

1 2 **FOCUS ON JOY!**3 **THE JOY-STEALERS**

Colossians 2:16-23

4 **The Joy-Stealers**

- Paul warned in the closing verses of chapter 2 about three things that can steal our Christian joy:

- Legalism (2:16-17) – Trying to earn God's favor by adhering to a set of rules.
- Mysticism (2:18-19) – Following man-created spiritual hierarchies or seeking ecstatic experiences which God did not intend.
- Asceticism (2:20-23) – Practicing severe self-denial in order to be more "spiritual."

5 **Legalism (2:16-17)**

- *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

- Old Testament laws:

- Had a real benefit to God's chosen people
- Furnished a daily reminder that sinful man could not keep God's Holy Law and therefore could not provide His own salvation.
- Pointed forward in time to Christ.

6 **Mysticism (2:18-19)**

- *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.*

- People began worshiping angels because they felt the need to have someone / something between themselves and God.

- Today: Mormons (angels); Catholics (priests)

7 **Asceticism (2:20-23)**

- *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body: not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.*

- People think self-denial makes them or their children more "spiritual."
- Enforcing dietary, dress, or other standards to be more "spiritual."

8 **FOCUS ON JOY**

1. Look UPWARD to the reign of Christ

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- Literally, "Since you have been raised together with Christ"

- "Since" better than if

- We cannot raise ourselves to a new life in Christ. We have "been raised together" with Christ.

- We were represented in Christ. When He arose from the dead, those of us in Christ participated in the resurrection.

10 **Seek heavenly things**










- "Seek" – "to make a demanding intense search for"

- Not casual

- This is intentional activity

- Heaven – where Christ is seated as co-regent on the right hand of God the Father

11 **Strive for heavenly things**

- Look into heavenly things
 - Understand God's will
 - Put yourselves in submission to God's plan for your life
 - Do what is important to Christ Who is on His throne
- 12  **What should you seek?**
- Seek HIM (Deuteronomy 4:29; 1 Chron. 28:9)
 - Seek HIS FACE (unhindered fellowship and blessing) – 2 Chronicles 7:14
 - Seek HIS PEACE and pursue it (Psalm 34:14)
 - Seek HIS AUTHORITY (Isaiah 55:6)
 - Seek HIS KINGDOM (Matthew 6:33)
 - Seek HIS GLORY (1 Corinthians 10:24)
 - Seek a faithful and rewarded life (Hebrews 11:6)
 - Seek the lost (Luke 19:10)
- 13  **A 2-fold emphasis**
- "Seek those things above" suggests STRIVING.
 - "Set your affections on things above" suggests CONCETRATING.
- 14  **Navigating life (seeking)**
- Captain Worsely in the Antarctic had 3 tools
 - A map
 - A sextant
 - A compass
 - We have 3 tools:
 - The Word of God
 - The Spirit of God
 - The Sovereignty of God
- 15  **Focused love (setting affections)**
- Example of Greyfriar's Bobby
 - Mourned for years at the grave of his master John Gray
 - How much more should we love, adore, and be near a living Master?
- 16  **2. Look INWARD to the death of the old man**
- A dead man takes no joy from the present world
 - A dead man has no plans of his own
 - A dead man has lost his desires and lusts
- 17  **3. Look CHRIST-WARD to the Safekeeping of Christ**
- Your life is hid in Christ with God (you're in the safe!)
 - Hidden implies:
 - Concealment
 - Safety
 - Invisibility
 - Security
- 18  **1 Peter 1:3-5**
- *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*
- 19  **We have all the resources we need**
- What do you do to prepare for a disaster?
 - What if one comes?
 - God has already prepared us with everything we need spiritually.
 - Example of FedEx commercial
- 20  **4. Look FORWARD to Christ's return**

- Should comfort us rather than frighten us
 - A good spiritual barometer for us
- The Bible speaks of Christ's return a lot!
 - 1800 references in Old Testament
 - 300 references in New Testament – 1 out of every 30 verses
- Paul wants us to live in the light of Christ's return.
 - Let your earthly practice match your heavenly position.

21 

Look forward to what?

- In heaven we will:
 - Worship without distraction
 - Serve without exhaustion
 - Fellowship without fear
 - Learn without fatigue
 - Rest without boredom