

# LEGALISTIC ASCETICISM

## COLOSSIANS 2:20-23

*How did you see God working in your life this week? (Romans 1:11, 12)*

BACKGROUND: Legalistic ascetics try to change the outside (the flesh). Jesus' love changes the inside (the heart). As a young child the shackles of the "do not" rules were life saving. As a believer, the power of grace has given you everything needed for life and godliness (**II Peter 1:3**). The ascetic believes all that is needed is self-sufficiency, self-will, and self-reliance.

**HAS NO FOUNDATION** in believers' lives. The basis of the believer's life is found in **Colossians 2:20**. Your old sinful life died with Christ at the cross. Now Christ lives in you giving you grace (power) to live His life. Legalistic ascetics' "do not" rules are a bad exchange for your personal relationship with Christ. (**Colossians 2:20-22, fn 2:20-23, Colossians 2:13-15, fn 2:13-15, Romans 6:4-7, fn 6:1-4, fn 6:6**) *How is this kind of asceticism a threat to your relationship with Christ?*

**HAS NO WISDOM.** "Not behaving but believing is God's way: behaving follows believing!" William R. Newell, *Romans Verse By Verse*, p. 234. (**Colossians 2:22, 23, I Corinthians 1:18-30, fn 1:19, fn 1:22-24, Proverbs 3:5, 6, fn 3:5, 6, Proverbs 28:26, fn 28:26**) *What is the wisest thing that could happen to your children?*

**HAS NO VALUE** in restraining sin and sensual indulgence. Athletics is an example of harsh treatment of the body, but should be played for enjoyment. For a believer, when athletics becomes a means to stop and prevent sin or to strengthen his relationship with Christ, then it is legalistic. "There is only one thing that will put the collar on the neck of the animal within us and that is the power of the indwelling Christ," John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Colossians and Philemon* (quoting Alexander McClaren), p.124. (**Colossians 2:23, fn 2:23, Titus 2:11-14, I John 3:9, fn 3:9[2<sup>nd</sup>], I John 5:18, 19, fn 5:18, 19**) *How could you restrain sin in your life?*

*According to this preparation how may we pray for you to be strengthened in your personal relationship with Jesus? How else may we pray for you?*

