



A new creation focus through Colossians ...

Failure of the "Do Not's"

Doctrine of human origin, in order to have some pretence of holiness, always sets up a system of *do's* and *don't's*. The All Wise, anticipating the direction that false teaching would go, set up His own system of *do's* and *don't's*, the covenant which came through Moses. The apostle Paul, writing to the churches of Galatia, noted that "if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law" (Galatians 3:21). The point is that if God's law does not produce the righteousness that leads to eternal life, then any lesser man-made system of law

will certainly not produce righteousness either. Hence, from even the strongest law position — that which was given by God — legitimate pressure cannot be put on new covenant saints to keep the Sabbath or the festivals or the regulations on food and drink. Much less, then, can disciples of Christ be pressured by those laws and regulations which come through the visionaries and the developing Gnostics of the first century.

▼ **Dying to elementary principles** — The decrees of the law of God which were hostile to the newly immersed follower of Christ were taken out of way, nailed to the cross with Christ. The death of the individual to old things was not, however, limited to the decrees of the Law. "If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world," asseverated Paul, "why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to [worldly] decrees" (Colossians 2:20). The saint also is released from, if necessary, the decrees and feasts and fasts of pagan religions, or to the man-made rules of disciplining the flesh. Paul lumps all of these into the term "elementary principles of the world." In being buried with Christ in immersion, the saint died to these principles as well as any power his past life might attempt to hold over him.

▼ **Ineffectiveness of worldly decrees** — Why, then, would the saint submit to the myriad of rules and regulations issued by mere men, regardless of what heavenly visions they used to try to justify the imposition of their ideas upon fellow man? "Why," says Paul, "do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 'Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!' (which all refer to things destined to perish with the using) — in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?" (Colossians 2:21,22). A check list of things that may be done and a check list of things that may not be done absolve the individual of the responsibility of thinking through his situation and making his own value judgment as to what should be done next. Under the terms of the new covenant, saints walk by faith, fixing their eyes on Jesus in glory. This fixation transforms their inner persons, and works outward to transform their judgment and behavior. A system of law, then, is inimical to the system of faith, and there is no sense in which the child of the new covenant should devolve into the primitive, childish system of God-made law, or worse — man-made law.

Wherever the saint has not put to death his flesh, these man-made regulations have appeal. Hence Paul's deep and intense warning. "These are matters which have, to be sure," he avers, "the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence" (Colossians 2:23). The untaught or the unwary can be pulled into these doctrines. Thus, it is imperative that the saint of God become fully aware of the nature of the faith of Christ, and why it succeeds where everything else fails. These other systems have the appearance of wisdom, but really have no wisdom at all. The individual Christian, in order to successfully overcome his flesh, must know how to implement the principles of the faith. Furthermore, he must really increasingly understand the wisdom of God in order to articulate to others the principles of the faith, that other saints may begin to enjoy the victories over fleshly indulgence!

**THE PAPERWORK OF
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NESS HAS PERISHED
ON THE CROSS OF
CHRIST.**