

**Testing for Sound Doctrine (Colossians 2:8-10)**

We cannot add anything to the work of the cross to make it more effective. Here are some questions to ask when you encounter a new teaching.

- a. Where does it place Jesus Christ – His person and His work?
- b. Does it deny either His deity or His humanity?
- c. Does it claim that a believer must have some “new experience” to supplement his experience with Christ?

**3 Warnings (Colossians 2:16-23)****1. *Let no one judge you (Colossians 2:16-17)***

- a. We must never believe that observing aspects of Jewish tradition or law makes us more spiritual or mature. If we are not mature in our understanding, it would be easy to look at such practices as a mark of spirituality, but they are not. It is only by the power of Christ – not the power of ANY ritual – that we are saved.
- b. The basis of our freedom is the cross – Satan is defeated, the Law has lost its dominion over us, and we are raised with Christ to new life. Don't let anyone judge you according to what you eat or drink or what holidays you observe. The cross made all of these things of NO merit, because HE is the reality they all pointed toward. The person who judges believers by the Jewish law is really judging Christ. They are saying that Jesus did not finish the work of salvation on the cross and that we must add our own works to it for completion.
- c. Legalism is bondage. Jesus made it very clear that food is neutral (Matthew 15:1-20) To give a spiritual impact to food, is to make it add to the work of the cross – and it refutes Christ's own teaching. Of course setting dietary boundaries will enhance your health, but it doesn't make you more spiritual. For further study, see Acts 10:9, Galatians 2:11, I Corinthians 8:8, Romans 14-15

**2. *“Let no man disqualify you for the prize.” (Or trick you out of your reward – vs.18-19)***

- a. The danger Paul is addressing here is mysticism. This is the belief that one can have an immediate experience with the spiritual world apart from the word of God or the Holy Spirit. The false teachers did indeed have spiritual experiences, but they were demonic, counterfeit experiences (II Corinthians 11:13-15).
- b. Warning against the worship of angels as intermediaries. There is only one mediator between God and man, and that is Jesus Christ (I Timothy 2:5) Jesus clearly said that no man could come to the father but through Him. Trying to approach God in any way but through Christ is idolatry. (John 14:6)
- c. False teachers don't usually try to convert the lost, but they prey on weak-minded and ungrounded believers. These false teachers took their crusade into the church and tried to draw people to themselves by appealing to their fleshly desires (religion, supernatural experiences). They elevate experience over sound doctrine.

**3. *“Let no one enslave you.” (vs. 20-23) : Asceticism***

- a. Asceticism is the practice of rigorous self-denial and even self-mortification in order to become more spiritual.
- b. There is a place for discipline and proper care of our bodies.
- c. The power of Christ does more than just restrain us from fulfilling the desires of the flesh – it puts new desires within us.
- d. While a lifestyle of intense self-denial might look more rigorous and spiritual on the outside, Paul says that it does nothing to change the heart. Only grace can do that, we don't need to law to restrain us on the outside when we have the life of Christ on the inside.