

Colossians 2:16-23

Spiritual Growth

Introduction:

One of the keys to spiritual growth in Christ is the believer's awareness of the false teaching around him. In this text Paul spent a great deal of time dealing with false teachers and heretics who had infiltrated the church. Paul also gives the solution in the midst of Legalist, Mystics, and Ascetics – v.19 “holding fast to Christ who is the head of the church.” Spiritual growth will come when believers actively involve themselves in the visible church obeying the words of Christ and following Him. John 14:15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

I. Legalism – v.16-17

A. Defined as a religion of human achievement. Christ plus works equals salvation.

1. Beware of Judges before you – Mark 7:14-23
2. Jewish legalism – Rom. 10:3-4

B. Our Freedom in Christ: Gal. 5:1

1. Freedom from Satan – II Tim. 2:25-26; Heb. 2:14
2. Freedom from the power of sin – Rom. 6:20-23
3. Freedom from the curse of the Law – Gal. 3:13

C. Shadows of the Old Testament – v. 17; I Cor. 5:7

II. Mysticism – v.18-19

A. Defined as the pursuit of a deeper and higher subjective religious experience.

1. Worship of angels
2. Mormonism – Col. 1:16-18; Rev. 22:7-9
3. Worship the triune God alone – Matt. 4:10; Isa. 6:1-4

B. Visions (extra Biblical)– Heb. 1:1-2

C. The Road to Spiritual Growth v.19

1. Having the mind of Christ – Phil. 2:5; Col.1:18
2. Intimately connected to Christ – John 15:5

III. Asceticism

A. Defined as living a life of rigorous self-denial, fleshly in nature

1. Monasticism – living in a monastery (gnostic teaching)
2. Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk – v.23; Isa. 29:13
3. Alexander Maclaren – (a Scottish preacher)

Conclusion:

Whether it is Legalism, Mysticism, or Asceticism these will all impede our spiritual growth in Christ and for some will damn their souls in hell. The key to spiritual growth in Christ is when we “hold on to Christ our Lord who is the living head of the church that will cause us to grow in fellowship with Him and one another.