

Colossians 2:16-23

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 July 2024

Preacher: Seth Powers

[0 : 00] Okay, so we're continuing in our study of Colossians. This is Colossians chapter 2, verses 16 through 23. So this is finishing out chapter 2. And this is not a topical sermon, but I kind of feel like it's a topical sermon because a lot of the bent of this passage is combating asceticism.

And this is what I call the title of this is Let No One Disqualify You. If you have an ESV, that's the title of the little section of Scripture is Let No One Disqualify You.

But I really, I think the point is Paul is trying to combat a demonic substitute for reality, for Christianity. And the substitute is asceticism.

And we see extreme versions of this that we easily recognize. And then we have more subtle versions of this that we might be completely blind to, that we've just given entire categories of our confidence in our life to, and just think that's normal.

That's just normal Christianity. And by God's grace, I want to share what's on my heart and maybe articulate this passage in a way that maybe exposes some of that stuff and cleans house a little bit, especially as we're starting a church.

[1 : 29] I love that there's that adage, for every mile of road, there's two miles of ditches. We're like that. The devil changes his tactics when we change.

So when we're just in the world, living for the world, getting drunk, and just giving ourselves fully to sexual immorality and indulging the flesh, the devil has one tactic for us.

Keep us doing that. All right? Don't repent. Don't listen to God's law. You do you, man. You know, don't let anyone judge you. But then when we come to Christ, you know, he opens our eyes to the truth, the fact that we're sinners.

We're under the wrath of God. We're headed for hell. And that he substituted his son as the sacrifice for our sin. And we receive that, and we're born again.

We're saved. And then we're like, man, I want to live for Jesus now. I don't want to have anything to do with that life. Well, the devil just adjusts his tactics. Okay? He has a different line. And that line is encouraging holiness.

[2 : 30] But through a different means. A different approach. And that is what Paul's combating in this passage here. So, I guess the point being, this is not a very balanced sermon. Because this is not a very balanced section of scripture.

So, if you hear me saying things, you're like, but, but, but, you know. Yes, of course. All right? And there's a lot of other passages that handle the but, but, but that come to mind. This one doesn't.

And so, I just want to be as unbalanced and as focused as Paul is here. So, a little bit of qualifier. Okay. Let's read a passage. Colossians 2, verses 16.

Starting at verse 16. I'm going to read through the end of the chapter. And then we'll break it down and go verse by verse. Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you. And then we'll pray. asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with the growth that is from God. If, with Christ, you died to the elemental spirits of this world, that's demons, why, as though you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations like do not handle, do not taste, do not touch, referring to things that all perish as they are used, according to human precepts and teachings.

[4 : 11] These indeed, these have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence

of the flesh. So let's get into verse 16 here. Paul says, therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in reporting to what? Questions of food and drink and with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. Or in other words, consumables, you know, dietary restrictions, or whether one day is more holy than another. When we think of food and drink, this is just anything that's, we consider like, that's socially acceptable as consumable, like something that you eat as food, whether you, you know, cake, beer, barbecue, bacon, processed foods, kosher, not kosher, you know, just the whole gamut, food and drink. Which is like, why? Like, why would anyone pass judgment on, like, why would that even be a thing that Paul's concerned about? Well, we know about these things, you know?

We know that the Jews, for instance, had dietary restrictions. There were things that were holy and that there were things that were not holy. And it was very clear that you ate the not holy things that was, you were defiled, that was sin. And you had a restriction. And so it was good to judge Jews, you know, because God judged them. You know, if you ate something that was unclean, you were unclean.

It infected you. Same with drink. And then holidays, like, what's the deal with holidays? Well, the Jews had tons of holidays. And they were bound under the law to observe them, to not do so with sin.

So the question is, what about us? We're in the New Testament. Paul's super clear. Let no one pass judgment on you for any of it. Full stop. Okay? Full stop. So we think about days, Christmas and Easter.

Do Christians celebrate those? Some Christians think those are pagan holidays, nothing to do with it. Other Christians are way on the other side. Just like, no, like, you're not going to remember Christmas, the day Jesus was born? Easter? You raised him from the dead? What? And they're just like, straight. Sabbath. What is the Sabbath? You know, and the Old Testament, it was a particular day, Saturday, and you don't work at all. If you work on Sabbath, you know, one of the very first instances of transgression of the law was a guy picking up sticks in the Sabbath. And they were told, you cannot work. They stoned him to death. All right, so this is serious. So what about us? [7 : 09] Like, you know, you know, do we stone Christians if they don't observe the Sabbath? What even is the Sabbath to a Christian? Well, this is very important that we know this. And there's a lot of range of opinions on these things. You know, some people think that, you know, the Sabbath is now the Lord's day Sunday, and we observe like a literal day of physical rest on that day. Some see it more as a spiritual fulfillment. These are all really important questions. But Paul's starting off, we're going to start off with a new premise. Let no one pass judgment on you for anything regarding food or drink or days. So regardless of our theology and the way we interpret all this stuff, he's starting off with a new premise. Clean sheet. Let no one pass judgment on you. This is important.

We'll get into this more later. Just a few notes on this. Food and drink, you know, like, you might not even have a background in understanding the law that much or, you know, been associated with certain groups that do understand the law and try to apply it to Christians, you know. But overall, it's pretty easy to think of some foods as more holy than others. You know, the Daniel fast, vegetables and water. Surely that's a little bit more Christian than a rack of ribs and beer, you know. And our conscience, like, we have this, you know, we're sinners. And so we just, our conscience, unless it's been renewed by the Word of God, it just kind of automatically thinks this way.

And so when someone comes with a really strong biblical case as, like, no, actually, you know what? Vegetables and water is holy, and that's how God actually intended you to live.

And if you eat barbecue ribs and drink beer, double damned, all right? It kind of sounds, it just seems right. And so we have to really dig in here and understand what Paul is trying to articulate and have our minds be renewed. So just right off the bat, food and drink, healthy does not mean holy. Like, of course, vegetables and water as a pattern of life is more healthy than if you ate, like, ribs from Oklahoma Joe's and drank beer for all of your, you know, liquid consumption. Like, that's way healthier, okay? So we can all agree about that. But we're talking about something different.

We're talking about standing before God, righteousness. Holy days, getting into Romans, Romans 14 speaks to both of these. I'm just going to mention a few passages here. Romans 14, verses 14 and 17, Paul shares his thoughts on both of these topics, food and days. He says,

I know and I am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself. But it is unclean for anyone who thinks it's unclean. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Regarding holy days, a little bit prior in that

same passage, Romans 14, verses five through six, he says, one person esteems one day is better than the other while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

[10 : 27] The one who observes the day observes it to honor the Lord. So we start to get a little insight here. Like he's not saying any consideration in the conscience for food is silly for a Christian.

No. He says, Hey, actually, if you have freedom and you have the same faith that I have, that you can eat everything, praise the Lord, because that's actually true. But if you don't, you have freedom. And you know what? It's better that you don't eat food that would harm your conscience. All right. You need to grow up in faith a little bit more. And these two groups of Christians shouldn't force each other to act like each other. But you see what the metric is? It's within. God doesn't have a standard of you eat these 14 things. These are approved and everything else is off limits. No, no, no. It has to do with the conscience, what we're doing, the motive, why we're doing it before the Lord. Same with holy days.

You observe one day, you do it to honor the Lord. Awesome. So there are Christians who observe certain days as more special than the other ones out of reverence for God. Other Christians, they see every day is the same. I'm going to, you know, this is the day the Lord has made. That's true. 365 days a year. I'm going to worship like the Lord on every day, you know, and I don't, I like, it just doesn't mean anything to me like Sabbath or Christmas or Easter or whatever, you know, feast of booths, Passover. They're all the same because in Christ, every single day is the day that I'm going to walk in the Sabbath rest of a believer and worship the Lord. Both of these, Paul says, are fine because they're unto the Lord. God is now looking at the heart and saying, hey, why are you doing this?

But we got to be careful and we'll get into why we need to be careful quite a bit. So anyway, point being verse 16, Paul says, do not let anyone pass judgment on you in these matters.

A Christian has liberty and this is of gospel importance. This is essential. This, this might seem like some secondary thing. It's like, yeah, yeah, yeah. Christians can eat whatever they want. And yeah, you know, we're not bound under the holy days like they were under the law. Well, we need to be more than just sort of passingly convinced about this. We need to be rock solid about this because we're sinners and the devil has an alternative gospel that is very persuasive if we let it in. And like, this is easier said than done. Okay. Very mature leaders can fall prey to this demonic influence that Paul's about to battle here. Peter did it in Galatian. A little bit different flavor, a little bit different terms, a little bit different background, same deal. Paul had to rebuke him. This is the, this is the preeminent apostle. Peter fell prey to this deception that Paul's going to challenge here. So anyway, he says, don't let anyone pass judgment on you in these matters. On what basis? How can we stand confidently? Verse 17, these, these rules and regulations, these are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Um, is that ours? No.

[13 : 50] These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. I love how the KJV puts it. It says the body belongs to Christ. You think of a body and light. You're our, our bodies in, in the sun, they cast a shadow. So all throughout the new old Testament, we have all these rules and regulations and precepts and days and Holy days and kosher laws, dietary laws, sacrifices. Well, it all is a huge shadow cast by the person of Jesus Christ, the person and work of Jesus.

He is the substance. It all points to, and has its fulfillment in a person, Jesus Christ. And that's what Paul's saying. So these things are a shadow. You're preoccupied with shadows.

The substance is Jesus Christ himself. And that's what you have. Um, so anyway, there's a lot of passages here. I think I'm going to kind of skip over these, but I do want to go back to one of them. It's Colossians two verses nine through 10. And this is kind of the context for, for this, this, uh, admonition. Paul says for in him, Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and you are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. So Jesus is the substance. He's the fulfillment of everything. And God put us in him. So we're not falling short in any area, which is just amazing. Say, how can that be? I have all kinds of sin in my life. Yes.

But in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, you don't, you're complete. And you are seated over every authority in this world that would point to some precept and say, Hey, you eat pork.

You know, the Bible says that that's a, that's a unclean animal. It's fulfilled in Christ. And, you know, I might not understand it all, but I do know he's saying, don't let anyone pass judgment on you. And because it's that, that, that regulation is just a shadow of something that's fulfilled ultimately in

Christ. And he puts you in there and it's not your understanding that makes you able to stand there. It's just the fact that you believe it. He put you in there and you might not have to even have a very good answer to why it doesn't matter that you pork now or not.

[16 : 03] I'm complete in Jesus and he's the head over all authority. And so your authority doesn't count. It doesn't matter. You know, um, this is important. Verse 18, let no one disqualify you. There we have it again. The goal of this teaching is to disqualify you from your standing, your confidence in Christ.

Let no one disqualify you insisting on asceticism and worship of angels going on in detail about visions puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind. So here we have it again, this, this admonition, let no one disqualify you. I think of this as kind of like he's attacking this, this spiritual bullying from a holy high horse, you know, this imminent preacher, this someone who looks really holy and he has, you know, a deep understanding of what God's real plan and desires for us are. And, and I'm kind of like a loser Christian. This guy's an awesome Christian. He's telling me, you know, no, if you really want to follow God, you need to do all these things. You know, it's, it's disqualifying. And he's saying you don't, you need to not be bullied by this.

And this is important because we just tend to trust strong convictions from people. If someone has a strong conviction, all right, and it's delivered by a persuaded, persuasive messenger, like they're fully convinced. They really live it. And they're persuasive and they're confident. Well, I'm not that confident. They're so confident. I have a default within me to agree with them. It's just, we're hard code. We're insecure, you know? Um, and honestly, this is like a good thing. Like when someone preaches the truth, it's awesome. This is a good attribute. If someone's preaching the truth, it's horrible. If someone's preaching deception, it has to be combated just as confidently and more ruthlessly because of how persuasive this sort of, this predisposition to being deceived, we have is. Um, so it says they insist on asceticism, these false teachers. And, uh, I think of this as outside in religion. Uh, this is the religion that the Pharisees had. Um, this is the religion that Jesus combated when he said, you clean the inside of the cup or you clean the outside of the cup, but the inside is full of wickedness. Um, it's, it's demonic. This is the religion of demons. We're going to get into this a little bit more later, but, uh, it's the same basic spirit as the heresy of the Galatians. So there's an entire book that is chastising a church for leaving confidence in the gospel and coming under the law. Um, it was under the influence of the Judaizing, uh, Christians, at least professing Christians. Well, this, this is written to people who are pagans, ex-pagans, and they don't have, he's not specifically addressing a bunch of Judaizing, uh, heresies here, but it's kind of the same spirit. Well, it's because this religion is the religion of the world. Okay. This is the, the demonic principalities and strongholds. It's their answer to the problem of sin. And it's the universal religion everywhere. We're trying to work off your debt to get to God. Um, so there's modern examples of this seventh day Adventists, Mormons, Jehovah's witnesses.

These are all obvious cults, but there's versions of it within the church. You know, um, I think a great example of this is the doctrine that, uh, alcohol is sin for Christians.

Okay. Uh, teetotalers, you know, independent fundamental Baptists, a whole list. There's a bunch of other denominations that kind of do this and they go beyond what's written. And then they basically say, Hey, if you're a real Christian, you don't drink. Okay. Whenever the Bible talks about wine and stuff like that, it's talking about unfermented grape juice. Uh, it's just a distortion. Well, that is a more socially within Christian, uh, circles.

[20 : 08] Anyway, it's more socially acceptable version of this demonic heresy. So, and that's why it's applicable to us.

All right. Like we're not above any of this stuff. That's what we're talking about. Uh, the other one, he says, so he, he, he, he, there's these two, two sort of indicators of these false teachers. These people are trying to disqualify. We need to kind of be on our guard with, you know, one is they insist on asceticism. The other is worship of angels. So obvious versions of this are like, you know, uh, false religions that worship an angel, like a messenger came and gave a new, uh, revelation, you know, like, uh, Islam and Mormonism, you know, these are obvious. Okay. Uh, and then just straight up idol worship. Like when they, when people worship idols in pantheistic religions are actually worshiping demons, there's demons that represent those idols and they get whatever out of it, they get something out of it. And, and, and people worship demons. Okay.

So you start talking about worshiping angels. So that's an obvious one. Uh, but another interpretation of the word angels is messenger. And this is where it kind of hits home a little bit

closer for us. Um, this can be alive in the church when we have a, a, um, a dedicated, dedication to a particular deliverer of the gospel, a particular teacher, a particular leader.

These are our leaders that get a free pass. You know, you, you, you put them in the, well, if they said it, I just automatically believe it category because there's so much trust there.

Paul spoke of this when he, when he blasted the first Corinthians, the Corinthians, blasted the first Corinthians in first Corinthians, he rebuked the Corinthians for having a sectarian spirit saying, I am of a Paul. I am of a Paul's same spirit. You're worshiping messengers. Uh, we can get like that. Um, so I think it's a little heart check for me. This is certainly true of me. And it's helpful for me to kind of have this metric.

[22 : 08] Am I more inclined to believe something, uh, from certain preachers, especially the ones I don't know personally? Do I just, do I have like an, uh, a cadre of preachers and leaders that I just give a free pass to? I don't take what they say and check and see if it's according to scripture.

If that's true, I'm doing this. I'm worshiping a messenger. Okay. Nobody gets a free pass. We're all sinners. When Jesus comes back, we all get glorified bodies. Everybody gets a free pass.

Up until that point in time, we judge what they say according to scriptures. We receive it gladly. You know, if it seems according to the truth, we can receive it joyfully and gladly and be like, oh man, that was really encouraging. But you know what? I'd never actually heard about that thing before.

I'm going to go check and see if that's what the Bible really says. And if it doesn't say it, no, just no, this is for you kids too. Like this is, we need to be a people who worship Jesus Christ, the father, the Holy spirit. And we don't give people a free pass just because they've been a huge blessing to us.

No, we're all sinners. Like this is why it's so dangerous when leaders go astray is because everybody tends to give them a free pass, especially really good ones like Peter.

Paul blasted Peter in Galatians because Peter, his, um, falling into this trap was going to lead everybody astray because Peter got a free pass. They shouldn't give Peter a free pass, but that's just human nature. All right. So we shouldn't either. Um, moving on. And then he says that these people, they, they go on in detail about visions and they're puffed up by their sensuous mind. Um, you know, the Bible doesn't in the new Testament, it doesn't, it doesn't restrict, you know, all of our dietary things and we eat and drink, you know, there was a very particular exhortation given to Gentiles in Acts, um, right after the, uh, the church of the Gentiles first emerged.

And it did give some dietary restrictions, but for the most part, you know, holy days, what day you should, you know, observe as unto the Lord food, drink, all that stuff, basically unaddressed. All right. So in order to make really strong cases, I have to go beyond what's written and I have to get into God told me territory. And so like this, that's why these teachers go on and about, on and about their visions, you know, and some of us in less charismatic circles might not be as susceptible to getting tricked by this. But if you're in a charismatic circle and people are prophesying, you value prophecy, you just might be wide open to it.

[24 : 54] If you're not used to testing and someone says, God told me that, you know, I'm gonna keep using barbecue, barbecue ribs, uh, are sin. You eat them. You're defiled and under God's judgment, you know, I might be susceptible of that. Well, that guy couldn't get that from the Bible. Cause it didn't talk about that. He had to get it from a vision. That's why they go on and on about visions.

I think another version of this is maybe not, maybe not like dream vision, charismatic type visions, but maybe more like, I know I've seen what's real, man. You know, these are the woke visionaries. All right. They've seen behind the scenes and they understand how all this really works. And they have the real insight into, you know, why this particular dietary thing is mess is the source of all sin in the world, you know? And it's more just like, uh, it's more operating by their sensual mind. Um, you know, Romans eight, five says, those who live according to the flesh, set their mind on things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit, set their mind on the things of the spirit. These people are especially convincing because they can often identify real problems in the world, manifestations of the flesh. All right. Sin problems, but they do it without personal conviction. I E the takeaway isn't fundamentally where the problem it's, they're the problem. All right. And the solution they offer is not a gospel solution.

All right. It has to do with cutting a bunch of stuff off. All right. Um, the conviction of the sin is awesome. Acknowledging bad fruit is awesome. It takes the spirit to actually do anything about it. It didn't require Jesus coming and dying, crucifying the old man, raising the life of a new man. It's not the solution that God has offered through his son. So anyway, uh, these things are important

because it's more than just differences of food convictions and what day Christians worship is about being disqualified. Um, so I gotta skip through this stuff. Uh, how do you know you're being disqualified? Just a few indications. One is you take on other people's stricter convictions, especially when they're around. All right. You don't actually believe this thing, but you know, so-and-so, you know, uh, doesn't drink beer. You feel fine drinking beer, but when they're around, you're kind of like, drink water, you know, want to do it in love. Not really. You're afraid of what they think. Um, this is a, this is a personal one. We used to have a hardcore conviction that Christmas was pagan and we were in a group that shared that conviction. And then Lord opened the gospel and all of a sudden we were like, we love Christmas. All right. But I was so scared to decorate our home because those people were still in our life and they would visit. They're like, [27 : 50] I just don't even want to have a conversation. You know, um, I'm letting them disqualify me. We'll get a Christmas tree, but we'll get a little one. You know, uh, I mean, these are silly things, but these, we just do this, you know, and if we start seeing ourselves do this, wait, wait, wait, like take a Holy spirit timeout and ask the question, Lord, am I living before you? Or am I living in front of men? Do I care more about what they think? Do I care about more about what you think? Do I believe these radical things, the gospel promises me, you know, or do I really kind of not really know? And I'll just default to whatever, whoever has the strongest opinion about a particular issue, always go with them. So, uh, it's important because when we are persuaded and we start acting like hypocrites, it's indication we're not holding fast to Jesus Christ, our head.

Verse 19. So these teachers are doing not holding fast the head from whom the whole body nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments grows with the growth that is from God. So Paul said, these false teachers aren't holding fast to Jesus. Um, you know, I love the picture of a body, you know, human means of unity is trying to get as many shared convictions as humanly possible.

And then we have unity. God's means of having unity is unifying us with the son. And that's the true basis of Christian unity is holding fast the head from whom the whole body is nourished life. I love the image of a house with a whole bunch of appliances, electrical appliances in it. Okay. And each appliance is different. It's unique, but there's one power source.

When they're plugged in, they do their thing and they're connected to each other through this source. All right. But if they try to unplug and plug into each other, there's no power. There's no life. Well, that's what trying to achieve unity on the basis of complete homogeneity of particular convictions is like no life. Um, but when people have really strong convictions about these things like that, you're tempted to. So anyway, Jesus is a source of life, not dietary convictions. Um, verse 20, if with Christ, you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why as though you're still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations? Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch referring to things that all parishes. They are used according to human precepts and teachings. So really, I think this is the main point I wanted to make. This is the main thing on my heart. Demons have a religion. They have a religion that is called asceticism. So convict Christians are convicted of sin. Well, guess what? The world actually is too. They walk around with a nagging sense that they're falling short of God's law because the Bible says God wrote his law in their hearts. Um, it's not conviction under repentance, but it is walking around feeling guilty about them being sinners and demons know this. And the solution that they offer to people is asceticism.

Okay. You need to deny yourself these pleasures. Um, so where do we get this? First Timothy four verses one through four. Now the spirit expressly says that in light latter times, some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons. This is really interesting what these teachings are going to be. It's not what I would naturally think of is, you know, living for money, living for drunkenness, living for entertainment.

[31 : 44] Yeah. Like that would make sense. That would be teachings of demons. It's not what it is. What does he say? Through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received by thanksgiving for those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it's received with thanksgiving. So doctrines of demons are just forbidding things that we enjoy that God created to be received with thanksgiving food. All right. Marriage. I mean, you see this in the Catholic church, uh, priests are forbidden marriage. What happens? What's the natural byproduct?

Way crazier stuff. Way worse than, um, Titus one five, one 15 says to the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. A defiled conscience can't enjoy anything other than God without feeling guilty. Okay. Everyone knows we're supposed to enjoy God only, you know, even in the world, like they basically know this Christians know it too, but a conscience that's defiled can't appreciate God's creation and give thanks to him and just say, Hey, thank you, Lord. This hamburger is amazing. Thank you. Feels guilty.

I'm finding pleasure in something other than God. Oh, you know, that's a defiled conscience. It seems, it seems holy. And the devil says, amen. You know, you should only want God alone. It's not true. It's not true. Um, so I want to give a few examples. Uh, these, these are imaginary scenarios. They're not that imaginary because these are all, I've experienced all these where I've been convicted of sin. And then I've had a conversation with the devil where he's offered me a different solution for my sin other than the cross of Jesus. So here's one gluttony. Um, I feel guilty of this sin. I feel, I feel that I've sinned. I know I'm a glutton. All right. And the demon says, real Christians are fine with only bread and water. You're in sin. If you want something different than just bread and water, the fact that you enjoy tasty food is actually a sign of discontentment and love of this world. Has anyone ever had a thought like this before? Repent and eat bread and water only in small amounts. Also eating seconds of sin. So like, this is just like, I've had all these arguments in my mind and I thought it was the Holy Spirit, you know, cause he's encouraged me to do something righteous. Something that seems like way more like in line with self-denial and everything that I'm currently doing. Cause currently I'm just a glutton. You know, I know I'm in sin.

Drunkness. I used to be a total drunkard. Uh, the line of reasoning comes alcohol is the devil's juice. Real Christians do not touch the stuff. Why would you want to? Your desire to join, enjoy the warmth and relaxation alcohol brings is basically just a lust for many drunkness.

[34 : 51] You're just not satisfied in God. If you were really satisfied in God, you would never want or enjoy that. You should live on water only. Like these are just like, that seems like a really solid biblical godly line of reasoning. Okay. Yeah. All right. Water only. Cool. Um, there's, there's a litany of these. I have a few more examples like this.

It has later on, he says this, an appearance of righteousness, but no power to restrain sin. Um, I think kids are coming on gluten and I've, I need to live edit some of these notes.

I'm just going to jump onto verse 23 here says these regulations have indeed an appearance of wisdom and promoting self-made religion and asceticism. What's the solution to your sin that demons offer? Asceticism, self-made religion, do more, try harder, severity to the body, beat your body, you know, and there is a good way to beat our body and make it our slave, but that's a different sermon. That's a different part of the Bible. We're talking about the bad way.

Okay. But they are of no value in stopping indulgence to the flesh. So asceticism, I probably should have given this definition at the beginning. Merriam-Webster says, asceticism is the practice of strict self-denial as a measure of personal and especially spiritual discipline, rigorous abstention or abstaining from self-indulgence. Um, it appears wise, which is why it's persuasive to us. Paul says this persuasion in Galatians, he says, this persuasion is not from him who calls you. This is not the solution that God is offering you.

And a little of this persuasion, a little leaven leavens the whole lump. Um, so why is it bad?

[36 : 42] I'm just going to burn through a few of these reasons and we'll close here. One is it's leaven, which means leaven fills something. It fills the lump. You start with, uh, food and holidays, goes into a lot more stuff than that. It spirals into every area of our life because what the devil does is he can hook us on this. It transfers us from my confidence is in the righteousness of Christ to my confidence is what I do and do not eat and what holy days I practice. Well, once you accept that you have to build confidence in all the other areas of your life on the basis of your works.

So it balloons, it's leaven. It leavens the whole lump. Um, it's self-made religion. I get the credit.

Okay. That's nothing to do with the gift of God. It's about what I do. All right. So, you know, I love the KJV talk calls this, uh, self-made religion. It calls it will worship, the worship of the will. Uh, if any of you have ever really gotten into Catholic mystics, it's all about this.

There was a season in my life. I was super into Catholic mystics. It's will worship. It's literally worshipping the agency our will has to find the narrow way of righteousness and achieving.

There were whole categories of Christians in the early days who would go out into the desert and they were called the desert fobbs. They would, they would preach this stuff. Monasteries are built

on this impulse. It denies original sin. That's another reason. Okay. It says the problems out here, it's not in here. Uh, Jesus says, woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you clean the outside of the cup, but the inside is full of greed and self-indulgence. Clean the inside that the outside may be also clean. This is the word of the Lord for us. These are inner problems. Okay. Um, next reason it just doesn't work. Okay. It flat out doesn't work.

If you try this hard enough, you had any period in your life where you devoted yourself to this approach to dealing with sin, you know, it doesn't work. Okay. Uh, you can't fight fleshly lusts with fleshly religion. The flesh wins. Okay. Like wherever you, I love the adage, wherever you go, there you are. Okay. Um, there's the Amish are a group who have a lot of rules. If you're familiar with this group, they have restrictions on everything. Their strategy for dealing with sin is this and it's balloon. The leaven has leavened the whole lump and they have a pressure relief valve and it's called room springing. Okay. If you know what that is, uh, there's a, there's a season, uh, in an Amish child's life when they enter adulthood, they're allowed to go taste the world and see what it's like.

[39 : 48] Absolute wickedness. It's so crazy. We had a group of friends in our early church. We, that actually did missions to them. They would go out and preach at room springing. Well, the flesh just gets bottled up and then it lets itself out in other ways. It's like whack-a-mole. It hides the real problem, thus presenting salvation. So you're so busy trying to deal with all these little manifestations of sin, um, by self-denial. It prevents me from coming to the terms of the fact that I am the fountain of sin.

The fact that I have sin in these different areas is because I'm a sinner and there's a real simple solution, the cross. But if I'm devoted to these other means of dealing with sin, I, I miss salvation. It's a deception. It doesn't depend on faith. Talk about that. Galatians 5, 6 said, for in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love. Keeps you worldly. Um, so I have various examples on this. I'm not going to share them right now. I feel very passionate about this because I think I lived most of what I've considered, like there's probably five or six years where I've considered myself a really radical Christian.

Really? I was just radically committed to this stuff. All right. And the Bible says to the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure. When you have defiled unbelieving goggles on, you just see the entire world through that lens. You want to enjoy good things, but you can't because it's sinful. You're always falling short. You don't have a clean conscience. The glorious truth of the gospel is we've received a clean conscience through Jesus.

[41 : 40] And we, through Jesus can joyfully enjoy things of this life without being ruled by them. Self-control. What's the solution? Okay. So the devil's solution is asceticism.

Devil's solution to sin. What's the Christian solution? The Holy Spirit. Well, Colossians, he doesn't share a lot of the solution right here. Colossians chapter three shares the solution that's from the Lord. It's going to get into this a lot, but the preview is it's the Holy Spirit.

First Timothy, second Timothy one, seven, one seven says, God gave us not a spirit of fear, but a power and love and self-control. Galatians 5, 16 says, but I say, walk by the spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. It's a glorious promise. Okay. It depends on faith.

It depends on another person coming and living inside of us and granting us self-control and the ability to enjoy everything God has created to the glory of God under self-control like Jesus did. There was a huge difference between the way John the Baptist maintained righteousness and the way Jesus did. Our example is Jesus. It's not the John the Baptist. Jesus said that among all that were born of women, there was none greater than John the Baptist. He was telling his disciples this, but I tell you the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. It's going to be greater than us. That's us. Okay. Why? Because we've received the spirit. The work of the cross was accomplished for us. It was not from John the Baptist. It was put to death. The thing on the inside that's a problem was crucified. The power of sin was broken on the cross. And now I've had a conscience that had been cleansed from dead works. And the Holy Spirit has given me liberty, the same freedom that Jesus had, not freedom to indulge in sin, but the freedom to enjoy all of God's creation the way he intended to enjoy it so that no one would disqualify. So anyway, so I have a point in time in the future when we're faced with this kind of stuff as a church to be firmly grounded in your gospel and to not be disqualified. In Jesus' name, amen.