

Colossians - Chapter 2

“Living by Rules, But Coming Up Short”

Colossians 2:20-23

Verse 20-22

1. As Paul concludes this chapter he deals with the issue of asceticism.
 - An ascetic is a person who practices strict _____-denial as a measure of personal and, especially, spiritual discipline (Webster's).
2. The ascetic has a _____ for everything.
3. This is so common today. Both religious and non-religious people think that they will achieve a deeper spirituality by practicing _____ of certain things, and practicing rigid self-discipline.
4. It is the fundamental idea of Satan's world system - a religion that begins with _____.
 - Example: Satan, in Isaiah 14:12-14 – “*I will.*”
 - Example: Cain, in Genesis 4 – A religion of self-effort.
5. This is what Paul is dealing with here in Colossians: people who think they can sanctify the soul through discipline of the _____, and people who think they are spiritual because they obey certain rules that pertain to the body. 1 Timothy 4:1-4
6. God is not _____ by our keeping of religious rules and disciplines.
 - Satan's world system says, “It's all about _____ and your ability to keep these man-made rules and spiritual disciplines, and through these disciplines you attain to a deeper spiritual life.”
 - Paul says, “It is all about _____ and the life I now have in Him. I am complete in Him! I am a new creature in Him. Everything I need is found in Him. As I yield to Him, He lives His victorious life _____ me.” Colossians 1:11, 27, 29; 2:6-7, 10; Galatians 6:15

7. It is Christ and His Spirit that strengthens me spiritually. He is all I need. I don't look to _____ and disciplines, I look to Christ. As I grow in Him, the work He does internally naturally works its way out externally. Paul will show us this in chapter 3.

Verse 23

1. The real danger and deception of the ascetic mindset is found in this verse.
2. As ascetics give up certain foods, practice rigid rules and disciplines, and attempt to practice religious self-denial, they get puffed up.
3. As they deny their bodies any physical enjoyments, they appear to be _____ and humble.
4. But, Paul says that the reality is, it is all an outward show. Any attempt to worship God apart from the merits of Christ is "*will worship*," and is _____ by God.
5. When we try to overcome a fleshly sin through fleshly effort, it only leads to another _____.
6. You cannot overcome the _____ through fleshly discipline and rules.
7. You can only overcome the flesh through the _____ of Jesus Christ. We rely on Him, trust Him, and find our sufficiency in Him, and Him alone. We are complete in Him!