

I. Freedom in Worship - Col. 2:16-17

1. Therefore ties this verse to the last one (**verse 16**)
 - because Christ is sufficient - don't let anyone judge you
- Rea 2. In what were they being "judged?"
 - eat and drink
 - don't eat pork, for instance - or eat blood (Lev. 3:17)
 - religious festivals
 - special celebrations... with required attendance
3. God has classified certain foods to be off limits in the Old Testament
 - clean and unclean
 - stand firm in the liberty given you in Jesus Christ
4. Compare 1 Cor. 8:8 - food does not bring us nearer to God
 - Jesus said/ taught the same thing - that the outward food does not make the inward person - Mark 7:18-19
- Rea 5. The Old Testament Sabbath is an issue for many today... it was a "required" law - some have said that because of passages like this one in Colossians that Sunday attendance is no longer "required" and also the "no work" idea is not required (that went with it)
 - to be consistent then you might say that the "no adultery" law is no longer required - and no one would do that
 - many today are using such verses to excuse their faithful attendance at church
- Rea 6. So, Jesus worked on the Sabbath
 - to feed Himself and His disciples
 - to heal the sick
 - Jesus also, attended the Synagogue as His "custom" - Luke 4:16
 - But... He did not mow His grass on the Sabbath - there is a difference between mowing your grass and working at the hospital to save a life ...isn't there?
 - the religious festivals were not (in themselves) wrong to celebrate... but to make them the whole of your faith... or to make them necessary for salvation is definitely wrong
7. Properly understood - rules and religious festivals (**verse 17**) - are a shadow of things to come
 - the reality is Christ
 - they were preparatory
8. Jesus work and words were not dependent upon such observances - but they were a shadow of the reality in Christ
9. We worship in spirit and truth - John 4:1ff
 - in heart, not in building or rituals
- Rea **Ideas and Questions:**
 1. This is why we don't need to celebrate Passover, or the festival of Pentecost
 2. Such religious "deeds" were used (and sometimes today are used) to give us spiritual "credits" with God - so that we can "earn" our way into heaven -instead of relying on the grace of God given us through Christ
 3. So, we might understand better their dilemma about circumcision - was that necessary?

-this is why this issue of circumcision is used as example time and time again in New Testament - it WAS (after all) a mark given by God Himself in the Old Testament

II. Freedom from Falsehoods - Col. 2:18-19

1. Two threatening falsehoods (**verse 18**)
 - A. False humility
 - B. Worship of angels
2. Disqualify you
- Rea -because they are puffed up they make a “judgement” that you really don’t know anything because you don’t know about these things- “puffed up”
3. They talk about what they have seen
- Rea -they believe and practice an “esoteric” order... that is - we know something that you don’t know. The Mormons boast in knowing current things that others don’t have. The Eastern religions boast about what they’ve seen in trances. Some boast that they have been to heaven (or hell) and need to tell you all about it. Almost always there is the attitude that “we know more than you do” because we have an inside track with God. They think they have “extra revelation.”
4. The danger is to become puffed up with idle notions
5. The bigger problem - they have lost connection with the head (**verse 19**)
- Rea -a serious problem, a serious charge here
- Rea -without connection with the head these multitude of doctrines (teachings) run in all directions
6. The entire body is held together by the head
- like ligaments and sinews
- Rea **Ideas and Questions:**
 1. It seems almost every day there is a “new doctrine”
 - watch out for new findings of “Scripture” that has not been around... until now
 2. Watch out for “new revelations” to inspired people
 - dreams might fall into this category
 - professors who think that they alone know what the Hebrew or the Greek say
 - we need always remember! - true contact with God makes us humble
 3. Were they “puffed up” before the revelation or are they “puffed up” since it?
 4. Not being connected to the “head” they do not lead toward the head - Jesus

III. Freedom to Live - Col. 2:20-23

1. Why do you still submit to the elemental forces and their rules? (**Verse 20**)
 - A. Examples are given in verse 21 - do not handle, do not touch, do not taste
 - these folk were depending on their own discipline to add to their salvation
 - B. You “died with Christ”
 - died to your own ability to live a good life
 - C. Spiritual forces of this world - the elemental forces and spiritual forces are seen as one and the same here
 - D. “Rules” went with these forces and belief system
2. **Verse 21** - touch, taste
 - A. The Old Testament rules concerning the outward world
 - the push is to escape contamination

-such a belief system seems to eliminate more important matters
-compare Matthew 23:23

3. These rules deal with that which is destined to die with us - the body (**verse 22**)

-they come from human commands and human wisdom

Rea -man-made regulations are like man-made idols - they are empty

-they are legalistic practices in a human religion

Rea -I've noticed that those who are most into "rules" are least into being "servants"
and looking after their fellow-man

4. These have an appearance of wisdom (**verse 23**)

-they are, though, filled with false humility and harsh treatment of the body

Rea -they have no real value in restraining the flesh - this is the irony

Rea -just because you eat right and avoid touching the wrong thing, does not mean
that you heart is right

Rea **Ideas and Questions:**

1. We have "freedom" to eat, but choose not to

2. We have (now) free will - since set free by Christ

-before Christ we were slaves of Satan and the elemental forces of the world

3. A "rules centered" faith winds up empty of life

-so... the life is supposed to push the rules instead of the rules pushing the life

-I obey some rules because of something more important than the rules... because
I love Jesus

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