



MESSAGE GUIDE

For Nov. 9,
2025



Colossians 2:6-23
Mark Moore,
GUEST SPEAKER

COMPLETE 4: COMPLETELY FREE

We're in the fourth week of our series called, "Complete," as we continue our study through the book of Colossians. In Colossians 2:6-7 the Apostle Paul writes, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

Paul is writing to the church in Colossae, reminding them of "what you do" as a follow of Jesus.

- Be Rooted. "Rooted" in Greek- *errizōmenoi*, suggesting a once-for-all experience, single action.
- Be Built up = Bible + Next Steps (*epoikodomoumenoi*), indicates a continual process.
- Show Gratitude = Eucharist & worship

But notice what Paul writes before and after verse 6-7:

- "I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments." (Colossians 2:4)
- "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ." (Colossians 2:8)

Paul is warning them of false teachers. We don't normally talk about false teachers because we would rather be positive than negative. We don't want to bash other ministries. But the topic comes up a number of times in the Bible and so I feel obligated to address it head on. Below are some examples of false teachings and false ideas:

- Rationalism—Think This (pride). They seduce you through intellectual pride to focus on human logic, reason, and philosophy. Don't get me wrong, I love intellectualism, I value reason. That's how I'm wired. But you can't solve a spiritual problem with a human solution. Human wisdom is great as far as it goes but put on a pedestal it becomes an idol.
- Legalism—Do This (guilt). They seduce you through guilt. When someone suggests that you need more than faith in Christ to save you. You have to add to Jesus rules that demonstrate your righteousness. Often this takes the shape of asceticism—you have to abstain from certain food to prove your superior spirituality. Or you have to attend a certain number of meetings or memorize certain prayers or verses to demonstrate your Spirituality.
- Hedonism—Experience this (craving). If it feels good, do it.
- Mysticism—Feel This (selfishness). They seduce you through selfishness. There are secret mantras, formulas, practices—you have to speak in tongues, or handle snakes, or get cold chills. Each of these are more about you than about Christ.

1. WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THESE FALSE IDEAS SHOWING UP IN OUR CULTURE OR EVEN IN THE CHURCH?



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So, what can we do to safeguard your faith from being seduced by false teachers?

In the next few verses, Paul begins to address this by starting with what God does: “When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” (Colossians 2:13-15)

This alludes to an ancient custom dictating that when decrees were nullified, a copy of the text should be nailed up in a public place. When Jesus was crucified, the superscription nailed to his cross contained the words “The King of the Jews.” When Jesus is your king, all your past is nailed to the cross with him.

So, do not let anyone judge you (2:16-23). “Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.” (Colossians 2:16-17)

What Paul is addressing here is the basic practices that make a good Jew a good Jew?

- Diet—Jews had very specific rules about what they could eat.
- Day—No working on the Sabbath. Friday Sundown to Saturday sundown.
- Dress—Jews wore phylacteries and tassels. A phylactery is a small leather box that contains strips of parchment inscribed with passages from the Torah that Jesus men would wear around their arm or forehead. (Jesus actually mocked them for making them large so everyone could see how spiritual they were).

2. WHAT ARE YOUR EXPERIENCES WHEN A CHURCH SEEMED TO EMPHASIS CERTAIN RULES THAT MUST BE FOLLOWED TO BE A GOOD CHRISTIAN (SUCH AS FOOD, ALCOHOL/TOBACCO USE, OBSERVING DAYS, OR HOW YOU DRESS)?

3. WHEN HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT OTHERS THINK OF YOU OR EXPECT FROM YOU MORE THAN WHAT



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The question comes down to this: Are you trying to meet the expectations of insiders or the needs of outsiders?

Some rules are good for some people. But here's where it gets twisted—the right rules can have wrong motives. For the Jews and many Christians, the rules about diet, day, and dress have a dark side:

- The right rules repel outsiders. Many religious rules are not designed to make people better but to build a barrier between insiders and outsiders. For the Jews it was dietary restrictions and circumcision. Neither made you a better person and both were repulsive to outsiders. So, these rules discouraged outsiders from becoming insiders. Dietary restrictions kept outsiders from your dinner table and ensured your daughter wouldn't marry a pagan.
- The right rules conceal a bad heart through good behavior. These rules help you prove to other insiders just how much of an insider you are. That's the very charge Paul lays out against these rule followers.

"Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. They have lost connection with the head". (Colossians 2:18-19a)

When you focus on yourself you can't see Jesus. Obviously, we want to live a life that represents Jesus well. But when we live lives to prove our righteousness to legalists, neither Jesus nor our neighbor win. The right rules don't make you righteous.

"Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? ... Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. (Colossians 2:20-21, 23)

While that is counter-intuitive, we have all experienced rule followers who are judgmental and really no better than anyone else. They may not get drunk but there are intoxicated with ego. They may not sleep around but they lust for recognition. They may not cuss, but their gossip can kill.

4. HOW ARE YOU HOLDING ON TO THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD? ARE YOU TRYING TO WIN FAVOR BY SUBMITTING TO RULES OR TO CHRIST?



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When Christ rules, rules don't. It's time we let Jesus be our judge and get past the opinions and pride of other people. Jesus was a rule-breaker. Does this mean our behavior doesn't matter? Of course not. The question is not whether we should live a righteous life, the question is how to pull it off. Rules don't lead to right living. Relationship leads to righteousness.

If you conform to the judgment of people inside the church, you will likely also conform to the judgement of people outside as well. That's why Paul had to tell the same people to change their behavior. In church, they were acting like super saints but outside the church they were acting like petty pagans.

5. HOW ARE YOU REPRESENTING CHRIST? ARE FRUSTRATED THAT YOU ARE NOT REPRESENTING HIM BETTER? WHAT STEP WILL YOU TAKE TO REPRESENT CHRIST THROUGH HIS RULE IN YOUR LIFE?