

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, August 29, 2010

Passage: Colossians 2:16-19

Memory Passage: Col. 2:16-17

**TODAY:** From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?

### DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Col. 2:16-17.** These verses begin with a “therefore.” What is it there for?
- (b) **Read Romans 14:1-13.** What do you learn from these verses about passing judgment on others? What similarities are there in the content of these verses compared to Col. 2:16-17?
- (c) What is the main difference between the command in Col. 2:16 and the commands you studied in Rom. 14? What does this tell you about the circumstance with which Paul is dealing in Colossians compared with Romans?
- (d) Paul’s command in Col. 1:16 is, “let no one pass judgment on you.” How can you stop someone from passing judgment on you? What is Paul’s main concern here (in other words, is Paul commanding us to stop someone else from judging or is he teaching us how to react when people demand certain actions from us and judge us when we don’t act as they say we should)?
- (e) *Family:* **Read Rom. 14:13.** Tell a story about two families, both of whom have family devotions. One family has them in the morning and the other in the evening. One day, the family who had morning devotions found out that the other family had theirs in the evening, and began to say things like, “You must have devotions in the morning because we are to start each day with God’s word. In fact, we don’t think your devotions are ‘real’ because you don’t have them in the morning! Maybe you are not even believers!” Ask, “Is there anything wrong with this thinking? Why?” This will help you begin a discussion of what it means to be judgmental toward those who have different ideas than us. Then **read Col. 2:16** and explain why Paul says that we should not allow others to pass judgment on us according to this verse.

### DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) In verses 16-17 Paul warns against legalism. Write a definition of legalism.
- (b) In what areas of the Christian life does he warn against legalism? Why do you think he chooses these areas? How might they have been a problem in Colossae? How are they a problem today?
- (c) In what other ways does legalism affect the Christian community? Have you ever been captive to legalism? If so, have you been set free from this legalism? Pray a prayer of thanksgiving to God for setting you free, or if you are still captive to legalism, pray that God would set you free as you study this week.
- (d) *Family:* Pass out copies of the same picture to be colored by everyone. If the picture has things that have a common color this will work better, like a sun, sky, trees, flowers, things that are commonly colored the same. Tell them that after they color the pictures you will hang them on the wall. After everyone is finished, say, “Now in order to have your picture hung on the wall you must have colored the sun blue (or choose something in your picture that is usually colored one way, like green leaves, blue sky, etc. and deem that it must be colored out of the ordinary).” When everyone protests, ask “Why are you upset about this? Don’t you know that all suns are supposed to be colored blue?” After the discussion that ensues, explain that what you have just done is establish a law and applied it to them, when there is no such law as making all suns blue. This is an example of legalism, that is, demanding that Christians obey laws that the Bible does not command.

### DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Heb. 8:1-6 & 10:1-2.** According to these passages, what are considered “shadows” and why?
- (b) **Now re-read Col. 2:16-17.** What does Paul consider “shadows” in these verses? Why are they shadows? What bearing does this have on his argument against legalism?
- (c) One definition of the word “shadow” is: “a faint, indistinct image or idea.” How is Christ the “substance” of the faint, indistinct ideas of diets & days mentioned in v. 16?
- (d) *Family:* Rig up a flashlight or un-shaded lamp that will throw light onto a wall on which you can make shadows. Try to do this in a way that you can hold objects in front of the lamp but be behind your family so they can only see the shadow, not the object. Gather several objects, several which will be easy to identify by their shadows and others that will not be so easy. Ask everyone to guess what the object is based on its shadow. After you display several objects, turn off the light and ask: “How did you identify each object? What was hard or easy about identifying each object?” Listen carefully to their answers, as it will help you then teach about Christ being the substance of the shadows as you **read Col. 2:16-17.**

**DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT****READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Col. 1:18-19.** Paul gives a second command in v. 18: “Let no one disqualify you” (NASB “Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize”). “Disqualify” is a word in Greek which means “to act as umpire or one who gives the prize,” so in this sense it would mean “deprive, disqualify, or encroach upon another’s interest.” From what would we be disqualified if we capitulate to these types of false teachings?

(b) The first characteristic that marks the “disqualifiers” is that they “insist on (or probably better, “delight in”) asceticism (or false humility; NASB “self-abasement”). Why would someone who insists upon or delights in a false humility be dangerous to a believer? What types of activities would they require (see v. 23 for help)?

(c) Paul added to this asceticism “worship of angels.” Of these two false teachings Richard Melick writes, “Through ascetic practices, they taught that the mind & spirit could be sensitized to higher spiritual realities. These became an evidence of spiritual superiority” (*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* by Richard R. Melick Jr., p. 271). What types of practices affect the church today that are represented by this description?

(d) *Family:* Read Eph. 4:15-16 & Col. 2:19. As you read, have someone make a list (with everyone’s help) of all the characteristics of a healthy body of believers. After the list is made, explain each characteristic a little, helping everyone understand the symbolism. Then have each person draw/color their own picture of what these characteristics look like.

**DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT****READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Col. 2:18-19.** “Going on in detail about visions” is an expression that contains a Greek word that was used in the first century of a person entering into a sacred area in order to see the mysteries after they have been initiated into a religious cult. Paul is continuing to deal with the false teachers at Colossae, but can you think of any false teachings today that are based on visions and mystical experiences? How would a believer getting caught up in these activities risk being disqualified?

(b) Paul also mentions that this false teacher is “puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind” (lit. “the mind of his flesh”). Why do you think this false teacher was marked by this type of spiritual arrogance? How does this characteristic help us today to recognize false teachers? Are all false teachers like this? Is everyone who fits this description a false teacher?

(c) According to the beginning of v. 19, what is the main problem with this kind of teaching?

(d) *Family:* Spend some time working as a family memorizing this week’s memory verses, Col. 2:16-17. You can use flash cards with a word on each card that everyone works to put in order, play hangman on your white board, go around the room and each person say the next word in the verse, etc. etc. etc. Be creative! Your goal is to recite the verses in unison.

**DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT****READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Col. 2:19 & Eph. 4:11-16** I know we have looked at this Ephesians passage recently, but review it again with Col. 2:19 in mind and write a paragraph that describes a healthy body, with Christ as its head, with “growth that is from God.”

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