

CHRIST OVER ALL



COLOSSIANS 2:6-10

CHRIST OR THE COUNTERFEITS



COLOSSIANS 2:4-5

I say this in order that no one may delude you with **plausible arguments**. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.”



**HAVE YOU BOUGHT INTO A
“PLAUSIBLE ARGUMENT” THAT IS
STEALING LIFE FROM YOUR FAITH?**



COLOSSIANS 2:6-10

6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,
7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as
you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty
deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental
spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, **10** and you
have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.



CHRIST OVER ALL

**RECEIVING GRACE ALONE:
SALVATION**

**WALKING IN HIS SPIRIT ALONE:
SANCTIFICATION**

**GIVING THANKS TO HIM ALONE:
GLORIFICATION**



CHRIST OVER ALL

SALVATION

SANCTIFICATION

GLORIFICATION



COLOSSIANS 2:6-7

6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord,
so walk in him, **7** rooted and built up in him and
established in the faith, just as you were taught,
abounding in thanksgiving.



ROOTS GIVE STRENGTH
BUILDING GIVES SHAPE

BUT...

LOVE MAKES IT SAFE TO STAND NEAR YOU.



COLOSSIANS 2:6-10

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8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.



COLOSSIANS 2:8

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.



4747 *stoixeíon*– properly, *fundamentals*, like with the *basic components* of a philosophy, structure, etc.; (figuratively) "*first principles*," like the basic fundamentals of Christianity.

[**4747** (*stoixeíon*) refers to "the *rudiments* with which mankind . . . were *indoctrinated* (before the time of Christ), i.e. the elements of religious training or the ceremonial precepts common alike to the worship of Jews and of Gentiles" (J. Thayer).



1 TIMOTHY 6:20-21

O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” for by professing it some have swerved from the faith. Grace be with you.



COLOSSIANS 2:4-5

I say this in order that no one may delude you with...



COLOSSIANS 2:4-5

I say this in order that no one may delude you with...
plausible arguments.



PSALM 51:6-7, 10

6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

10 **Create in me** a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.



JOB 28 (1, 7-15, 20-23, 27-28)

¹“Surely there is a mine for silver,
and a place for gold that they refine.

⁷“That path no bird of prey knows,
and the falcon’s eye has not seen it.

⁸The proud beasts have not trodden it;
the lion has not passed over it.

⁹“Man puts his hand to the flinty rock
and overturns mountains by the roots.

¹⁰He cuts out channels in the rocks,
and his eye sees every precious thing.

¹¹He dams up the streams so that they do not trickle,
and the thing that is hidden he brings out to light.

¹²“**But where shall wisdom be found?**
And where is the place of understanding?

¹³Man does not know its worth,
and it is not found in the land of the living.

¹⁴The deep says, ‘It is not in me,’
and the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’

¹⁵It cannot be bought for gold,
and silver cannot be weighed as its price.

²⁰“**From where, then, does wisdom come?**
And where is the place of understanding?

²¹**It is hidden** from the eyes of all living
and concealed from the birds of the air.

²³“**God understands the way to it,
and he knows its place.**

²⁷then **he saw it and declared it;**
he **established it, and searched it out.**

²⁸And he said to man,
‘**Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom,
and to turn away from evil is understanding.’”**



COLOSSIANS 2:6-10

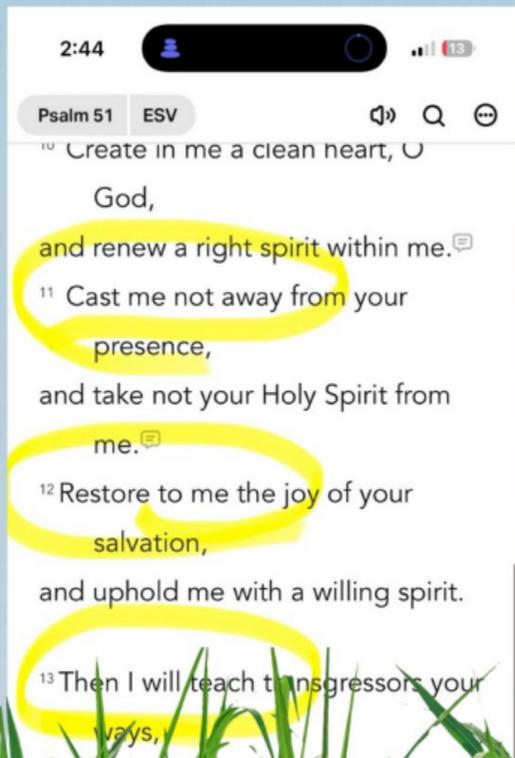
6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.



PSALM 51



COLOSSIANS 2:9-10

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily and
you...



COLOSSIANS 2:9-10

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily and you **have been filled in him**, who is the head of all rule and authority.



CHRIST OVER ALL

**YOU WILL BE PRONE TO WANDER UNTIL
YOU REALIZE...**



CHRIST OVER ALL

WE ALL WANT

A LOVE THAT IS UNQUENCHABLE
A PASSION THAT IS UNMATCHABLE
A PURPOSE THAT IS UNQUESTIONABLE



CHRIST OVER ALL

WE ALL WANT

A LOVE THAT IS UNQUENCHABLE
A PASSION THAT IS UNMATCHABLE
A PURPOSE THAT IS UNQUESTIONABLE

IT IS ONLY FOUND IN ONE PLACE



**HAVE YOU BOUGHT INTO A
“PLAUSIBLE ARGUMENT” THAT IS
STEALING LIFE FROM YOUR FAITH?**



Empty Deceit: Now & Then

In Colossians 2:8, Paul warns the Colossians to “see to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.” But in the Colossian context, what was he referring to? Most scholars think that the Colossian problem was not one single philosophy, but a blend. A kind of spirituality that said, “Jesus is good, but you need more.” Here are three of the human traditions and philosophies of the day, and how they compare to the “empty deceit” that we sometimes still fall for today.

1. Stoicism

A popular Greek philosophy of the day was stoicism. The stoics emphasized self-mastery, virtue, and living according to reason and fate. In Paul’s day, stoicism was widespread because it offered ideas of inner strength and perceived stability in the midst of a chaotic empire. The problem is that it offered a system of wisdom and virtue *apart from Christ*. *Stoicism is an empty philosophy not because discipline is bad, but because discipline cannot save.*

Today: Moral Discipline

The ideas of the stoics are alive and well. Whether we name it stoicism or not, many are still taken captive by the idea that moral discipline can save. But without gospel transformation, moral discipline is empty. Apart from Christ, the Bible even calls our righteous acts “filthy rags.” (Isaiah 64:6).

2. Jewish Traditions

The context of Colossians makes it clear that some teachers were pressuring Christians to adopt Jewish practices as necessary for a full faith. Paul specifically mentions circumcision (2:11), food laws (2:16), and festivals (2:16). This was human tradition misapplied, as these were religious rules becoming a substitute for Christ. *These traditions were an empty philosophy not because tradition is bad, but because tradition apart from Christ cannot save.*

Today: Religious Legalism

Religious rules becoming a substitute for Jesus might sound familiar! While it may no longer be Jewish tradition masquerading as the ultimate savior, many still live as though religious legalism can save. The Bible explicitly condemns legalism, from

Jesus's teachings to the Pharisees to Paul's writing to the Galatians where he says "A person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:16).

3. Asceticism

In Colossians 2:21, Paul quotes a popular teaching of the day that says "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch." This points to asceticism, a popular philosophy of the day that promoted strict self-denial as a path to holiness. Paul goes on to say that these things have the appearance of wisdom, but "are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh" (2:23). *Asceticism was an empty philosophy not because habits are bad, but because they have no real power over sin, and therefore cannot save.*

Today: Self-Help Philosophy

While we may not call it asceticism today, many still look to "influencers" and self-help philosophy as a way to save. But self-help podcasts and Instagram accounts cannot save you. Developing healthy habits and practices is a great thing, but like the ascetics of Paul's day, they are insufficient to deal with sin.

A Blend of Worldviews

Again, most scholars agree that the Colossian problem wasn't one single philosophy, but a blend of worldviews. We have the same issue today. In our modern era, tons of empty philosophies compete for our attention. The issue arises when these philosophies or worldviews seek to replace Christ. "Jesus plus something" implies that Christ is good, but not enough to save. Our brother Paul argues against this false teaching. He says that in Christ is the fullness of God (2:9) and that we are filled in him (2:10).

Paul's warning is still relevant today. Whether it's moral discipline without gospel transformation, legalism that seeks to replace grace, self-help philosophy as salvation, or some other "Jesus plus" spirituality, anything that shifts trust from Christ to human systems becomes empty deceit. Do not be taken captive by anything that seeks to replace Him.

Christ is sufficient! And that is very, very good news.

Discernment Links:

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/15-discernment-diagnostic-s/>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/7-traits-of-false-teachers/>