



## **Sermon Study - Conversation Guide**

April 28, 2024

“Why Legalism Fails”

Colossians 2:16-3:1

This guide is a discipleship tool for personal reflection, family conversations, for home groups, and for Table Talk on Sundays @10:40 am and 12:15 pm on the Lowell Patio

Coastal Community Church  
[mycoastal.org](http://mycoastal.org)

Today we're going to discuss why legalism fails. Legalism is the idea that you must perfectly follow the Old Testament Law, or a set of rules laid out by men who interpret the Bible in such a perfect way, if you obey, blessings will flow. But if you don't, curses and condemnation will follow. Yet last week Paul reminded us that Jesus nailed all our sin to the cross.

**2:16 *Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.***

Most of the churches the apostle Paul was writing to were made up of Jews who chose to trust Jesus as the Messiah. That same Jesus told Peter how all the food on the Jewish 'do not touch' list was okay to eat moving forward. There are 7 major Jewish festivals, the new moon festival, and the weekly Sabbath meal. Every week and month, the Jews who believed in Jesus gathered with their traditional Jewish families.

Can you imagine the awkwardness when those family members were staring at the ones who believed in Jesus as they barbecued pork ribs at a Kosher meal? There are going to be a lot of moments in your life when following Jesus doesn't make any sense to the people around you. I pray your heart stays soft and you are no longer scared to lose the people's approval who add nothing to your life but stress and anxiety.

**2:17 *These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.***

For Jewish Christians, all the celebrations and dietary restrictions were the shadow of Jesus. For example, the Passover lamb which was killed to deliver Jews from Egyptian slavery, pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, who died to deliver us from the slavery and condemnation brought on by sin. Jesus is the reality, the point. Christianity is about knowing Jesus. Our focus isn't on what to do. It's on Him. That's not easy to do. Paul knows this. So, he gives us examples to help us.

**2:18 *Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. 19 They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.***

Back then, some worshipped angels. To them, if you had a vision or a crazy supernatural experience, then you'd be totally fulfilled. I have seen

crazy miracles like cancer healed, addictions disappear, and people raised from the dead. None of that replaces Jesus. Yes, it gives me evidence that God is real but they're not a substitute for knowing Jesus.

In our culture, many people either have, or know someone who is taking psychedelics to have a spiritual experience. The pursuit of such experiences for their own sake is never a good idea. Jesus is the head of us as the church. Every good thing comes as we stay connected to Him.

**2:20 *Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: 21 “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”?***

How can you tell when something is not from Jesus? The person telling you about that spiritual idea or rule is quick to run your life, telling you exactly what to do and what not to do. Condemnation is the result.

**2:22 *These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. 2:23 *Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.****

If you seek the “hidden secrets” to things like weight loss for peace, your spiritual appetite doesn't change. You can grind yourself into dust trying to get more peace, hope, and love and be less selfish, triggered, or angry, but the only tool you have in your toolbox is you. God loves you, knows every broken piece in you, and claims every part as His beloved. He doesn't want you carrying the burdens but wants to carry them, as Jesus says in *Matthew 11:28-29*. So, Paul reminds us to turn to Jesus.

**3:1 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.***

You probably noticed that last week I skipped two verses. I'm going to bring them back today, since this entire section starts and ends the same way, and it all drives home the same point...

**2:6 *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.***

Here is the Good News. You're more broken than you admit and more loved than you could hope, because Jesus claims you as His own. He is with you. Set your hearts on Him, asking for His direction in every step.

**GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDELINES: Tips for great conversation**

- We aren't here to teach/fix each other, but to share our experiences.
- Show respect by listening to one another, asking clarifying questions.
- If you're quick to share, allow space and time for others to speak up.
- If you're slow to speak, your experience is valuable so please share.

**INTRO**

Invite everyone to introduce themselves and then read the Bible verses.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What part of the message and Scripture was most encouraging, and which part is most challenging?
2. What did You notice about God, and what did you notice about yourself as well as other people?

**GOSPEL EXCHANGE (REDEMPTIVE WORK)**

*Jesus asks us to give Him our burdens (Matthew 11:28-29), whatever they may be (a lie we have believed about God or ourselves, our hurt or negative emotions, or even our concerns for loved ones), so He can carry them for us, giving us His peace (His completeness) in exchange.*

What do you want to exchange with Jesus today?

What is the burden? "Lord Jesus, I give you my..."

What's His gift? "Lord Jesus, I receive your..."

**ACTION QUESTIONS**

1. What is one step of obedience you can take this week, based on what you've discovered today? (*NOTE – Consider prayerfully asking God to answer this question for you, taking 30-45 seconds to listen in silence, writing what you heard. If nothing comes clear, keep praying this week.*)
2. During the coming week, who can you share what you learned today? (*NOTE – Consider repeating the same step with this question as the previous question.*)