



Introduction

Keep your eyes on Jesus and do everything you can to avoid the dangers on either side.



I. THE ERROR OF LEGALISM.

Colossians 2:16-17

In light of Christ's sufficiency, don't let anyone judge your standing before God on the basis of your observance or non-observance of the Mosaic Law.

A change has taken place. We no longer come to God on the basis of the law. We come through Christ. Our eyes are to be on him.

There are things we will choose to avoid as Christians.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. 1 John 2:15-17

The problem with legalism is it reduces the Christian life to a set of do's and don'ts. It puts the emphasis on externals and not on the heart.

Legalism produces Christians that are judgmental, joyless and demand uniformity.

"Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.")

He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.' " Mark 7:18-23

The answer to legalism is not license – doing whatever we please. God calls us to be holy as he is holy.

The answer to legalism is to keep our eyes on Jesus and choose the things that will help us to grow closer to him.



II. THE ERROR OF MYSTICISM.

Colossians 2:18-19

On the positive side, mysticism seeks a deeper relationship with God.

On the negative side, mysticism can lead people away from Christ in their search for a deeper spirituality.

- They were fascinated with angels. So are people today.
- There was a false humility in their worship. We are not good enough to go to God directly.
- They based their teaching on visions and dreams and their own thoughts, rather than Scripture.
- They claimed a special wisdom or insight.

People are hungry for spiritual things, but it is easy to be deceived.

What we really need is Jesus!



III. THE ERROR OF ASCETICISM.

Colossians 2:20-23

Asceticism is the belief that one can reach a higher spiritual state by rigorous self-discipline and self-denial.

In Colosse, their asceticism viewed the body as evil. It is an enemy to be punished.

In an extreme form asceticism can devise endless means of self-abasement and even self-torture.

There is a place for discipline in the Christian life.

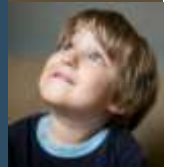
- "Train yourself to be godly."
I Timothy 4:7
- "Run in such a way as to get the prize."
I Corinthians 9:24

But holiness is not a matter of self effort alone.

For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.
I Timothy 4:4-5



Enjoy life. Enjoy God's good creation. And do it with thankfulness in your heart.



Conclusion

We need balance.
Keep our eyes on Jesus.

