



COLOSSIANS 2 PART 2

It is easy to start the Christian race by grace, but it is incredibly difficult to stay there. We have a natural tendency to drift back toward performance, thinking we need to add something to the finished work of Christ to truly be secure. Whether it is the ancient trap of Jewish legalism, the allure of mystical experiences, or the harsh discipline of asceticism, the enemy is always trying to convince us that Jesus isn't enough. We think we need Jesus plus a strict diet, or Jesus plus a special revelation, or Jesus plus a list of rules to follow.

But Pastor Steve reminds us in this study of Colossians 2 that "Christ is the substance of all". The work of salvation is not a 50/50 partnership where God does His part and we finish it with our good behavior. It is a completed work. The debt has been paid, the enemy has been disarmed, and the shadow has given way to the substance. As you go through these questions, challenge yourself to identify where you might be relying on "shadows"—religious habits or self-imposed rules—instead of resting in the substance of Christ

Pastor Steve emphasizes that Colossians 2:10 says we are complete in Him, not almost complete. How does believing you are already complete in Christ change the way you approach your daily struggles with sin? (OT: Psalm 23:1 | NT: 2 Peter 1:3)

Study Questions:

1. Paul describes a "circumcision made without hands"—a cutting away of the sinful nature by Christ. How does this spiritual reality offer more hope than the physical striving of religious legalism? (OT: Deuteronomy 30:6 | NT: Romans 2:29)
2. Verse 13 states that we were "dead in trespasses" but God made us alive. Since a dead person cannot resuscitate themselves, what does this teach us about the role of grace in our salvation? (OT: Ezekiel 37:4-5 | NT: Ephesians 2:4-5)
3. Paul uses the imagery of a debt being nailed to the cross. In the ancient world, a paid debt was often canceled this way. What specific "debts" or past sins do you need to visualize being nailed to the cross today? (OT: Isaiah 43:25 | NT: 1 Peter 2:24)
4. Christ "disarmed principalities and powers." If Satan has been stripped of his ultimate weapon (the accusation of unpaid sin), why do we still live in fear of him? (OT: Genesis 3:15 | NT: Hebrews 2:14-15)
5. Pastor Steve distinguishes between "self-denial" (which can be proud) and "denying self" (which is humble submission). How can we practice true self-denial without becoming proud of our discipline? (OT: Daniel 4:37 | NT: Luke 9:23)