

**Series "Jesus Is First"  
"Shadow or Substance"  
Colossians 2:16-23  
Part-9**

**The spiritual life has its dangers and its warnings. Paul had already warned about the false teachers! Colossians 2:8**

**Colossians 2:16-17**

**The Lord Jesus often used the word "beware" – Matthew 7:15-16; Mark 12:38.**

**The Apostle John said: 1 John 4:1**

**1. Verses 16-17 – Legalism – Want To Judge You**

**2. Verses 18-19 – Mysticism – Want To Disqualify You**

**3. Verses 20-23 – Asceticism – Want To Enslave You**

**1. Verses 16-17 – Legalism – Want To Judge You:**

Colossians 2:16

"Therefore" – here is the word "therefore," which relates this discussion to the previous verses. The basis for our freedom is the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:9-15

Legalism – "It is the failure to recognize God's grace that has made us acceptable to him; it is the attempt to make ourselves acceptable by our own works."

"let no one act as your judge" – "take you to task," Ceremonial Legalism, adding works to their faith. There was 2 areas that Paul warns against: Diet and Days.

Diet – in regard to food or drink, under the Old Testament system, certain foods were classified as "clean" or "unclean," Leviticus 11:2-20.

There were physical reasons for not eating certain foods (Book: "None Of These Diseases"). There were also spiritual reasons.

But Jesus made it clear that, of itself, food was neutral, Mark 7:18-23.

Peter was reminded of this lesson again when he was on the housetop in Joppa (Acts 10:9) and when he was rebuked in Antioch by Paul (Galatians 2:11); Not necessary to faith or life.

Romans 14:3-4; 1 Corinthians 8:8

Days – “or in respect to a festival” – This was Passover, Pentecost, the feast of Tabernacles, or Feast of Lights; Taught the people aspects of Christ’s work.

“or a new moon” – the first day of the month – Numbers 28:11-14.

“or a Sabbath day – The Old Testament Jew was commanded to keep the weekly Sabbath, which was the seventh day of the week, Exodus 20:9-11.

Colossians 2:17

“things which are a mere shadow of what is to come;” – Hebrews 10:1

Shadow is the intended likeness of the substance.

Galatians 3:24-25

“but the substance belongs to Christ.”

Does this mean that the Old Testament Law has no ministry to New Testament Christians?

1. The Law still reveals the holiness of God, Romans 7:7.
2. In the Law, Jesus Christ can be seen, Luke 24:27.
3. “We know that the Law is good if a man uses it properly,”  
1 Timothy 1:8.
4. The Law reveals sin and warns of the consequences of sin – but it has no power to prevent sin or redeem the sinner. Only grace can do that, Romans 6:23.

Have you been accepted by Jesus or are you still trying? Galatians 6:2 – “fulfill the law of Christ.”

## **2. Verses 18-19 – Mysticism – Want To Disqualify You:**

Colossians 2:18

Mysticism – “intrusion into visions, communicating with spirits or angels, angelic idolatry, Spiritism, the occult” (Mary Worship, saint worship).

“Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize” – “to award the prize against,” means “to declare unworthy of a prize.”

1 Corinthians 3:8

“delighting” – It was nothing but ugly pride that was being displayed. Self-abasement means “humility.” This was speaking of a false humility.

“and the worship of the angels,” – Angels, are our servants! Hebrews 1:14.

Matthew 4:10

“taking his stand on visions he has seen,” The phrase taking his stand was a technical term used by the mystical religions of that day. It meant “to set foot in the inner shrine, to be fully initiated into the mysteries of the religion.”

“inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,” – Actually, he reveals a subtle kind of pride that substitutes man-made beliefs and traditions for the Word of God. “His unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.”

Colossians 2:19

“and not holding fast to the head,” – Colossians 3:4 – “When Christ, who is our life,”

“from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments,” – spiritual body grows by nutrition, not by addition.

“grows with a growth which is from God.”

It is through worship, prayer, and the Word that we draw on the spiritual resources of Christ.

### **3. Verses 20-23 – Asceticism – Want To Enslave You:**

Colossians 2:20

Asceticism – practices “rigorous self-denial and deprivation of the body of normal desires in order to become more holy, approved by God as more spiritual;” No material comforts.

Colossians 2:21 – “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” Paraphrase  
“Don’t handle this! Don’t taste that! Don’t even touch this other thing!”

1 Timothy 4:1-5

“Do not handle,” – Before you can eat, you have to handle it.

“do not taste,” – You are to abstain from certain foods that we can eat;  
Man’s rules!

“do not touch!” – abstaining from sexual relations, 1 Cor. 7:1-5.

Colossians 2:22-23

“These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom” –  
literally “will-worship.”

“in self-made religion” – This is “self-imposed worship.”

“and self-abasement” – “humility.”

“but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.” – The power of Christ in  
the life of the believer does more than merely restrain the desires of the  
flesh, it puts new desires within him.

**Application:** The Holy life is found in Jesus Christ alone:

1. The Holy Life Begins With The Recognition Of What Jesus Christ  
Has Provided. Jesus Christ Has Furnished Everything We Need:  
Colossians 2:9-13.
2. We Need To Trust Him For The Energy To Live Effectively:  
Colossians 2:6-7.
3. We Will Make Spiritual Progress With The Growth Which Is From God:  
Colossians 2:19.