

# Christ Over All

## A study in Colossians

Shadow and Substance  
Colossians 2:16-23  
July 7, 2024

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.  
- Colossians 2:16-17

### I. DEATH BY DEGREES

- People may judge us falsely if they so choose. We do not have to allow it to stick. Legalistic righteousness is specious. Judaism was a shadow, Jesus is the substance (Vss. 16-17; 1 Cor. 6:13; Heb. 8:1-7, 10:1-4).
- We need not be intimidated or coerced by those who claim superiority over us in regard to their spiritual prowess (Vs. 18; Gal. 2:4-6; Phil. 3:2-3).
- It is possible to begin the walk of faith but not finish it. We can be disqualified by chasing after shadows (1 Cor. 9:27; Gal. 1:6-9).
- Paul is not discounting certain conditions which might impose a voluntary limitation on our Christian liberty (Rom. 14:1-23; 1 Cor. 8:1 ff., 10:23-24 ff.).

### II. IF THEN...WHY?

- Paul asks a legitimate question: If you died with Christ to the law and its regulations now mediated by unholy angelic powers and puffed up men, why do you continue to submit to it? (Gal. 3:10, 5:1-12).
- We do not enhance our faith by a list of “do’s and do not’s”. Asceticism will not save you, not from God or yourself (Vs. 23).
- We have been set free by the gospel of Jesus. Our submission to false teaching and false teachers who try to “enhance” our faith with a “Jesus plus” teaching will not lead us to a true faith, or a faithful life.

**KNOW:** Laws and legalism will not save you. Those who tell you how it has saved them will not help you. We must draw wisdom and perseverance from Christ. Only he has the substance to sustain you through life and death.

**DO:** Turn away from shadows. Find substance in Jesus.

#### Suggested Reading:

*The Whole Christ* by Sinclair Ferguson (Available in the LifePoint Adult Library)

*Live Your Truth and Other Lies* by Alisa Childers (Available in the LifePoint Adult Library)

#### For Children:

*What Jesus Did: 31 Devotions About the Life of Jesus* by Sinclair Ferguson (Available in the LifePoint Children’s Library)

**Next Week’s Text:** Colossians 3:1-4

### Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

#### Please Read Colossians 2:16-23

1. What is Paul’s concern for the church in Colossae in this passage?
2. In what ways were the Old Testament laws, festivals, Sabbaths, sacrificial system, etc. a “shadow of the things to come?”
3. Why do so many seem to want to submit to religious regulations in their lives?
4. In what ways can we “hold fast to the Head” (see verse 19)?
5. Why will practicing legalism and rigorous self-denial not ultimately help us in our fight against sin?
6. What steps will you take to apply Paul’s teaching to your own life?