

“CHURCH GROWTH”

COLOSSIANS 2:19

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INTRODUCTION

The false teachers afflicting the Colossian Christians were attempting to pass judgment against the believers and thereby rob them of their prize due them in Christ. They were laying undue burdens on the believers regarding self-humiliation through fasting and other ascetic practices, the worship of angels as intermediate beings who could help them reach through to God, the reliance upon supposed visions that these teachers had seen that would take the believers above and beyond what other orthodox teachers had taken them. In reality, all of this was evidence not of a superior mind for the false teacher as they claimed, but rather of their “puffed up” mind in their own pride and without good reason due to their mind being “fleshly”—carnal and characterized by the confusion and error true of the unregenerate nature. Their minds were not Christ-like, they were fleshly!

But, all of the above listed problems with the false teachers have one root problem: they were not holding tightly to the Head of the body (the Church)—Jesus Christ. Evidently they claimed to be believers and part of the Body through faith in Christ, but by not holding to Him they either 1) proved their lack of genuine salvation, or 2) their spiritual weakness and carnality.

In any case, **they could not help grow the church with who they were and what they were doing**; the church can only grow when clinging to Christ firmly—in correct beliefs, in correct teaching, and in correct lifestyle and practice.

Moreover, this verse shows us that **only God through Christ grows the church**; but, the verse, especially when compared with its sister passage of Ephesians 4:15-16, also shows us that the believer has a part in growing the church. God wants His church to grow!

YOU MUST SUBMIT TO GOD AND WATCH HIM WORK THROUGH YOU TO GROW HIS CHURCH.

- I. ONLY GOD CAN GROW THE CHURCH.
 - A. From the Head (Christ) the body grows.
 1. As “Head” He has both authority over and gives life to the church.
 2. He rules over all the church
 - Every individual
 - Every local body, congregation
 - The entire universal body of believers
 - B. From God the Father the body grows
 1. A growth that has its source in God
 2. A growth that is owned by God
- II. GOD GIVES HIS BODY LIGAMENTS AND TENDONS TO HOLD IT TOGETHER
 - A. These are likely the gifts (spiritual gifts and spiritual graces such as faith and love) and offices of the church.

- B. These support/supply the body and hold it together so that it can function as a cohesive whole.
- C. Such connecting links to the body assume that there are a multitude of body parts that are thus held together.
 - 1. Each individual part then must participate (Eph. 4:16).
 - 2. The body helps build itself in love (Eph. 4:16).
 - 3. Still, the member does not get the credit for the growth—God does.

CONCLUSION

At Christmas time we think of Christ's entrance into the world in order to save sinners. But once He saves sinners he puts them into His Body, the Church.

- God wants you to be a functioning member of Christ's body.
- He wants His body to grow—**spiritually especially**, and of course in numbers also.
- God will use you to help grow His body.
- God has provided all of the gifts and graces that we need in order to hold the body together.

YOU MUST SUBMIT TO GOD AND WATCH HIM WORK THROUGH YOU TO GROW HIS CHURCH.

But, before you can do that, you must be part of His body—you must be saved!

See John 1:11-12.

RECEIVE HIM TODAY!

If you have received Him, Submit to Him and get to work for Him!