

THE PREMINENCE OF CHRIST

Lesson 8: The Dangers of Legalism

Colossians 2:18–23

Legalistic religion vs. legitimate relationship: Legalistic religion depends on things that can be humanly done rather than on a relationship with Christ who does what no person can do in his or her own strength (*Colossians 2:18–23*).

- I. Legalism deprives Christians of their rewards (*Colossians 2:18a; 2 Corinthians 5:9–10*).
- II. Those who base their lives on visions and angelic worship demonstrate arrogance and self-absorption (*Colossians 2:18b*).
- III. Real spiritual growth comes as a believer depends on Christ and trusts God to produce His character in one's life (*Colossians 2:19*).
- IV. It is absurd for Christians who have experienced freedom in Christ to be bound again through legalism (*Colossians 2:20–21; Galatians 5:1*).
- V. Human-made, human-sustained, and human-driven legalism exists for the purpose of exalting the flesh or self (*Colossians 2:22*).
- VI. Severe, austere religion looks attractive on the surface but God rejects it and so should believers (*Colossians 2:23a*).
- VII. Legalism provides no power to propel a person's obedience to God or to combat fleshly appetites (*Colossians 2:23b*).

Note: Pseudo-Christian cults and false religions typically share the characteristics Paul warns about here: visions, worship of angels, eating or refraining from eating certain foods, strict observance of special days, etc.