

A Practical Study of COLOSSIANS

How Christians Grow

“Christ is All and in All”

Key verse 3:11b — *“Christ is all and in all.”*

Study Number Seven – Christ Not Legalism – Colossians 2:16-23

Colossians is a book that was written to the church at Colosse in the Lycus Valley. In that little valley there were three cities—Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colosse.

This is an interesting church because Paul’s never been there. He’s in prison in Rome and the pastor who was a young man that came to know Christ through the apostle Paul, by the name of Epaphras, had some problems in the Lycus Valley. There are some people with super knowledge that were coming along to say that it’s not just enough to know Christ as Savior. They said that you have to put your act together with some kind of performance.

He goes to Rome and talks to Paul and Paul sends this letter back to these people that he’s never met. But this letter magnifies the Person of Christ more than any other letter in Scripture.

The name of Christ is going to be mentioned over and over again. It's like that's the whole focus of the letter.

Colossians 3:11 is the key verse in our ministry. That verse says "Christ is all and in all."

Christ is all that a man needs and He is in all that a man does. There's no distinction between the sacred and the secular. And so Jesus Christ becomes the center of everything in your life.

Colossians 3:11 happens to be the key verse to the whole book. Each study in Colossians we provide a homemade translation of the Greek text.

We have called this series of studies:

Stages in My Relationship to Christ.

There are TWELVE of them. Here are the first six:

Stage #1 he makes it quite clear and we called it **CHRIST HAS CHANGED MY LIFE**. He uses three key words—faith, love and hope.

The beginning of a relationship with God is **FAITH** in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done on the Cross.

And in order to know that in your heart, the Spirit of God who dwells within you permanently starts to produce **LOVE** in

your heart. It's not just warm fuzzies. It's that *agape* kind of love that's willing to lay down your life for somebody else. It's characterized by service and giving of yourself.

That leads to HOPE—"soon we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

So those three key words are in that first study—Christ Changed My Life.

Stage #2: THE WILL, THE WALK, AND THE WORK.

This guy sitting in prison in Rome is praying for these Colossian people that he never met. He's praying **THREE THINGS** for them:

1. that they'll know the **WILL** of God,
2. that they will **WALK** worthy of Him in their conduct, and
3. that they will do the **WORK** that they have been gifted to do by the Lord in service for Him.

The **WILL**, the **WALK**, and the **WORK**—Stage #2.

Those are the things that you become concerned about immediately upon your faith in Christ.

Stage #3: **CHRIST IN FIRST PLACE.**

Colossians 1:18

in order that Christ might come to have first place in all things.

Salvation is NOT a terminal experience. It's only the beginning of a dynamic life with Christ at the center of it.

It's a life of change and adjustments and working together. That's exactly the way it is.

Marriage was designed as a laboratory to teach us how the Lord wants to work in our lives. How are you going to find what He wants? You spend time in the Book on a regular basis.

Stage #4: Maturing in Christ. You're going to grow up in Him.

1 Peter 2:2

As newborn babies desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby.

Paul says, "I want to have you folks be mature, grown-up in your relationship."

Stage #5: Living in Christ.

Learning how to live in Christ and be aware of the resources that He brings.

Stage #6: Christ Living in Me.

And so then we come to Stage #7.

Stage #7: CHRIST NOT LEGALISM.

We could say, “Not Religion But Relationship.” Building a relationship with Jesus Christ is the assignment that each of us have.

A person doesn't become a Christian very long before they get around some people who are doing a lot of things that you're supposed to do after you become a Christian. Like you have to serve on this committee and you have to go here and you have to go to that and do this and do that. And pretty soon you have a list with your tongue hanging out thinking, this is not what I thought this would be.

That's right. It's not.

Christ is to be the CENTER. Once you have dealt with the will, the walk and the work, then you're wanting to please Him on a daily basis. You check in for signals on a regular basis so that you know and understand whether what you're letting go on in your life is pleasing to Him.

Remember what happened when Jesus was here? The

religious establishment put Him to death. Talk about performers. They were big time performers.

Matthew 23 is one of the strongest passages about performance. Listen to what he says:

Matthew 23:24-28

...You strain at a gnat and you swallow a camel! Woe to you, Pharisees, and you religious leaders—hypocrites! You're so careful to polish the outside of the cup, but the inside is full of foul extortion and greed. Blind Pharisees! First cleanse the inside of the cup, and then the whole cup will be clean. Woe to you, Pharisees, and you religious leaders! You are like beautiful mausoleums—full of dead men's bones, and of foulness and corruption. You try to look like saintly men, but underneath those pious robes of yours are hearts besmirched with every sort of hypocrisy and sin.

That was not a popular presentation. It upset them greatly.

Do you feel that? That you went through a phase, or maybe you're in it right now. You're burnt out. You're worn out from going to this and to that and there is confusion.

Just back off and come back to the Lord and let Him prepare your heart. Let Him tell you how He's gifted you and let Him tell you what would bring Him pleasure and joy. Then just show up for assignments every day—whatever it's going to be.

What a privilege it is to walk with the Lord and serve Him!
It's the most exciting thing that can happen in your life.

Commentator William Barclay says:

The whole New Testament rejoices in the glorious fact that, once a man knows Jesus Christ, there is nothing between him and God, that the door is wide open for every man. As Paul did, we too must regard with the gravest suspicion any teaching that would put any [thing or] being between us and God.

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The simplicity of all—Christ is all and in all.

We're going to start at Colossians 2:16 and we're going to go down to verse 23.

Our **KEY VERSES** are verses 20 and 21.

v. 16 Stop, therefore, allowing anyone to sit in judgment upon you in eating and in drinking or in the matter of a feast day or new moon or Sabbath—

“Stop, therefore, allowing anyone to sit in judgment upon you in eating and in drinking or in the matter of a feast day or new moon or a Sabbath—”

You might say that's a different translation. That sentence begins with a **GREEK IMPERATIVE** or a **COMMAND** and it's

in the PRESENT TENSE.

Whenever you have a Greek negative command in the present tense, he's telling you stop doing what you're doing. Already these Gnostic teachers in the Lycus Valley have influenced the flock enough so that pastor Epaphras has gone all the way to Rome to talk to Paul about what needs to be done.

Now do you want another very familiar negative, present Greek command is in the Upper Room? What did Jesus say to the disciples?

“Let not your heart be troubled.” (ref. John 14:1)

Do you know what that is?

Stop being troubled in your hearts. They were sitting around, scared to death because He was talking about dying and leaving them. So He says, “Stop it right now!”—PRESENT TENSE.

The very first thing out of the box here in dealing with these folks in the Lycus Valley that have been influenced by this:

“Stop, therefore, allowing anybody to sit in judgment upon you”

Then he gives us several things they need to stop doing.

Listen to Peterson in *The Message* as he paraphrases this

verse:

Colossians 2:16

So don't put up with anyone pressuring you in details of diet, worship services, or holy days.

In other words, it's quite clear that he starts out with a very strong command to tell them don't get sidetracked into this kind of thing. These false teachers are going to come along and they're going to try to get you to do certain parts of the Law.

Remember in the book of Galatians it was "you can't be a Christian if you're a Gentile unless you're circumcised." Or "you can't be a Christian unless you are keeping certain parts of the Law as well as receiving Christ."

It is Christ + NOTHING.

The pure Gospel. It's your relationship to Jesus Christ.

Your eternal destiny depends on WHO you know and not WHAT you've done. At the Cross of Calvary, Christ paid it all. If you met with Him today, you're up to date and you admit it in brokenness about how you blew it yesterday. You'll do the same thing tomorrow. He's always there to welcome with kindness, love and understanding.

Don't let anyone do this to you. Don't let them sit in judgment.

He then summarizes that by giving us FIVE THINGS that they could be sitting in judgment upon:

1. what you EAT,
2. what you DRINK,
3. “the matter of a feast day”—that’s one of the feast days,
4. “new moon,” and
5. the “Sabbath”—were all parts of these celebrations that were supposed to have some spiritual ramifications to it.

Remember Paul the author? He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. Mr. Performance. But on the Damascus Road he met Christ.

Did you ever hear his testimony in Philippians 3:7? He goes through all of the things of the Law: of the tribe of Benjamin, born to full Jewish parents.

Philippians 3:7

...all these things I counted as one big loss for the sake of Christ.

It’s Christ and Christ only. He’s practicing what he’s preaching and he’s telling these folks in the Lycus Valley to do

the very same thing.

You might be asking, “Does this mean that there are some things in my life that are private and that are nobody else’s business?”

Yes. There are lots of grey areas in your Christian conduct. There are a lot of super performers that are Christians that are going to come along and tell you that you can’t be a Christian and do this. Or you can’t be a Christian and do that. And maybe you’ve already been torched with that and discouraged. They don’t have a right to do that.

We read in Romans 14:

Romans 14:5

Let each person be fully persuaded in his own mind.

That’s between you and the Lord and that’s nobody else’s business.

Here are five questions you can ask about these things if you’ve got some questions: These are all biblical.

Question #1: Does it edify?—this questionable thing.

Does it build me up? Is it something that edifies me?

Question #2: Does it enslave me?

In other words, is this habit something that has an addictive nature to it that it's going to enslave me?

Does this questionable thing that I'm dealing with—and the Lord's putting pressure on me—does it enslave me?

Question #3: Does it cause others to stumble?

It's anything that would cause somebody else to stumble and is something that we could give up.

Remember what Paul said?

“If meat causes my brother to stumble, I won't even eat meat. I don't have any problem with it and I can eat it with people who don't mind it, but if I'm with a brother who's going to stumble because of what I'm eating, I ain't going to do it.” (ref. 1 Corinthians 8:13)

Question #4: Does it glorify God?

Is this something that in your life, it's questionable to you, but does it glorify God?

Question #5: Does it cause doubt?

Whenever there is doubt there is the Spirit of God saying “Look, you're going to be a lot better off without this.”

Isaiah 32:17

The work of righteousness will be peace and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.

Put all of that into sequence and you're going to be able to deal with things in your life and not become defensive when somebody tries to nail you to the wall because of something that you're doing or not doing. You see what we're saying?

There's a freedom in this by responding in that way.

Oswald Chambers said this:

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers)

“You shall be witnesses to Me...” That means lives of pure, uncompromising, and unrestrained devotion to the Lord Jesus, which will be satisfying to Him wherever He may send us.

(January 18)

“Stop, therefore, allowing anyone to sit in judgment upon you”

And start right now and stop it!

“eating,”

“drinking,”

“matter of feast day,”

“new moon,” and

“Sabbath.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said:

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon)

Dost thou think that Christ would have come all the way from heaven to keep the law for thee if thou couldst keep it for thyself? 2992.292

p. 273

Satan is a very old lawyer, he has been in the profession for many centuries, and he knows how to raise all manner of quibbles and difficulties, and he can argue and reason in a very crafty fashion; so, your best plan is not to answer him at all, except just to say, [and I love this answer] “I have put my case into the hands of my great Advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have anything to say, you must say it to him.”

2883.236

p. 274

Isn't that great? There's such freedom in that.

**v. 17 which are a shadow of the things about to come;
but the body belongs to Christ.**

“which are a shadow of the things about to come; but the body belongs to Christ.”

When you see a shadow the reality is not far behind.

We have the “SHADOW” and then we have the REALITY.

Paul says the “shadow” was the LAW.

The REALITY was the Christ who came to pay for our broken Law.

The reality is Christ, the “shadow” is in performance or in the Law. A lot of folks get sidetracked along that line.

J. Vernon McGee in *Thru the Bible*, when he gets to the word “shadow,” says:

...“a shadow of things to come.” We get our word *photograph* from the Greek word used here for “shadow.” ...they were just pictures of Christ. Now that Christ has come, we have the reality. Why should we go back and look at a picture?

p. 352 (source unknown)

It was Thomas Brooks who made some of great statements in his public ministry. He says:

(Smooth Stones Taken from Ancient Brooks: Being a collection of sentences, illustrations, and quaint sayings from that renowned Puritan, Thomas Brooks by C.H. Spurgeon)

Every thing that a man leans upon but God, will be a dart that will certainly pierce his heart through and through. He who leans only upon Christ, lives the highest, choicest, safest, and sweetest life.

p. 32

Christ is the pot of manna, the cruse of oil, a bottomless ocean of all comfort, content and satisfaction. He that has him wants nothing. He that wants him, enjoys nothing.

p. 81

Now look at verse 18.

We have another NEGATIVE.

v. 18 Let no one disqualify you, delighting in a self-imposed humility, and worship of the angels, entering at length upon the tale of what he has seen in a vision, being puffed up by the mind of the flesh and not holding fast the head,

“Let no one disqualify you,”

This doesn't mean that Paul thinks you can lose your salvation. He's just saying that if you waste your life trying to perform, you're not going to have anything but wood, hay and

stubble at the Judgment Seat of Christ. There will be nothing for the basis of reward.

It's Christ living in you that produces the gold, silver and precious stones.

Paul was concerned that he might be disqualified. He said: "I treat my body roughly and I make it serve me, lest when I preach to others I would be ordered to stand aside or be disqualified." (ref. 1 Corinthians 9:27)

It's the same word here.

"Let no one disqualify you,"

How would that happen?

"delighting in a self-imposed humility, and worship of the angels, entering at length upon the tale of what he has seen in a vision, being puffed up by the mind of the flesh"—the OLD NATURE—"and not holding fast to the head,"

Peterson says:

Don't tolerate people who try to run your life, ...
(source unknown)

He mentions these five things. These 5 STEPS are steps to DISQUALIFICATION as far as reward is concerned.

1. “delighting in a self-imposed humility,”

This is a person who is letting you know he's very humble. It's a cover for excessive pride.

That's the kind of pride that was manifested in the Scribes and Pharisees. They loved to pray on the street corners. They loved to ring the bell and toot the horn when they gave some money so everybody would know they are sacrificially involved.

Performing humility will get you nowhere. It's like playing before an empty house. That is not biblical humility.

F.F. Bruce said:

Humility is the sweetest, loveliest flower that bloomed in Eden; and the first that died. It has rarely blossomed since on mortal soil. It is so frail, so delicate a thing tis gone if it but looks upon itself.
(source unknown)

We're talking about brokenness, contrition, and humility.

2. “worship of angels,”

In John's book of Revelation, every time he received a new revelation he fell down before the angel. And the angel said “Get up. I'm just like you. Don't be worshipping me.”

So over and over again Scripture makes it very clear that we're not to worship angels.

3. “entering at length upon the tale of what he has seen in a vision,”

This really gets to some grassroot things that are out there right now. Lots of people are having visions and they're whole story before the Christian community is to create warm fuzzies by telling others about their visions.

That'll only last so long and then it'll wear out and then it'll go away. It's not the vision, it's the Word of God.

4. “being puffed up by the mind of the flesh”

That's our old nature that's within us.

The flesh PUFFS UP and love BUILDS UP.

The flesh makes us BIG and the Spirit makes us LITTLE.

The flesh is PROUD and the Spirit is HUMBLE.

5. “and not holding fast the head,”

Christ is the “head” and we're the body. He's going to use that illustration here. He's basically saying you cut off the head when you put Christ out of the picture.

Legalistic requirements, worship of angels, concentration on visions, magnifying your experience. He's basically saying "Don't ever lose your head. Be careful."

Hughes was a pastor at Wheaton Bible Church for years in Wheaton, Illinois. He wrote a commentary on Colossians and he says:

(Colossians and Philemon: The Supremacy of Christ by R. Kent Hughes)

[I want to tell you a story about] Coach Johnny Kerr tried to get his Chicago Bulls to practice. As Kerr tells it:

We had lost seven in a row, and I decided to give a psychological pep talk before the game with the Celtics. I told Bob Boozer to go out and pretend he was the best scorer in basketball. I told Jerry Sloan to pretend he was the best defensive guard. I told Guy Rodgers to pretend could run an offense better than any other guard, and I told Eric Mueller to pretend he was the best rebounding, shot-blocking, scoring center in the game. We lost the game by 17. I was pacing around the locker room afterward trying to figure out what to say when Mueller walked up, put his arm around me and said, "Don't worry about it, coach. Just pretend we won."

p. 84

That's the way people live don't they? They know they're losing ground, they know they're not on the right track

because of the performance orientation. They're facing failure after failure after failure and finally they just get tired and throw it in rather than trying to understand the reality of Christ being the center of it all.

Spurgeon said:

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon)

Listen to me a moment, and quit your fancied strength: you, my hearer, cannot keep the law of God, for you have already broken it. How can you preserve a crystal vase entire when you have already dashed it to [pieces]? 2050.591
p. 273

Even Moses could not carry those tables in his hand without breaking them, nor can I do any better ... 2992.291
p. 273

... external religion is fiction, fluff, form, foam! 1930.629
p. 299

v. 19 from whom all the body, through the joints and ligaments, is being supported and held together, growing with the growth of God.

“from whom”—WHAT?—“all the body,”

Now here comes our relationship to the head:

“through the joints and ligaments, is being supported and held together, growing with the growth of God.”

We put all the pieces together and we stay focused on the head and allow Him to be guiding, controlling and leading. And then we have a deep desire to please Him.

GROWING IN GRACE rather than GROANING IN DISGRACE is a picture of this particular passage.

Paul uses it very carefully.

Christ is at the center. There are no rules nor experiences. It's just simply Christ and Christ Himself.

Now the KEY VERSES—verses 20 and 21.

v. 20 If you died with Christ from the elementary things of the world,

“If you died with Christ from the elementary things of the world,”

v. 21 why, as living in the world, are you submitting yourselves to legal requirements, [such as], do not touch, neither to taste, nor to handle,

“why, as living in the world, are you submitting yourselves to

legal requirements, [such as], do not touch, do not to taste, and do not handle,”

We put them both together because that’s just one verse.

He’s saying there’s an inconsistency in your life. When you came to know Christ you died to the world and to all of its allurements.

Why are you going back to this? Why are you living in reverse? Why are you reversing the video of life and submitting yourselves to legal requirements such as:

“do not touch, neither taste, nor to handle,”

Now there’s **THREE THINGS** here:

1. Don’t let anybody “sit in judgment,”—verse 16.
2. Don’t let anybody “disqualify you,”—verse 18.
3. Don’t be “submitting yourselves to legal requirements” like these very things that he outlines for us.

It is **CHRIST NOT LEGALISM**. Be a person who wants to wake up every day pleasing him.

Erwin Raphael McManus wrote a book called *Chasing Daylight*. Listen to what he says:

(Chasing Daylight: Seize the Power of Every Moment by
Erwin Raphael McManus)

I am convinced that God longs to put His fingerprint in our lives, to act on our behalf and surprise us with His magnificence. I am equally convinced that most of the time we do not give God a context in which to do this.

p. 82

That stings doesn't it?

We're guilty. We've got all kinds of things and excuses for just a simple reality of an ever deepening relationship with the Lord Jesus.

When you strip it all down, this is the bottom line.

Christ and knowing Him and loving Him. The neatest thing is recognizing when He intervenes in situations.

Ruth Paxson says:

(Life on the Highest Plane: A Study of the Spiritual Nature and Needs of Man by Ruth Paxson)

To many Christians the most difficult thing they have to do is to consent willingly to the Lordship of Jesus Christ over their whole being. They are loath to admit the necessity of the absolute dethronement of "the old man" and the perfect enthronement of the Lord Jesus. As someone has very aptly

said, “I was quite willing that Jesus Christ should be King, so long as He allowed me to be Prime Minister.” But Christ shares His Lordship with no one and unless “He is Lord of all, He is not Lord at all.”

p. 217

And then this next statement:

Unless by a definite act of your will you have chosen Him as Lord it is futile for you to expect Him to control your life.

p. 303

It’s either all or not at all. You can’t negotiate with Him on partial control and rationalize these things.

Erwin Lutzer says:

(Cries from the Cross: A Journey Into the Heart of Jesus by Erwin W. Lutzer)

Obviously, Jesus died before the thief did, and He was on hand to welcome him into the eternal dwelling place. Spurgeon wrote that this “man who was our Lord’s last companion on earth” was His “first companion at the gates of paradise.”⁵ The thief was with Him in condemnation and hours later was with Him in salvation.

5. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Christ’s Words from the Cross*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 33. p. 62

v. 22 all of which are meant for destruction by being consumed, which are according to the precepts and teachings of men?

“all of which are meant for destruction”

What you eat is PERISHABLE! It’s destroyed. It’s being consumed.

“by being consumed, which are according to the precepts and teachings of men?”

That is certainly not from the Spirit of God. They’re basically designed to be perishing in the using.

“which are according to the precepts and teachings of men?”

v. 23 Which things, indeed, are having an appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-imposed humility and severe treatment of the body, [which are] not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.

“Which things, indeed, are having an appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-imposed humility and severe treatment of the body, [which are] not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.”

All of those external things won’t do anything to deal with the sin within each of us and the nature that is there to want to

live life independent of Him.

When all is said and done, this man-made religion can't do anything with our old nature—the flesh.

(Galatians-Colossians, Holman New Testament Commentary: Volume 8 by Max Anders)

Alexander Maclaren said, “There is only one thing that will put the collar on the neck of the animal within us, and that is the power of the indwelling Christ
p. 310

That is the whole purpose.

There are 11 lessons that come out of this study.

LESSON #1: One of the real temptations of a young Christian is to endeavor to produce righteousness in the flesh or as a result of one's own effort.

LESSON #2: This involves certain legalistic requirements by which we grade ourselves as spiritual or unspiritual, depending upon how well we are performing.

LESSON #3: Satan will do anything to get us concentrating on our performance rather than our relationship with the Father. Concentrating on our conduct rather than on Christ. Working on the outward and neglecting the inward.

LESSON #4: The reality is in Jesus Christ. As the shadow foretells the coming presence, so the law points us to Christ.

LESSON #5: Don't go chasing after the shadow when you already have the reality in Christ.

LESSON #6: We each need to be aware of how we can be disqualified from rewards at the judgment seat of Christ.

LESSON #7: According to Paul, there are five ways we can be disqualified: (1) "delighting in a self-imposed humility"—this kind of humility is a cover-up for excessive pride—no real brokenness; (2) "[the] worship of angels"; (3) "entering at length upon the tale of what he has seen in a vision; (4) "being puffed up by the mind of the flesh"; and (5) "not holding fast [to] the head"—who is Christ.

LESSON #8: We must not look elsewhere to find growth, strength, knowledge, and joy. For all of these are found in Jesus Christ.

LESSON #9: Paul is saying here that it is our responsibility to concentrate on the relationship to Jesus Christ and our fellowship with the Father. Once the life of Christ is flowing through us, the fruit will take care of itself.

LESSON #10: All the flesh needs is a law to break before it leaps into action.

LESSON #11: What a glorious freedom is ours in a

relationship with an adequate Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to this story from Tim Tebow:

(Through My Eyes by Tim Tebow)

After the final touchdown I walked over to Coach Meyer. He pulled off his headset, opened up his arms, gave me a great big hug, and said, “Atta boy. Great job. You finished. I love you.” It was a great feeling to hear him say that, after filling all the roles he had in my life as a coach, a friend, and a father figure.

As great as that was, how much greater will it feel when we get to heaven and Jesus takes off his headset, opens up His arms, gives us a big hug, and says, “Atta boy. Great job. You finished. I love you.” I talk to kids about that all the time—finishing strong. It’s great for football. You have to finish in football; you have to learn how to finish in the weight room, through the line, finishing a sprint; everything gets hard. Finish. Eventually some people are going to stop, some people are going to quit, and some people are going to start going slower, but the people who can finish and finish at the same pace or stronger than when they started, those are the ones who are going to succeed; ...

p. 205

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said:

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-

thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon)

God has so made man's heart that nothing can ever fill it but God himself. 3157.391
p. 406

Father, we're living in uncertain days and You could soon split the skies. We want to be at work finishing the task that You've given us. So may the Lord Jesus Christ be glorified in our time of study. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A Practical Study of EPHESIANS

HEAVEN'S PLAN for Life on Earth

“What It’s Like Living According to God’s Plan”

Key verse 3:11b — *“Christ is all and in all.”*

STUDY NUMBER SEVEN – CHRIST NOT LEGALISM – COLOSSIANS 2:16-23

KEY VERSES 2:20, 21

v.16 Stop, therefore, allowing anyone to sit in judgment upon you in eating and in drinking or in the matter of a feast day or new moon or Sabbath—

v.17 which are a shadow of the things about to come; but the body belongs to Christ.

v.18 Let no one disqualify you, delighting in a self-imposed humility, and worship of the angels, entering at length upon the tale of what he has seen in a vision, being puffed up by the mind of the flesh and not holding fast the head,

v.19 from whom all the body, through the joints and ligaments, is being supported and held together, growing with the growth of God.

v.20 If you died with Christ from the elementary things of the world,

v.21 why, as living in the world, are you submitting yourselves to legal requirements, [such as], do not touch, neither to taste, nor to handle,

v.22 all of which are meant for destruction by being consumed, which are according to the precepts and teachings of men?

v.23 Which things, indeed, are having an appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-imposed humility and severe treatment of the body, [which are] not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Colossians 2:16-23 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What command is given in verse 16?

3. What command is given in verse 18?

4. What does the phrase “disqualify you” in verse 18 mean?

5. How is the body of Christ described in verse 19?

6. What should our attitude be as Christians towards legalistic standards, according to verses 20 & 21?

7. How does Paul characterize legalism, according to verse 22?

8. How is legalism described, according to verse 23?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: One of the real temptations of a young Christian is to endeavor to produce righteousness in the flesh or as a result of one’s own effort.

LESSON #2: This involves certain legalistic requirements by which we grade ourselves as spiritual or unspiritual, depending upon how well we are performing.

LESSON #3: Satan will do anything to get us concentrating on our performance rather than our relationship with the Father. Concentrating on our conduct rather than on Christ. Working on the outward and neglecting the inward.

LESSON #4: The reality is in Jesus Christ. As the shadow foretells the coming presence, so the law points us to Christ.

LESSON #5: Don’t go chasing after the shadow when you already have the reality in Christ.

LESSON #6: We each need to be aware of how we can be disqualified from rewards at the judgment seat of Christ.

LESSON #7: According to Paul, there are five ways we can be disqualified: (1) “delighting in a self-imposed humility”—this kind of humility is a cover-up for excessive pride—no real brokenness; (2) “[the] worship of angels”; (3) “entering at length upon the tale of what he has seen in a vision; (4) “being puffed up by the mind of the flesh”; and (5) “not holding fast [to] the head”—who is Christ.

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LESSON #8: We must not look elsewhere to find growth, strength, knowledge, and joy.
For all of these are found in Jesus Christ.

LESSON #9: Paul is saying here that it is our responsibility to concentrate on the relationship to Jesus Christ and our fellowship with the Father. Once the life of Christ is flowing through us, the fruit will take care of itself.

LESSON #10: All the flesh needs is a law to break before it leaps into action.

LESSON #11: What a glorious freedom is ours in a relationship with an adequate Lord Jesus Christ.