



SERIES: August / September Series “HE IS ENOUGH”

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Thursday 09/02/2021

Scripture: Colossians 2:16-17

TITLE: Conviction or Obligation?

“Use good judgment at all times.” That is the sum total of the employee handbook for Nordstrom’s. Think about it. A chain of that size having one simple instruction: use good judgment at all times. Think about how freeing that is. Now compare that to probably the employee handbook at your workplace. It is likely full of dos and don’ts that feel overbearing.

Jesus frees us from the overbearing manmade rules. He frees us to a life with boundaries but not chains. What am I talking about?

Let’s turn back to Colossians 2:16-17 (NLT) for the answer.

“So don’t let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality.”

Paul says, “Don’t let anyone condemn you.” Your version may say “judge.” Now, we don’t have time to go into the “don’t judge others” verse that gets largely misused.

So what’s Paul getting at. He’s fighting the false teachers who were promoting legalism. That nasty teaching that Christ isn’t enough. You have to perform some manmade rules to finish the salvific process.

That’s wrong. Paul says, “that’s a lie.” Paul wrote in Romans 10:4, “For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God.” Why on earth would we go back to the game of religion – the trap of legalism when Christ freed us from it? We shouldn’t!

The false teachers were telling the Colossian believers they still had to eat a kosher diet. They had to observe certain rituals and holidays. They had to adhere to sabbath worship. Paul is saying, “None of those things save you. These rules were really just a shadow of Christ.” Christ affirmed this in Matthew 5:17. Jesus said, “Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose.”

Now, is Paul’s point that you shouldn’t worship? Or mind how you live? No. Paul did recognize that there is a better way to live and that’s according to God’s ways. But obedience doesn’t save. It is evidence of that salvation. But let’s not confuse conviction with requirement.

Paul wanted the Colossian church and us today to live as free people who live by God's grace each and every day.

So here's my challenge for you today: How are you relying on religion instead of relationship? Jesus is more concerned about your heart and your relationship with Him than religious activity.

Evaluate your daily living and filter it through your relationship with Christ. How are you doing church, prayer, giving, etc., out of obligation or legalism versus loving worship of our King? Find out, and then make a heart change. When you do this, you will win the day!