

“Act Like It: Part 1- You’ve Died with Christ” Colossians 2:16-23

Central Idea: Believers should be aware of false teaching and live in light of their standing in Christ.

I. False Teaching #1: Legalism (16-17)

- Definition: Observing laws to earn God’s favor
 - Main proponents seem to be Jewish
- Instruction: Don’t fear failure or human criticism
 - Christ won a decisive victory and has taken care of these
- Error: The need to follow laws on food and festivals
 - “Food or drink” refers to Jewish dietary regulations
 - Mentions yearly, monthly, and weekly observances
 - Christ is the reality behind these things, so there is no reason to begin observing them (Heb. 10:1)
- Application:
 - The new age has brought the blessing the old was pointing to, returning to the old means missing out
 - This does not create a superior gospel, but waters it down

II. False Teaching #2: Mysticism (18-19)

- Definition: Belief that special spiritual understanding can be gained through meditation and self-surrender
- Instruction: Don’t get cheated out of your prize
 - There is reward for running well (2 Tim. 4:7-8)
- Error: False humility and worship of angels
 - Worship of angels stems from the idea that other beings must mediate between God and man
- These things are based in human understanding

- Paul exposes the hypocrisy of false-humility, that it actually leads to a false sense of pride
- Main cause is that their direction is not from Christ

• Application:

- The believer’s direction should come from Christ
- He is the only one who causes genuine growth

III. False Teaching #3: Asceticism (20-23)

- Definition: Abstaining from worldly pleasure to earn God’s favor
 - Seems to be based in the same principles seen in 2:8
- Instruction: Don’t live like the world
 - There’s no need to submit to what you have died to
- Error: Following valueless earthly commands
 - Three reasons these rules are inadequate:
 - The prohibited things have no lasting impact
 - The rules are of human origin
 - The rules don’t solve the real problem; overcoming the desires of the flesh
- Those who humiliate themselves, then boast in their achievement act the same as the Pharisees
- Application:
 - Sinful desires are a heart issue and must be dealt with as such
 - Believers are dead to worldly regulations, they add nothing to our salvation