

Colossians 2:1-5  
Godward Spiritual Struggle for Others

**Introduction:** While 1:24-29 emphasized Paul's ministry in general, 2:1-5 emphasizes his ministry to the Colossians specifically.

- 1) **Paul's desire stated POSITIVELY—2:1-3** <sup>1</sup> *For* (continuing 1:24-29) *I want* [θέλω] *you to understand* ...
  - a) What he wants them to know? *how great a struggle* [ἀγών] *I have* ...
    - i) Most likely Paul's intense exertion in prayer for them.
      - (1) John Kitchen reminds us: part of his struggle found its way from inward distress to outward action, including the writing of this very letter.
      - ii) Ministering to bring people to spiritual maturity is hard work.
    - b) Who benefits from Paul's struggle? Three groups are mentioned.
      - i) The Colossian believers: ... *on your behalf* ...
      - ii) The Laodicean believers: ... *and for those who are at Laodicea*,
        - (1) 10-11 miles west of Colosse
        - (2) The congregation later describes as "lukewarm." (Rev. 3:14)
      - iii) All believers he has never met: *and for all those who have not seen my face in the flesh*,
        - (1) Paul is emphasizing that his struggle was for Christians personally unknown to him yet spiritually dear to him. (Murray Harris)
    - c) What is the four-fold purpose of Paul's struggle? <sup>2</sup> **so that** [ἵνα] ...
      - i) **Encouragement:** *their hearts may be encouraged* [παρακαλέω],
      - ii) **Prior unity:** *having been held together* [συμβιβάζω] *in love* [ἀγάπη],
      - iii) **Certainty/confidence:** *even unto* [εἰς] *all the wealth of the full assurance* [πληροφορία] *of understanding* [σύνεσις],
      - iv) **Full knowledge:** *unto* [εἰς] *the full knowledge* [ἐπίγνωσις] *of God's mystery* [μυστήριον], *that is, Christ Himself*,
        - (1) <sup>3</sup> *in whom* (Christ) *are hidden* [ἀπόκρυφος] *all* (without exception) *the treasures* [θησαυρός] *of* (God's) *wisdom* [σοφία] *and knowledge* [γνώσις].
        - (2) Cf. Prov. 2:1-8 in LXX (common words such as: hidden, wisdom, heart, understanding, treasure, knowledge)
      - v) There are those who would try to sell us the false teaching that there is something new and better for the Christian that goes beyond the pages of Scripture. Is Christ enough? If **Yes**, you don't need to look elsewhere. If **No**, then you will never be satisfied.

2) **Paul's desire stated NEGATIVELY—2:4-5** <sup>4</sup> *I say this (2:1-3) so that [ἵνα] no one will delude [παραλογίζομαι] you with persuasive argument [πιθανολογία].*

- Now for the first time the danger facing the church is expressly mentioned.
- Paul's point is that even though the *arguments* seem to make sense (*sound reasonable*), they are in the end false. Paul is not here arguing against the study of philosophy or serious thinking per se, but is arguing against the uncritical *adoption* of a philosophy that is at odds with a proper view of Christ and the ethics of the Christian life. (NET Bible)

a) **Physically:** <sup>5</sup> *For [γάρ] even though I am absent in body,*

b) **Spiritually:** *nevertheless [ἀλλά] I am with you in spirit,*

i) *rejoicing to see* (based on Epaphras' words) ...

- two military illustrations: Greek phalanx or Roman manipule

(1) Discipline: *your good order* [τάξις]

(2) Unbroken ranks: *and the stability* [στερέωμα] *of your faith in* [εἰς] *Christ.*

c) There has been a resolute firmness in standing against the false teacher, but the potential danger of attack still exists.

i) Epaphras has done a good job of equipping the congregation.

3) **Things we need to remember:**

a) There is a temptation for people in ministry to become emotionally **detached** from their work. Paul is not ashamed to explain his struggle for them. (MBC)

i) At the same time, there is a temptation for people in ministry to become emotionally **attached** to their work.

(1) People don't become strong by exercising their emotions. (JMac)

(2) Emotions respond to what we perceive to be true, even if it isn't.

b) We need not be limited by what we can do in the presence of people. We can serve the Lord in the privacy of our rooms on our knees. If we do serve publicly, our effectiveness depends largely on our private devotions before God. (Wm. MacDonald)

c) Few things will break the heart of someone in ministry more than watching sheep begin to follow false teaching and be unwilling to listen to their shepherd.

d) Few things will rejoice the heart of someone in ministry more than watching sheep refuse to follow false teaching and be willing to listen to their shepherd.

Colossians 2:6-7  
What Godward Growth Looks Like

**Introduction:** This begins the ethical/practical section that runs through the rest of the book. (2:6-4:18) The first command in the book is found in 2:6.

- 1) <sup>6</sup> *Therefore ... **so walk*** [pres. act. impv. περιπατέω] *in Him*—2:6a
  - a) Keep on conducting your life appropriately with the sphere of Him.
    - i) Cf. 1:10
    - b) This is not mere **activity** but **progress** toward a particular goal.
  
- 2) What is the standard of walking in Christ?—2:6b
  - a) *as you received* [aor. act. ind. παραλαμβάνω] (the) *Christ* (,) *Jesus the Lord*, (cf. Eph. 3:11; Phil. 3:8; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2)
    - i) In view of the fact that this reception of sound doctrinal tradition has occurred.
    - ii) This is not mere **passive** reception but also **active** acceptance which includes faith and commitment to Him.
  
- 3) What are the four characteristics of a Godward walk of faith?—2:7
  - Paul mixes his metaphors by commanding us to walk while at the same time being firmly rooted.
  - a) **Stability by God's grace**
    - i) An **agricultural** illustration: <sup>7</sup> *having been firmly rooted* [pf. pass. ptc. ριζόω]
      - (1) The perfect aspect shows us this never needs to be repeated.
    - ii) A **construction** illustration: *and being built up* [pres. pass. ptc. ἐποικοδομέω] *in Him*,
    - iii) A **financial & legal** illustration
      - (1) *and having been established* [pres. pass. ptc. βεβαίωω] *in your* (better “the”) *faith—just as you were instructed* [aor. pass. ind. διδάσκω] (by Epaphras)—
        - (a) Being established is the result of the first two participles (rooted and built up)
  - b) **Gratitude for God's grace:**
    - i) *and abounding* [pres. act. ptc. περισσεύω] *with thanksgiving* [εὐχαριστία].

**4) Things we need to remember:**

- a) Sound Biblical teaching that is genuinely embraced brings spiritual stability and assurance to our life.
  - i) When we doubt or reject this teaching, it leads to spiritual instability and anxiety in our life.
- b) Discontent and ingratitude make fertile soil for false teaching to put down its roots. (John Kitchen)
  - i) Discontentment with and ingratitude for good food makes the cotton-candy of false teachers look appealing and beneficial.

Colossians 2:8  
Godward Salvation, part one

**Introduction:** We live in a day of theological and cultural confusion. Believers are bombarded with various philosophies such as: Critical Race Theory, BLM, LGBTQ+, gender confusion, Jesus Calling, The Shack, the televised series The Chosen, spiritual formation, Woke-ism, Social Justice, female pastors, mysticism, Chicken Soup for the Soul, etc. The list is seemingly endless. But we have a choice to make. We can and should moan over our grief at the false teachings that are spread. But we must do more than moan. We must follow the Biblical principles laid out in Colossians 2, especially with the command in 2:8.

- 1) We must guard against the imminent danger—2:8 <sup>8</sup> **See to it** [pres. impv.] *that no one* (a specific individual, a false teacher) *takes you<sup>pl</sup> captive ...*
  - The possibility of being taken captive [συλαγωγέω] occurs during war. In other words, we are not strolling through a park or walking on a beach.
  - You now belong to the kingdom of His beloved Son (1:13). The devil wants his former citizens back.
    - i) Warren Wiersbe echoes the words of many pastors when he says:  
Most of the people I have talked with who are members of antichristian cults were at one time associated with a Christian church of one denomination or another.
  - You are responsible for **not** being taken captive. No believers are exempt from this command. It is no one's fault but your own if you find yourself in a spiritual detention camp. Step up and take responsibility for your spiritual life now, before it is too late!
  - The false teachers are seductively impressive and enjoyable to listen to, making it hard to reject. Peter refers to them using plastic words. (2 Peter 2:1-3)
    - a) How might we be taken captive? What weapons are used against us? *through ...*
      - i) *philosophy* [φιλοσοφία] *and empty* (zero positive results) *deception* [κενός ἀπάτη],
        - One definite article governs the two items, thereby combining them.
      - (1) Philosophy (love of wisdom) by itself is not wrong. It is godless/manward empty philosophy that is extremely dangerous.
      - (a) **Everyone** has a philosophy, just as everyone has a theology.  
A philosophy is a system of thinking.

- (b) Fallen humanity tries to understand the basis and purpose of our existence, but only apart from God. They demand that God must not be a part of the equation.
  - (c) Paul dealt with two contradicting kinds of philosophers [φιλόσοφος] in Athens (cf. Acts 17:18).
    - (i) Epicureans: the highest good is to live for pleasure
    - (ii) Stoics: the highest good is to be free from excess and to submit without complaining.
  - (d) True philosophy will focus on Jesus Christ—it will not put Christ in any lower position, nor will it focus on human endeavor. (Bruce Barton)
- (2) The empty deception may be worthless, but it is not harmless.
- (a) Peter dealt with deception in 2 Pet. 2:13
- ii) Regardless of the specific teachings, the fundamental problem Paul identifies is that human rules and traditions are being recommended as necessary supplements to Christ. (FSB)
- (1) Paul shows contempt for these dangerous spiritual supplements.
- b) What does philosophy and empty deception look like?
- i) Positively**
    - (1) Its source: *according to* [κατά] *the tradition* [παράδοσις] *of men* [ἄνθρωπος],
      - (a) All people have traditional instructions passed on from generation to generation, good or bad.
    - (2) Its content: *according to* [κατά] *the elementary principles* [στοιχεῖον] *of the world* [κόσμος],
      - (a) Possible interpretations
        - Perhaps the fundamental elements of the Law of Moses.
        - Perhaps the fundamental elements of the universe
          - i.e. earth, water, air, & fire (cf. 2 Pet. 3:10, 12)
        - Perhaps the fundamental elements of learning
          - i.e. geometry, logic, religion (diet, calendars), zodiac/horoscopes/astrology, etc. (cf. Heb. 5:12)
        - Perhaps the elemental spirits
          - i.e. demons, evil spirits
      - (b) We have died to these things in Christ. (cf. Gal. 4:3, 9; Col. 2:20)
  - ii) Negatively**
    - (1) *and not according to* [κατά] *Christ*.
  - iii) **Paul's point is this:** you can either measure Christ by the yardstick of human knowledge, or you can measure human knowledge by the yardstick of Christ.

- c) These teachings are found in music, art, movies, psychologies, education, politics, finances, government, and every other aspect of our culture and our Christian subculture.

**2) Things we need to remember:**

- a) False teaching is by nature both overly simplistic and ever-increasingly complex. It must by nature evolve in increasing and unbearable complexity. Its internal inconsistencies require constant morphing and changing of its teachings so as to remain tenable on the surface.
- b) The Christian faith, however, consists of the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ, and it is away from this simple, restful trust that the evil one and those who serve him seek to lure us. (Kitchen)

Colossians 2:9-15  
Godward Salvation, part two

**Introduction:** While the Colossian believers had not yielded to the temptations from the false teacher, the temptation was nonetheless very strong. How will they be able to withstand the intense temptation?

- 2) The reasons why we must be on guard—2:9-15 <sup>9</sup> *For [ὅτι] ...*
- c) Because of **WHO HE IS (HIS DEITY)**—2:9 *in [ἐν] **Him** (emphatic) all the fullness [πλήρωμα] of Deity [θεότης] (the complete divine essence currently) dwells [pres. act. ind. κατοικέω] bodily / corporeally, physically [σωματικώς], (cf. 1:19)*
- i) Jesus has always been and always will be completely God.  
(1) He is not another God along with God.  
(2) He is not less than God.
- ii) Murray Harris writes: It is in Christ, and Christ alone, that the sum total of the fullness of the Godhead, no part or aspect excepted, permanently resides in bodily form. It is true that before the incarnation the fullness did not reside in Christ in bodily form. It is NOT true that before the incarnation the fullness did not reside in him at all. Thus, Paul implies both the eternal deity and the permanent humanity of Christ.
- iii) Jesus' human body is an undeniable historical reality that began in Mary's womb and endures into eternity future.
- d) Because of **WHAT HE HAS DONE (HIS COMPLETION OF US)**—2:10-15
- i) He has **completed** us—2:10 <sup>10</sup> *and in Him you have been filled / completed [pf. pass. ptc. πληρώω] (by God the Father), (cf. 2:10)*
- (1) *who (Christ) is the head [κεφαλή] over all rule [ἀρχή] and authority [ἐξουσία];*
- (a) He alone is supreme over ALL creation, visible and invisible.  
(1:16) He is not one of many.
- (b) He is head over each individually and over all collectively.  
(Kitchen)
- (2) There is nothing lacking in the way in which God has caused you to live. The false teachers cannot add to what God has already given. Genuine completeness can be found nowhere else.
- (a) We are conceived and live in our incompleteness before Christ.
- Spiritually (out of fellowship), morally (wrong standard of conduct), mentally (incapable of knowing the truth)  
(MacArthur)
- (b) Charles Spurgeon argues that we are complete:



- Without the aid of any Jewish ceremony
  - Without the help of any Gentile philosophy
  - Without the inventions of any superstition
  - Without any human effort or merit
- (b) There is nothing lacking in your relationship with God. You don't need to go looking for something elsewhere. You possess all you need and fulfill every requirement God might put upon you. (paraphrase of Kitchen)
- ii) He has **circumcised** us—2:11-15
- (1) **WHAT** is this spiritual circumcision?—2:11a <sup>11</sup> *in* [ἐν] *whom* *you were also circumcised* [aor. pass. ind. περιτέμνω] *with a circumcision made without hands* [ἀχειροποίητος],
- (a) This is not water baptism, but a unique, sovereign, spiritual act of God upon us at the moment of regeneration.
- (b) This is similar to the circumcision of the heart that God revealed (both in command and promise) in the OT.
- (i) Needed: Lev. 26:41; Acts 7:51
- (ii) Commanded: Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4; Rom. 2:28-29; Phil. 3:3
- (iii) Promised: Deut. 30:6
- (2) **WHERE** is this spiritual circumcision located?—2:11b
- (a) *in* [ἐν] *the removal* [ἀπέκδυσις] *of the body of the flesh*,
- (i) A reference to our old nature
- (b) *in* [ἐν] *the circumcision of* (that characterizes the followers of the) *Christ*,
- (3) **HOW** has the spiritual circumcision taken place?
- (a) A burial—2:12a <sup>12</sup> *having been buried* *with* [aor. pass. ptc.] (by God the Father) *Him* *in* [ἐν] (the) *baptism*,
- (b) A resurrection from spiritual death—2:12b-13b
- (i) *in* [ἐν] *which* (baptism) *you were also raised up* *with* [aor. pass. ind.] (by God the Father) *Him* *through faith in the working of God* (the Father), *who raised Him* (Christ) *from the dead*.
- (ii) <sup>13</sup> *And ... He* (God the Father) *made you* (Gentiles) *alive* *with* [σύν] *Him* (Christ),
- *you being dead in* [ἐν] *your transgressions* (deliberate deviations) *and the uncircumcision of your flesh*,
- (c) What has the Father done for us through Christ?—2:13c-15
- (i) **Gracious forgiveness:** *having graciously forgiven* [χαρίζομαι] *us* (including believing Jews and Gentiles) *all* (not just some) *our transgressions* (deliberate deviations).

1. Negatively: God does not wipe out the events from history or memory.
  2. Positively: He does eliminate the guilt and the burden of guilt.
- (ii) **Legal obliteration:** <sup>14</sup> *Having canceled out* (i.e. obliterated) [aor. act. ptc.] *the certificate of debt* (the record of our violations) *consisting of decrees against us which was hostile to us,*
1. *He also has taken* [pf. act. ind.] *it out of the way, having nailed* [aor. act. ptc.] *it to the cross.*
  2. It might even be said that he took the document, ordinances and all, and nailed it to his cross as an act of triumphant defiance in the face of those blackmailing powers that were holding it over men and women in order to command their allegiance. (F. F. Bruce)
- (iii) **Public humiliation:** <sup>15</sup> ... *He* (God the Father) *made* [aor. act. ind.] *a public display of them,*
1. *Having disarmed* [aor. mid. ptc.] *the rulers and authorities,*
  2. *having triumphed over* [aor. act. ptc.] *them in* [ἐν] *Him.*
    - a. This is better understood to refer to the cross, not Christ. The pronoun is neuter, not masculine.
    - b. The cross was not a place of Jesus' defeat but rather His triumph. (cf. 2 Cor. 2:14;
  3. How absurd it would be to be deceived into thinking they must somehow seek to satisfy these defeated enemies of Christ.

### 3) Things we need to remember:

- a) The message proclaimed by Paul to the Colossians remains the one message of hope to men and women in frustration and despair. Christ crucified and risen is Lord of all: all the forces of the universe are subject to him, not only the benign ones but the hostile ones as well. They are all subject to the one through whom they were created; the hostile forces are also subject to the one by whom they were conquered. (F. F. Bruce)
- b) Paul, by the Spirit of God, has used five different word pictures to show what Christ has accomplished for us:
  - i) Spiritual circumcision—2:11
  - ii) Spiritual immersion—2:12
  - iii) Spiritual resurrection—2:12-13

- iv) Legal charges dismissed—2:14
- v) Military triumphal procession—2:15
- c) We must be completely clear—it was precisely this which God “canceled out” for each of us. The record of our failures against the law of God is erased, obliterated, wiped clean so that no evidence of its previous existence can be tracked down, brought up, or used against us. Glory to God! (John Kitchen)

Colossians 2:16-19  
Godward Warning of Legalistic Mysticism

**Introduction:** All too often the people who claim they want you to be “more spiritual” are among the most legalistic people you will ever meet. There is a common occurrence in contemporary Christianity that is marked by spiritual intimidation and spiritual bullying.

This section appears to be a further explanation of his warning in 2:8.

**1) Courtroom scene: resist all efforts to be illegitimately accused—**

**2:16-17** <sup>16</sup> *Therefore* (because the Father has reconciled us to Himself through Christ), **no one is to judge** [pres. act. impv. κρίνω] *you ...*

- By saying “no one”, Paul seems to deliberately keep the false teacher anonymous. This may have bothered the attention seeker.
- These accusations seem to be predominantly Jewish in nature
  - a) About your groceries (cf. Peter in Acts 10:14; Paul in Rom. 14:21)
    - i) *in food and drink*, (observing kashrut or kosher rules)
    - ii) Diet regulations are common in false religions
  - b) About your annual, monthly, or weekly calendar: *or in respect to ...*
    - i) *a festival* (3x per year) *or a new moon* (monthly) *or a Sabbath day* (weekly)—
    - ii) These were common OT expressions: 1 Chron. 23:31; Neh. 10:33
  - c) Shadow of anticipation; incomplete: <sup>17</sup> *things which are only a shadow* [σκία] *of what is to come*; (cf. Heb. 10:1)
  - d) Body of reality; complete: *but the substance* [σῶμα] *belongs to* (the) *Christ*.
    - i) Warren Wiersbe writes: Why go back into shadows when we have the reality in Jesus Christ? This is like trying to hug a shadow when the reality is at hand!
  - e) **The Point:** Those who criticized the Colossian believers in these areas failed to grasp the significance of the cross of Christ.
    - i) These five areas are matters of conscience. (cf. Rom. 14:1-6)

**2) Arena scene: resist all efforts to be unjustifiably disqualified—**

**2:18-19** <sup>18</sup> **Let no one keep defrauding** [pres. act. impv. καταβραβεύω] *you of your prize* ...

- The word picture is that of an umpire or referee declaring someone disqualified from the contest.
  - a) How might this unqualified umpire/referee attempt to disqualify you? (he is characterized by four present active participles)
    - i) Personal religion: *by delighting* [pres. act. ptc. θέλω] *in ...*

- (1) False humility: *self-abasement* [ταπεινοφροσύνη]
  - (2) False worship: *and the worship* [θρησκεία] *of the angels*,
    - Either the worship of the angels or the worship done by angels
  - ii) Personal “visions”: *going into detail about* [pres. act. ptc. ἐμβατεύω] *visions he has seen*, (MT reads “not seen”)
    - (1) Perhaps claiming to have observed angels worshiping?
  - iii) Personal self-importance: *being puffed up* [pres. pass. ptc. φυσióω] *for nothing by his fleshly mind*,
    - (1) No matter what visions this person claims, he is still fleshly.
    - (2) His faith is in his alleged visions, not in Christ.
  - iv) Personal rejection: <sup>19</sup> *and not holding fast to* [pres. act. ptc. κρατέω] *the head*,
- b) How does genuine spiritual growth take place?
- i) Nourishment: *from whom* (the Head) *the entire body, ... grows* [pres. act. ind. αὕξω] *with a growth* [αύχησις] *that is from God*.
    - (1) Dependent on Christ
    - (2) Stimulated by God the Father.
  - ii) Interdependence: *being supplied* [pres. pass. ptc. ἐπιχορηγέω] *and held together* [pres. pass. ptc. συμβιβάζω] *by the joints and ligaments*,

### 3) Things we need to remember:

- a) Don't be discouraged or intimidated if others attempt to self-righteously judge you. Remember that you are ultimately responsible to Christ.
- b) True worship always humbles a person. The *mind* is awed by the greatness of God; the *heart* is filled with love for God; and the *will* is submitted to the purpose God has for the life. (Warren Wiersbe)
- c) The true Christian glories in Christ, not in his own experience. He follows the Word, led by the Holy Spirit; and as he abides in Christ, he experiences blessing and fruitfulness. (Warren Wiersbe)

## Colossians 2:20-23 Dangers of Minimizing Christ

**Introduction:** These are part of the challenges spiritual leaders face as they seek to bring to maturity those under their charge.

- 1) A valid assumption of the facts of victory—2:20a
  - a) The assumption: <sup>20</sup> *If you have died with Christ* (and you have) ...
  - b) The separation: *to [ἀπό] the elementary principles [στοιχείων] of the world [κόσμος]*, (cf. 2:8)
    - i) These are the very things Christ defeated at the cross. (2:15)
  
- 2) A valid question about surrendering to false teachers—2:20b-21
  - a) Why? *why, ... do you submit yourself to decrees [δογματίζω]*:
    - i) Why place yourself under obligation to these things?
  - b) What are the three negative decrees of religious asceticism?
    - i) Do you find it curious that the world condemns Christians as having negative commands but then have negative rules themselves?
    - ii) Long term contact: <sup>21</sup> *“Do not handle,*
    - iii) Short term: *nor taste,*
    - iv) Short term contact: *nor touch”?*
  - c) What does it make Christians look like?
    - i) *as if you were living in the world [κόσμος]*, (cf. 3:7)
  - Murray Harris: Since death with Christ brought emancipation from bondage to the elemental spirits, submission to the codified taboos that they promote amounts to a surrender of that liberty ... and a denial of the headship of Christ (v. 19).
  
- 3) A valid observation of the rules of the false teachers—2:22-23
  - a) Rules for the temporary: <sup>22</sup> *Which deal with everything destined to perish with use,*
    - i) Food ceases to be food once it is eaten. (Curtis Vaughn)
    - ii) These things perish by being used, not by being avoided.
  - b) Manward rules: *which are in accordance with* (founded on) *the* (specific) *commands and* (general) *teachings of men;*
    - i)
  - c) Deceptive external rules: <sup>23</sup> *which* (rules) *are matters having, to be sure, a word of* (reputation for) *wisdom in ...* (three areas)
    - i) Self-oriented worship: *self-made religion [ἑθελοθησκία]*
      - (1) Self-chosen pattern of worship
    - ii) False humility: *and self-abasement [ταπεινοφροσύνη]*

- (1) While asceticism pretends to be humble, it is actually pride.
- iii) Harsh self-discipline: *and severe treatment* [ἀφειδία] *of the body*,
  - (1) Douglas Moo writes: It is especially attractive to think that the problem of temptation, which can be viewed as a struggle to allow one's mind to control one's body, could be solved if only the body could be subdued through harsh treatment.
- d) Dangerously futile rules: *but are of no value* [τιμή] *against fleshly* [σάρξ] *indulgence* (gratification) [πλησμονή].
  - i) Man-made rules cannot address our deepest needs. Ironically, these man-made rules appeal to our flesh rather than help to mortify the flesh.
  - Murray Harris: It is incongruous for the citizens of another, heavenly world to submit to petty regulations concerning perishable items in this world in order to conform to merely human precepts and tenets.

#### 4) **Things we need to remember:**

- a) Man-made religious rules can appear to be expressions of devotion to God.
- b) It is easy to make godliness hinge on outward observances and rules instead of inward conviction and Biblical principle. (A. T. Robertson)
- c) We do need rules of conduct in family, society and church, but these are not enough by themselves to make us pleasing to God.
- d) To paraphrase John MacArthur: A person may keep all the rules, have higher visions, commune with angels, receive revelation, and be in abject self-abasement in poverty, all because of self-made humility and unsparing treatment of the body. But all that is of no value because it serves only to satisfy the flesh. That is simply carnality—trying to glorify yourself as the one who can save yourself or make yourself spiritual.
- e) Don't be intimidated by people whose seemingly spiritual rules or experiences (raising hands, speaking in tongues, etc.) are more important to them than the Bible.