

# “DEAD WITH CHRIST TO THE WORLD”

## COLOSSIANS 2:20-22

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### INTRODUCTION

Balance is a difficult thing for us humans. We tend to go to one extreme of the other. So it is with this issue of the flesh. Do we indulge it or do we harshly discipline it. Neither, there is a better way!

In this passage Paul speaks about teachers who thought that the way to solve the problem with the “flesh” mentioned in 2:10-13 was to willfully choose a harsh ascetic lifestyle. Paul rejects such man-made rules and restrictions that in the name of “disciplining” the flesh actually encourage fleshly indulgence (v. 23). So it is with all man-made religions with all their rules—compare the Pharisees of old.

Next week we will look at more details of this passage, but today we consider two bad extremes that have sought to solve the problem with the flesh.

### YOU HAVE DIED WITH CHRIST TO THE WORLD: WHY STILL ACT AS THOUGH YOU LIVE IN IT?

- I. THE EXTREME OF LEGALISM
  - A. Teachers in Colossae: Submitting to Rules/regulations/dogmas not found in Scripture
    1. Human origin—“commandments and teachings of men”
    2. Issues based on things perishable—such as food and rituals.
    3. “Don’t “Touch/handle”; don’t taste; don’t touch at all!
  - B. Teachers among Pharisees and Scribes—doing the same (see Mark 7).
    1. Traditions of the elders (5-7—doctrines and commands of men)
    2. God’s commands ignored (8-13).
    3. Not what is outside, but what is inside defiles a person (15)
    4. Food does not go into the heart (18-19).
    5. **Jesus “purged all foods”—“declared all foods clean” (19b)**
    6. What comes out of man defiles him (20-23)
  - C. Teachers in the last days—our times and later! (**I Tim. 4:1-5**)
    - Very similar ideas to those in our passage.
    - Emphasis mainly on food and marriage.
  - D. Many in our time teaching such humanly originated means of self-denial:
    - 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists, Mormons, Legalistic conservative Bible teachers.
    - Keep dietary restrictions of Mosaic Law—still valid today.
    - Keep Sabbath—still valid today.
    - Women can’t wear slacks, no makeup, no jewelry; men’s hair can’t touch their ears etc.
    - Don’t eat meat, don’t drink carbonated beverages, hundreds of other restrictions not valid under the New Covenant.

- All ceremonial, sacrificial, dietary, political laws in the OT foreshadowed Christ and are fulfilled in Him, not to be observed by Christians today—as requirements.
- Peter learned this the hard way concerning foods in Acts 10: God has made clean.

So, what is our reaction to all of this?

- Anything goes? Full Christian freedom to do just what we please?
- The body is unimportant; the soul is what counts. I can use my body as I choose.
- As long as my heart is right, what I do on the outside is unimportant.

There were believers in Corinth who had come to such conclusions, and Paul had to correct them.

## II. THE EXTREME OF ANTINOMIANISM (I Cor. 6:12-14)

A. “All things are lawful”. (12)

1. But not all things edify.
2. I cannot be brought under the power of anything.

B. Food is for the stomach and the stomach for food—doesn’t matter! (v. 13)

C. I can use my body as I choose—immorality will not hurt the soul.

D. Paul argues: “The body is not for fornication.” (13)

- It is for the Lord; the Lord is for the body.
- God had raised up the Lord’s body, and will ours! (14)

## III. THE BALANCE OF BELONGING TO CHRIST (I Cor. 6:15-20)

E. Our bodies are Christ’s members (15-18).

F. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit (19)

1. He is in us.
2. He is from God.
3. We are not our own.

G. Therefore, glorify God in your body—it belongs to God!

## CONCLUSION

I have been surrounded many times by extreme legalists who sought to impinge their rules and restrictions on me.

I have also been deluged with those who rebel against rules and restrictions and want to do their own thing.

Today this rebellion is manifest in many ways—music styles is just one glaring example, as are dress standards, sexual preferences, alcohol, etc. The pendulum has swung the other way.

Can’t we have balance? Surely we can. We are free in Christ, but we must never use freedom to indulge the flesh! My body is His temple—I need to take care of it for His glory:

Eat right, exercise enough, get enough rest, keep it pure and holy, and abstain from “fleshly” and “worldly” behavior.

I am “in” the world, but not “of” the world. So are you!

## **YOU HAVE DIED WITH CHRIST TO THE WORLD: WHY STILL ACT AS THOUGH YOU LIVE IN IT?**