



Victorious Jesus: The Cobra Effect | Colossians 2:16-23

Colossians 2:16-23

¹⁶Therefore 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. ¹⁷These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, ¹⁹and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. ²⁰If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— ²¹“Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” ²²(referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? ²³These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

What is legalism?

Colossians 2:18, 20

“...asceticism...” + “...regulations...according to human precepts and teaching”

Colossians 2:18

“...worship of angels, going on in detail about visions...”

Why doesn't legalism work?

Colossians 2:23

²³These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

Colossians 2:18

“...puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind...”

JOB RIGHTEOUSNESS: I’m a hard worker, so God will reward me.

FAMILY RIGHTEOUSNESS: Because I “do things right” as a parent, I’m more godly than parents who can’t control their kids.

THEOLOGICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS: I have good theology. God prefers me over those who have bad theology.

INTELLECTUAL RIGHTEOUSNESS: I am better read, more articulate, and more culturally savvy than others, which obviously makes me superior.

SCHEDULE RIGHTEOUSNESS: I am self-disciplined and rigorous in my time management, which makes me more mature than others.

FLEXIBILITY RIGHTEOUSNESS: In a world that’s busy, I’m flexible and relaxed. I always make time for others. Shame on those who don’t!

MERCY RIGHTEOUSNESS: I care about the poor and disadvantaged the way everyone else should.

LEGALISTIC RIGHTEOUSNESS: I don’t drink, smoke, or chew, or date girls who do. Too many Christians just aren’t concerned about holiness these days.

FINANCIAL RIGHTEOUSNESS: I manage money wisely and stay out of debt. I’m not like those materialistic Christians who can’t control their spending.

POLITICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS: If you really love God, you’ll vote for my candidate.

TOLERANCE RIGHTEOUSNESS: I am open-minded and charitable toward those who don’t agree with me. In fact, I’m a lot like Jesus that way!

When you fight sin with sin, sin always wins.

“...I smiled, comparing myself with other men, comparing my active goodwill with the lazy cruelty of their neglect. And at the very moment of that vainglorious thought, a qualm came over me, a horrid nausea and the most deadly shuddering...I looked down; my clothes hung formlessly on my shrunken limbs; the hand that lay on my knee was corded and hairy. I was once more Edward Hyde.” –*Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Robert Louis Stevenson

What's the alternative to legalism?

Colossians 2:19

¹⁹ and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.