

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Chapter Two

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Paul's Conflict and Desire (2:1-4)

¹ For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,

- Paul earlier mentioned that he was “*striving*” to present every man perfect in Christ (**v.28-29**), but he here specifically identified his labors for the Colossians and for all who had not seen him face-to-face.
 - Paul had evidently never seen many of the brethren in Colossae and Laodicea, yet he agonized over their spiritual condition.
- Paul endured “*great conflict*” on behalf of the Colossians and Laodiceans.
 - “*Conflict*” is the Greek word “agón,” from which the word “agony” is derived.
 - This likely in reference to Paul’s concerns about brethren being led away from Christ by the various human philosophies circulating throughout the area (**Col. 2:8**).
 - The Laodiceans were likely facing the same battles as the Colossians (**Col. 4:16**).

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Paul's Conflict and Desire (2:1-4)

² *that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,*

- Paul wished for the Colossians' hearts to be "*encouraged*."
 - Paul desired for the Colossians to be strengthened in their faith and their knowledge "*of the mystery of God*" to increase (**Col. 1:9; Eph. 3:16; 1 Thess. 3:6-10**).
 - As we develop a better understanding of the "*mystery of God*," our faith increases (**Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:1**).
- Paul also wished for the Colossians to be "*knit together in love*."
 - The body of Christ must be "*knit together*" in order for growth and edification to occur (**Col. 2:19, 3:14; Eph. 2:20-22, 4:16**).
 - Jesus is the foundation upon which we ground our faith (**Col. 2:7**). Yet, love is a necessary condition upon which the "*full assurance of understanding*" is obtained (**Eph. 3:17-19**).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Paul's Conflict and Desire (2:1-4)

³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

- The “*treasures*” of “*wisdom*” and “*knowledge*” are “*hidden*” in God the Father and Son and are not to be found in man (**Col. 2:4, 8**).
- The Lord taught that the “*riches*” (**Col. 2:2**) found in His kingdom are the most valuable treasures one can find (**Matt. 13:44-46**).
- Do we personally find this knowledge of God's mystery to be as valuable as the Lord described?

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Paul's Conflict and Desire (2:1-4)

⁴ Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

- This verse does not picture the blind leading the blind (**Matt. 15:14**), but those who can see clearly deliberately leading people into eternal damnation.
- Many false teachers, such as the ones depicted by Paul in this verse, are cunning, crafty, and purposefully deceptive (**Eph. 4:14**), often for selfish gain (**2 Cor. 2:17; Acts 20:30; Tit. 1:10-11**).
- While it is seen as deplorable in our society to even remotely suggest that a religious teacher might deliberately and purposefully spread error, Paul warned here and the New Testament repeatedly affirms that we must beware of those who intentionally handle God's word deceitfully (**2 Cor. 11:13-15; Rom. 16:17-18; Matt. 7:15**).

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Paul's Conflict and Desire (2:1-4)

⁴ Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

- A person who attempts to deceive with “*persuasive words*” is one who uses subtle approaches to lead people astray (**Col. 2:8, 18**).
 - These people lie in wait to ambush people as the serpent did with Eve (**2 Cor. 11:3**).
- The protection against being deceived by false teachers is developing a “*full assurance of understanding*” concerning the Father's will (**Col. 2:2, 4:12; Eph. 4:13-14**).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Complete in Christ (2:5-10)

⁵ For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

- Paul expressed concerns about the battles the Colossians faced, but he was still confident in them. Paul was “*absent in the flesh*,” yet he rejoiced:
 - Seeing their “*good order*,” which indicates the church in Colossae was “*joined and knit together in love*” (**Col. 2:2**) at the time of writing.
 - Knowing the “*steadfastness*” of their faith, which indicates they were progressing toward the goal of “*full assurance of understanding*” (**Col. 2:2**).
 - Paul’s “*rejoicing*” serves as a testament to the strength of the Colossians’ faithfulness (**Col. 1:5**), which was reported by Epaphras (**Col. 1:8**).
- Compare this verse with the circumstances in Corinth.
 - Paul was also “*absent in the flesh*” but present “*in spirit*” with the Corinthians, but he sorrowed while writing to them (**1 Cor. 5:3; 2 Cor. 2:1-4**).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Complete in Christ (2:5-10)

⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

- The Colossians likely “*received Christ Jesus*,” i.e. heard the gospel preached and thus obeyed it, due to the work of Epaphras (**Col. 1:7, 2:7**).
- Therefore, the idea seems to be that Paul wanted the Colossians to continue in Epaphras’s teaching (**2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:5, 13**).
- “*Christ Jesus*” is a synecdoche (a figure of speech where a part is made to represent the whole, or vice versa) representing the whole of the gospel and doctrine of Christ, as well as His character (**Acts 8:5; Eph. 4:20**).
- Christianity does not merely consist of discovering who is the Christ but, rather, requires us to apply that knowledge of Him and His doctrine to bring about positive changes in our lives (**Eph. 3-4; Rom. 6:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:17**).
- We must continually “*walk in Him*” and strive to walk worthy of Him (**Col. 1:10**).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Complete in Christ (2:5-10)

***⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith,
as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.***

- Earlier, Paul stated that Christ was “*in*” the Colossians (**Col. 1:27**). Here, this sentiment is reversed and we see the Colossians being exhorted to walk “*in*” Christ.
 - When we allow Christ to dwell in us, we will walk “*in Him*” (**Col. 3:16-17; Gal. 2:20**).
 - This requires being “*rooted*,” “*built up*” in Him, and possessing an “*established*” faith.
 - “*Rooted*” – To render firm, to fix, establish, cause a person or a thing to be thoroughly grounded (Thayer).
 - “*Built up*” – In the figurative which likens a company of Christian believers to an edifice or temple; to build upon, build up. . . to grow in spiritual life (Thayer).
 - “*Established*” – To make firm, establish, confirm, make sure (Thayer).
- It is not enough to remain fixed on the rudimentary principles of the gospel; we must continually strive for growth (**Phil. 3:12; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2-4; 2 Pet. 3:14-18**).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Complete in Christ (2:5-10)

***⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith,
as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.***

- Not only should an attitude of “*thanksgiving*” be a general manifestation of one’s faith, but “*thanksgiving*” specifically for the truth of God should be present in the believer.
 - The association between “*thanksgiving*” and understanding the truth of God can be seen throughout this epistle (**Col. 1:12-14, 3:16**).
 - The Psalmist shared this appreciation for the truth (**Psalms 19:10, 119:97, 148, 171-172**).
 - Gratitude for the truth should likewise abound among God’s people considering we know the outcome of a properly “*rooted*,” “*built up*,” and “*established*” faith (**Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6**) – the salvation of our souls (**1 Pet. 1:9; 1 Cor. 15:1-2, 58**).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Complete in Christ (2:5-10)

⁸ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

- Earlier, Paul encouraged the Colossians to not fall prey to “*persuasive words*” (**Col. 2:4**). The reasons for those warnings are expounded upon in this verse.
- Paul warned the Colossians not to be cheated “*through philosophy and empty deceit*” brought about by:
 - “*The tradition of men.*”
 - This is an ever-present problem for Christians (**Matt. 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13**).
 - “*Basic principles of the world.*”
 - This may be in reference to Judaizing teachers (**Col. 2:14, 20-23; Gal. 4:3**), or the worship of angels (**Col. 2:18**).
 - Teachings that are “*not according to Christ.*”
 - No human philosophy is from Christ (**1 Cor. 2:1-5; Prov. 14:12**).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Complete in Christ (2:5-10)

⁹ For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

- This text likely provides the reason for the teachings referenced in the previous verse being false – they denied the deity of Christ.
- The complete essence of deity (*“the fullness of the Godhead”*) dwells in Christ.
 - Paul earlier stated that all the fullness of the Father dwells in the Son (**Col. 1:19**).
 - Although Christ took on a *“bodily”* form than can be described as being *“lower than the angels”* (**Heb. 2:5-9**), He retained all qualities of deity (**1 Tim. 3:16; Phil. 2:5-8**).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Complete in Christ (2:5-10)

^{10a} and you are complete in Him,

- All who submit to Christ find completion in Him. This includes:
 - All spiritual blessings and providential care (**Eph. 1:3; Matt. 6:33**).
 - Justification (**Rom. 5:1-9**).
 - Sanctification (**1 Cor. 6:9-11**).
 - Peace with the Father (**Eph. 2:14-16**).
 - Redemption (**Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-10**).
 - Spiritual completion / maturation (**Phil. 1:6**).
- We have no need to look elsewhere for care and direction than through Christ.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Complete in Christ (2:5-10)

^{10b} who is the head of all principality and power.

- Christ is the “*head of all principality and power.*”
 - He possesses all authority in heaven and on earth (**Matt. 28:18-20**)
 - He is head over earthly kingdoms (**Rev. 1:5**).
 - He is head over the spiritual kingdom (**John 18:36; Eph. 1:22**).
 - He is head over all men (**1 Cor. 11:3**).
 - He is head over all angels (**Eph. 1:20-21; Heb. 1:6**).
- Such authority would not belong to Christ if not for the fact that the “*fullness of the Godhead*” dwells in Him.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

- Under the law of Moses there was a literal circumcision ordained by God as a sign of the covenant He made with Abraham and his descendants (**Gen. 17:10; Rom. 4:11**).
 - This was rendered obsolete upon the death of Christ (**Gal. 5:1-4; Acts 15**).
- Under the Law of Christ, there is a spiritual circumcision (**Col. 2:12**).
 - This spiritual/figurative circumcision puts “*off the body of the sins of the flesh.*”
 - Whereas only Jews received circumcision of the flesh, all of the Colossians and all who are baptized have been “*circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.*”

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

- The word “*buried*” is both a figurative and literal expression.
 - It is figurative in the sense that a sinner elects to die to self and Satan when he is baptized; his old man tainted by sin is figuratively put to death and “*buried*” in baptism (**Col. 2:11; Rom. 6:1-14**).
 - However, baptism is also literally a burial because it requires a person to be “*buried*,” i.e. fully immersed, in water (**John 3:3-5; Acts 8:36-39**).
- A sprinkling or pouring does not qualify as a scriptural water baptism.
 - “*Baptism*” – Consisting of the processes of immersion, submersion, and emergence (Vine).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

- Many claim that baptism is a work of man and, thus, unnecessary for salvation. However, this verse describes baptism as a work “*of God.*”
 - Whereas works of man do not save (**Eph. 2:8-9**), works of God do save (**John 6:29; Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21**).
 - Furthermore, Paul described baptism as an act of “*faith.*”
 - It requires faith to believe:
 - The blood of Christ washes away our sins in baptism (**Acts 22:16, 2:38**).
 - God saves & adds us to His kingdom upon being baptized (**Acts 2:38-41, 47**).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

¹² buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

- Baptism is worthless without man's "*faith*" and God's "*working*" power.
- Since Paul analogized baptism as a spiritual circumcision, advocates of infant baptism argue it is authorized to baptize babies because physical circumcision was performed on eight-day-old male infants (**Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3**).
 - This verse proves baptism is for those with "*faith*" (**Mark 16:16**).
 - An infant does not have "*faith*." Therefore, he must not be baptized.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

***13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh,
He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,***

- Those who are in sin are described here as being “*dead*.”
 - Sin always results in spiritual death (**James 1:15; Rom. 6:23**).
 - All who are accountable have been “*dead*” in sin (**Rom. 3:23, 5:12**).
- The idea of being “*dead*” in sin is used by false teachers to perpetuate the doctrine of total depravity.
 - This verse makes it clear that the Colossians were not held accountable for Adam’s transgressions. Their spiritual death was the result of their own (“*your*”) sins.
 - Furthermore, the word “*dead*” simply indicates a separation between man and God (**Isa. 59:1-2**), not the incapability of man to bring himself to God.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

- The Colossians were not only “*dead*” in their sins before being made “*alive*” with Christ, they were also once “*dead*” in the “*uncircumcision*” of their “*flesh*.”
 - This would have special significance for the Gentiles. Unless they were proselytes, the Gentiles were uncircumcised due to not having obeyed the Law of Moses.
 - By birth, Gentiles were once excluded from God’s kingdom (**Deut. 7:1-6, 14:2**).
 - Due to the Lord’s sacrifice on the cross, Gentiles could become equal heirs and citizens of the kingdom of God (**Eph. 2:11-13, 19**).
- People who are “*dead*” in their sins are spiritually uncircumcised, but those who have been baptized for forgiveness of their sins have been spiritually circumcised and made alive together with Christ.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

***14** having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross,*

- When Jesus died on the cross, He “*wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us.*”
 - This refers to the Law of Moses, which was abolished when Christ fulfilled it through His death (**Matt. 5:17-18; Eph. 2:14-15; Heb 9:15-17**).
 - The Law of Moses was “*wiped out*” because it fulfilled its intended purpose (**Gal. 3:23-25; Rom. 7:7-13; Heb. 10:1-4**).
 - The Law of Moses was “*contrary to us*” because it pronounced condemnation and death (**Rom. 3:20; 2 Cor. 3:7-11**).
 - The Law of Moses was “*nailed*” to the cross with Jesus.
 - The Law of Moses is dead (**Rom. 7:1-4**); there is no life to be found in it today.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

- It is possible that Paul was alluding to Jewish religious authorities.
 - *“Unless rather this is to be understood of Christ's taking away the power and authority of the Jewish ecclesiastical rulers and governors, by abolishing the ceremonial law, and the ordinances of it; declaring himself to be the alone King and Lawgiver in his house, and requiring subjection to his institutions and appointments, which sense agrees with the context” (Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible, Colossians, p.72).*
- It is possible that Paul was referring to earthly governmental rulers (**Luke 12:11**).
 - *“This is a figure from the treatment of enemies when conquered. Jesus was condemned and put to by the principalities and powers of earthly governments – Jewish and Roman” (David Lipscomb and J.W. Shepherd, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, p.282).*

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

- It is possible that Paul was alluding to Jewish religious authorities.
- It is possible that Paul was referring to earthly governmental ruler.
- It is possible that Paul was speaking of angelic or demonic beings (**Eph. 3:10, 6:12; Rom. 8:38; 1 Pet. 3:22**).
 - *“The devil and his angelic rulers and authorities (Eph. 6:12) were all opposing God. But Jesus Christ defeated them by His death, burial, and resurrection (Heb. 2:14-15)” (Robert Harkrider, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, p.123).*
- Whatever the case, the cross provided a public display of Jesus's victory over all authorities, which would include anything terrestrial or celestial.
 - He “*disarmed*” them, made a “*public spectacle*” of them, and triumphed over them.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

¹⁶ So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,

- “*Food or in drink*” refers to the daily observances, “*festival*” refers to the yearly observances, “*new moon*” refers to the monthly observances, and “*sabbaths*” refer to the weekly observances all required by the Law of Moses (**2 Chron. 2:4, 8:12-13; Neh. 10:33; Ezek. 45:17**).
- The Law of Moses also had very strict regulations upon special days/observances (**Num. 28-29**).
- The Law of Moses implemented very strict regulations concerning food and drink (**Lev. 11**).
- The Law of Christ has no such restrictions (**Rom. 14:1-4, 17; 1 Tim. 4:1-5**).
- Since the Old Law was taken away and nailed to the cross with Jesus, no person has a right to condemn another for not keeping requirements of the Law on these matters (**Gal. 2:21, 5:1-4**).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

- The ordinances of the Law of Moses were a “*shadow of things to come*.”
 - The Law of Moses was a temporary “*shadow*” (**Heb. 10:1**), serving the purpose of pointing to the “*substance*,” Jesus Christ (**Gal. 3:19-25**).
- Some are confused by the present-tense (“*are a shadow of things to come*”) in this verse. As such, many argue the requirements for weekly sabbath-keeping is still binding today.
 - This ignores how Paul just concluded that the shadows were abolished (**Col. 2:14**).
 - This ignores the fact that something can be a “*shadow*” without it being in effect.
 - Consider **Heb. 8:5; Heb. 7:11-28; Acts 17:24**.
 - Also consider **Heb. 9:13-14**.
 - All four ordinances listed in **Col. 2:16** ceased being binding at the cross, including weekly sabbath-keeping.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.

- This admonition is the fourth such warning in this chapter against being drawn away from Christ by false teachers (**Col. 2:4, 8, 16**).
- “*False humility*” was a defining trait of the false teachers in Colossae.
 - This could refer to Judaizing teachers emphasizing dietary restrictions of the Old Law.
 - This could refer Gnostics practicing extreme self-denial.
 - “*False humility . . . probably refers to the ascetic practices of rigid regulations and extreme self-denial*” (Donnie Rader, *The Book of Colossians*, p.33).
- This could refer to people worshipping angels.
 - “*Some alleged that they were not worthy to worship God directly, therefore they worshipped angels instead as the representatives of God*” (Robert Harkrider, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, p.127).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

- These people presented themselves as having humility, but their humility was “*false*” because it was not informed by a spiritual mind aligned with Christ.
 - They presented themselves as having humility but, in reality, they were “*puffed up*.”
- These false teachers were also guilty of “*intruding into things which he has not seen*.”
 - Given the context, this expression likely refers to people claiming to have inspired knowledge/revelations, specifically in regards to angels.
 - Whatever these people claimed to see, Paul stated they saw no such thing. They spoke things from their own “*fleshly mind*,” not the mind of God (**Jer. 23:16-22**).
 - Sadly, there are many religious people today who also claim to receive special revelations from God that are not from Him (**1 Cor. 13:8-10**).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

- The root problem of all false teaching is the fact that they do not hold “*fast to the Head.*”
 - Instead of looking to teachers who intrude into things they have not seen, we should look to the image of the invisible God for guidance and growth (**Col. 1:13-18, 28**).
- The church, which is Christ’s “*body*” (**Col. 1:18**), experiences nourishment and growth as long as it continues to hold “*fast to the Head.*”
 - We are complete in Him (**Col. 2:10**), so why would we look elsewhere for guidance?
 - If the body roots itself to its Head, any subsequent growth will be “*from God*” (**1 Cor. 3:6**).
 - If the body roots itself to those puffed up with fleshly minds who offer human philosophies to provide growth, then any subsequent increase is not “*from God.*”

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

- Just as each bone, muscle, joint, ligament, etc. holds the physical body together, so too does each member of the Lord's spiritual body play an important function in holding together the spiritual body of Christ (**Eph. 4:16**).
- The Lord's body needs every member, even the weaker parts (**1 Cor. 12:15-26**).
- The growth and welfare of the body is dependent upon members doing their job.
 - *"By every member working effectually in his sphere, they all make the increase of the body unto the building up of itself. By this joint and harmonious working of all the parts, the body grow in the well-proportioned body of Christ, all moved and governed by him" (David Lipscomb and J.W. Shepherd, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, p.285).*

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

²⁰ Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— ²¹ “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,”

- Paul stated the Colossians “*died with Christ.*”
 - A person dies with Christ when he is buried with Him in baptism (**Rom. 6:1-4**).
- Having died with Christ, the Colossians became dead to the “*basic principles of the world*” and “*regulations.*”
 - Paul’s statement could be a refutation against Judaizing teachers since Christians are dead to the Law of Moses (**Rom. 7:1-4; Gal. 4:3-5**), or it could possibly be a reference to Gnostic asceticism, given **v.23**.
 - Whatever the case, the “*regulations*” propped up by the false teachers disallowed people from being able to “*touch,*” “*taste,*” and “*handle*” certain things.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

***²² which all concern things which perish with the using—
according to the commandments and doctrines of men?***

- Paul already told the Colossians not to allow anyone to judge them in regards to what they ate or drank (**Col. 2:16**). **V.22-23** provide the answer why they should not permit anyone to make those judgments.
- The self-imposed restrictions of **v.21** were unnecessary because:
 - They “*concern things which perish with using*” (**Matt 15:17; Mark 6:15**).
 - “*The things that one would touch, taste or handle are consumed in their very use. Thus, the prohibition against them cannot be of any use*” (Donnie Rader, *The Book of Colossians*, p.35).
 - They were “*according to the commandments and doctrines of men*” (**Mark 6:6-9, 13**).

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Vain Doctrines (2:11-23)

23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

- “*Indulgence of the flesh*” is a sin (**Rom. 13:14; Gal. 5:13-26**).
- However, the means by which the various false teachers in Colossae combatted such indulgence was of “*no value*” because their doctrine had “*an appearance of wisdom*” and displayed “*false*” rather than sincere “*humility*.”
 - Self-imposed religious practices denying the body of its necessities (asceticism) may look wise and righteous, but they do not remove temptations to indulge the flesh (**Matt. 6:16**).
 - What does remove temptations of indulging the flesh is seeking Christ and doing His will (**Col. 3:1-3; 1 John 2:15-17**).