

Colossians 2:16-19

Remaining Free of
Legalism

The Flow of this passage:

In Light these Position/ Union truths in Christ:

- Col 2:11- and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, (*summarizing*)
- Col 2:12- having been **buried with Him** in baptism, in which you were also **raised up with Him** through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.
- Col 2:13- He **made you alive together with Him**, having forgiven us all our transgressions,
- Col 2:14- having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross— **THEREFORE, BASED ON THESE FACTS:**

The Flow of this passage:
In Light these Position/ Union truths in Christ:

- **THEREFORE:**

- ‘I’m going to give you 4
COMMANDS because you’ve
been crucified, buried and risen
WITH CHRIST’

- Paul ties the previous doctrinal truths (Col. 2:11—14) with the practical application of these truths

The 4 Commands:

- I. **STAY FREE FROM O.T. LEGALISMS:** (vs 16-17) regarding food, drink, festivals, New Moons, Sabboth... **SOURCE: God**
- II. **STAY FREE FROM MAN-MADE RELIGIOUS EMBELLISHMENTS** (vs 18-19) regarding self-abasement, worship of angels, taking stand on visions... **SOURCE: MAN**
- III. **STAY FREE FROM ASCETISM** (Vs. 20-23) regarding taboos: Do not: Handle, Taste, Touch, shows of wisdom & humility, self-abasement . . . **SOURCE: MAN**
- IV. **KEEP SEEKING THE THINGS ABOVE** (3:1-2) setting your affection on things above . . . **SOURCE: God**

NOTE: 3 negative and 1 positive

SOURCE: RON MERRYMAN & CHESTER MCCALLEY

Col 2:16: **Therefore** no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—
Col 2:17: things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

- **Therefore**, based on the facts of: vs 14, the Certificate of Debt cancelled ordinances against us/ hostile to us]
- Food, drink, festival, new moon and Sabbath days: are all pertaining to what?
- LEVITICAL LAWS: things contained in the 613 from the Mosaic economy
- Q: Why are these things not part of the Christian walk?
 1. Rom 10:4: 'Christ is the end of the law to all that believe'
 2. Gal 2:16 and Rom 6:14 forbids the thought that holiness of life for the believer is found by adhering to legalistic principles
 3. Rom 14:17; I Cor 8:8; I Cor 10:31; I Tim. 4:3
- The Shadow of things to come: Christ casts the shadow. The NASB says "substance" of things to come. Better: the body belongs to Christ (*gr: soma*)
- Food, drink, festivals, new moons, sabbaths had typical value in OT [archetypical] but no independent existence.
- DO NOT substitute the shadow for the reality. DO NOT LIVE in the midst of the shadowy paraphernalia [e.g.: Roman Catholicism]
- **APPLY MERRYMAN'S** Ancient Chinese Axiom to others and have it applied to you!

Col 2:18 - Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he (has/hath **not** seen), vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, [KJV]

- BEGUILING (defrauding-NASB) you = *kata/brabeuō* = against/rule, judge down; act as your umpire. Arbitrary and negative umpiring
- This “Umpire”: in his vanity expresses his Sin Nature by religious rule-making, it’s based on his egotistic lifestyle, with false spirituality, then he proceeds to declare YOU as unworthy of his system.
- NOTE: in your bible: is it “seen” or “not seen”? Some versions have it , some don’t. Earlier transcripts: omit not’; later transcripts add in “not”
- CRUX of this passage: [H.A. IRONSIDE]

It sounds like humility to say *‘In myself I am so utterly ignorant and unworthy that it is not for me to go directly to God the Father or up to Christ His Son. I will therefore avail myself to mediating angels and spirits who can present my cause in a more suitable manner than I can myself.’* But it is really pride of intellect and the grossest unbelief, for God has declared that there is one mediator between God and men, the Man, Christ Jesus. [I Tim 2:5-6]

- This is WILLED humility. (NASB: self-abasement) the humility is self-motivated; the humility is false, they cast themselves in the role of judge, yet claim to be humble about it. Some translations say: they DELIGHT in the voluntary humility!

Col 2:19— And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.-

- Not Holding on to the Head: from 1:18 ‘He is also the Head of the body, the church... the first-born from the dead, so that He may have preeminence.’
- **when we learn the Head**, we are preserved from the effort of the Enemy to give the Flesh a place in connection with Christ [J.B. STONEY]
- False Gnostic teachers were using Levitical embellishments seeking DIVORCE or SEVER the Body from the Head (the body of believers) Their venture into angel worship & angel hierarchies did this
- RESULT: lack of nourishment. Note what would happen in vs. 19 if you disassociate with the Head- it follows that you loose the nourishment and growth. Again: back to EPH 4:15-16: ‘truthing in love’ causes the growth
- NOTE: the parallel to JOHN 15. Vs 5: ***‘I am the Vine you are branches; he who abides in Me, and I in Him, he bears much fruit; for apart from me you can do nothing.’***
- Our association/ identification with CHRIST AS your HEAD means:
 - I. **A PERSON IS OUR WISDOM;**
 - II. **A PERSON IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS;**
 - III. **A PERSON IS OUR SANCTIFICATION;**
 - IV. **A PERSON IS OUR REDEMPTION. [I COR 1:30].**
- So hold fast/ esteem/ be nourished, vitally connected to only Him in our "religion"

Colossians 2:20-23

Remaining Free of
Asceticism

Asceticism in Paul's Time & Now

DEFINED:

the manner of life, practices, or principles of person seeking to attain a high spiritual and moral state by practicing self-denial, self-mortification, and the like. **Activities:** rigorous self-denial; extreme abstinence; austerity.



Gnosticism: 2 Schools:

School I:

STOICISM says:

- “Live nobly and death cannot matter. Hold the appetite in check. Become indifferent to changing conditions. Be not uplifted by good fortune nor cast down by adversity. The man is more than his circumstances; the soul is greater than the universe.”
- Application: Flee from the world
- ***Asceticism***
- Addressed in: **COL 2:20-23**

School II:

EPICUREANISM says:

- “All is uncertain. We know not whence we came; we do not know whither we go; we only know that after a brief life we disappear from this scene, and it is vain to deny ourselves any present joy in view of possible future ill.
- Applications: “Let us then eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.”
- ***License***
- Indifferent to the world
- Addressed in: COL 3:5-17

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Col 2:20:

If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, **Col 2:21:** “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!”

- Elementary Principles = Rudimentary principles: the first principles of the world. The ABC's of religion
- ‘If you have died’: Paul is assuming this premise is TRUE: **“since you have died”** In a conditional clause, he is assuming the reality of the condition. And it's a FACT.
- SO THEN . . .
- “Why in the %^&#@ are you submitting yourselves to decrees?” (*My amplified version, not suitable for Sunday school*)
- Decrees here: have their genesis from MAN, not God, (as in 1:16's food, drink, sabbath days)
- Note: in 1:16, the way to deal with the Law (source: God) is CHRIST: taking it out of the way, nailing it to the cross, but with man's decrees:
- YOU ARE DEAD TO IT! It is silly to even consider yielding....
- A MODERN view: **The dead:** do not pay their mortgage payments, eat healthy, file their tax return extensions, use proper non-binary, gender-neutral pronouns

Col 2:20:

If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, **Col 2:21: “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!”**

- Col 2:21:
 - The “handle nots”, “taste nots”, “touch nots” are **TABOOS**. Associated with the ascetic first principles of the world (not from the O.T.)
- MODERN EXAMPLES OF TABOOS:
 - **GIVING SOMEONE AN EVEN NO. OF FLOWERS IN RUSSIA**
 - **CHEWING GUM: IN SINGAPORE**
 - **PREGNANT WOMEN IN CHINA: DO NOT EAT COLD FOODS ONE MONTH BEFORE GIVING BIRTH**
- Principle: Man’s approach to controlling the Flesh/Sin Nature is to invent his own laws to:
 - 1) TAME IT: by rules, the “handle not, taste nots and touch nots”
 - 2) WITHDRAW FROM THE WORLD: as in asceticism
 - 3) DENY ITS EXISTENCE: e.g. Christian Science, Reformed theology
 - 4) CURE IT / IMPROVE IT: with religion **[MERRYMAN]**
- God’s Method: is DEATH (Rom 6:2- ‘how shall we who are dead to sin...’)

Col 2:22:

(which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?

[Referencing: “Handle not, Taste not, Touch not.....”]

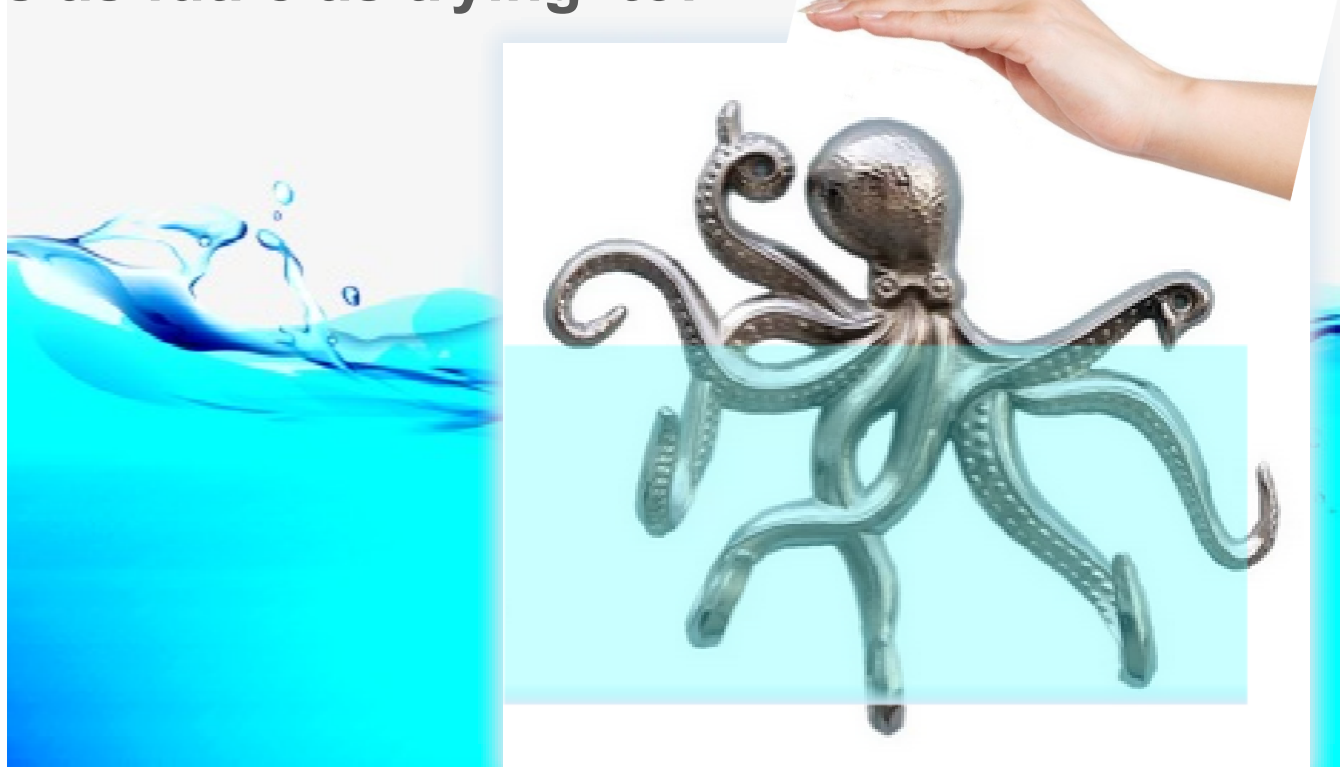
- How is the ‘Handle not, Taste not, Touch not...’ destined to perish with use?
- With use (or with the using...) = apochrēsis. ‘The consumption of it...’ ‘destined for corruption/ decomposition’ ‘Their very using destroys them’ VINCENT
- Merryman: ‘The ordinances/restrictions/tabooes forbidden by the false teachers dealt with EXTERNAL THINGS that are meant to perish with use’ The things were not corrupt in themselves.

Col 2:23:

These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh. [NKJV]

- These things: this class / category of things (the commands & doctrines of men)
- An appearance of wisdom = a **show** of wisdom. Q: who are they showing for?
- An **outward** appearance of holiness
- It's voluteered, self-imposed, officious, supererogatory service [LIGHTFOOT]
- Officious: **ASSERTIVE OF AUTHORITY IN AN ANNOYINGLY DOMINEERING WAY, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO PETTY OR TRIVIAL MATTERS.**
- Supererogatory service: **OF MORE THAN IS ASKED FOR; THE ACTION OF DOING MORE THAN DUTY REQUIRES. AN ACT IS SUPEREROGATORY IF IT IS GOOD BUT NOT MORALLY REQUIRED TO BE DONE**
- The Windup: It's pseudo-spirituality, pseudo—worship, parading itself in an arrogant display of false and willed-humility [MERRYMAN]
- Robbing the believer of his & her GLORIOUS station in Christ and the total sufficiency of the grace of the Lord! [MERRYMAN]

Whatever the religious activity used to tame, bring under control the Sin Nature through Man-made means; it's as futile as trying to:



BAPTIZE AN OCTOPUS