



## GOAT, PART 3: FREEDOM FROM RELIGION

An overemphasis on the rules can lead to distraction. Nowhere is this truer than when it comes to religion. In fact, some of you are skeptical about this Jesus stuff because you do not want to deal with all of the rules. You left the church 10 years ago because of all of the rules. You don't believe in God because of all of the rules. What if we told you that the teachings of Jesus and his earliest followers flip all of that upside down? What if we told you that what makes Jesus great is that he came to fulfill all of the rules of religion? What if we told you that following Jesus leads to freedom, not restriction?

**BIG IDEA:** Freedom isn't found in religion; freedom is found in the resurrection.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the craziest rule that you've ever had to follow? Be honest, how many times did you break the rule?
2. When you think about Christianity, what "rules" come to mind? How has the "do's and don'ts" of Christianity and church life impacted your relationship with Jesus in the past?
3. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Colossians 2:16-23:*

*So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. 17 For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. 18 Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels,[e] saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud, 19 and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it. You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, 21 "Don't handle! Don't taste! Don't touch!"? 22 Such rules are mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. 23 These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires.*

4. How did Paul encourage the Colossians to practice their freedom in Christ? (2:16)  
What were the characteristics of the false teachers? (2:18-19)
5. How did Paul challenge the legalism that had infected the church? (2:20-21)
6. How are you affected by popular religious rules floating around today? What does "fullness in Christ" mean to you?
7. Paul's advice kept the Colossians growing in their faith; what Christian leaders have helped you stay on track spiritually?

## MOVING FORWARD

How can the lessons from this passage help you thrive in your relationship with God rather than simply struggle or live in survival mode? This week, what would it look like for you fully exercise your freedom in Christ? How can we as a group support each other in this?

## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

What do you need to stop depending on to gain God's favor?

