

# BEWARE OF THE ENEMY'S TACTICS

Colossians 2:8–12

<sup>8</sup> *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; <sup>10</sup> and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. <sup>11</sup> In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup> buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

—Colossians 2:8–12

## Read Colossians 2:8–12

Have you ever been cheated? Perhaps you bought a product that you saw advertised, and after you bought it, it didn't fulfill any of the claims it promised. Perhaps the product was broken, cheaply made, or even repulsive. Besides having all your expectations and anticipations severely crushed, you were probably upset about the time and money you spent on something that was less than useless. Well, the same reality is true in the spiritual realm. There are many false advertisers out there seeking to exploit those who are sincerely seeking a closer walk with God. Jesus described these swindlers in John 10:10 and John 10:12–13 when He said: *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more*

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Paul writes against any philosophy of life based only on human ideas and experiences. Paul himself was a gifted philosopher, so he is not condemning philosophy. He is condemning teaching that credits humanity, not Christ, with being the answer to life's problems.<sup>24</sup>

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Today legalism, justification by works, or any teaching that devalues Christ's saving work on the cross, can be used by the powers of darkness to hold men and women in spiritual slavery.<sup>25</sup>

*abundantly, and ... But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.*

Unfortunately, thieves and hirelings abound in our culture today. These people like to prey on believers trying to convince them that they need to buy their products, follow their complicated instructions, read their literature, or even comply with their practices if they want a deeper spiritual life. These are the very type of people that Paul warned the Colossian believers about.

In Colossians 2:8–12, Paul not only cited some of these persuaders' tactics, but he also pointed to the superior position that believers already held through the accomplishments of Jesus.

May the Lord deepen your appreciation and the assurance of your own superior placement in the accomplishments of Jesus Christ as you do your lesson this week.

1. In Colossians 2:8, Paul warned the believers of some of the seductive devices the enemy employed in order to sabotage their faith. Use the words and phrases below to identify some of these devices:

- a. *Philosophy*

- b. *Empty deceit*

c. *Tradition of men*

d. *Basic principles of the world*

1) What do the following words convey to you about the danger of these devices:

a) *Beware*

b) *Cheat*

2) Share a way or a few of the ways that the enemy has sought to cheat you or someone you know from the riches of Jesus.

2. Use Colossians 2:9–12 to recognize and remark on the superior position believers already hold with God through the accomplishments of Jesus:

a. Verse 9

b. Verse 10

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

*You are complete in Him: Paul says that this is a fact to be enjoyed, not a status to be achieved.<sup>26</sup>*

—David Guzik

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

*When a person is born again into the family of God, he is born complete in Christ. His spiritual growth is not by addition, but by nutrition.<sup>27</sup>*

—Warren Wiersbe

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

*Jewish males were circumcised as a sign of the Jews' covenant with God (Genesis 17:9-14). With the death of Christ, circumcision was no longer necessary. So now our commitment to God is written on our hearts, not our bodies. Christ sets us free from our evil desires by a spiritual operation, not a bodily one. God removes the old nature and gives us a new nature.<sup>28</sup>*

c. Verse 11

d. Verse 12

3. What is your greatest takeaway from Colossians 2:8–12?