

Week Six: The Shadow and The Reality

OPENING:

- How do you, personally, decide whether something is true or not?
- Take a moment to skim Colossians 2:8-15 to refresh your memories of last week's study.
- Now read Colossians 2:16-23.

STUDY:

- In this passage, Paul gives us more details of the "deceptive philosophies" he mentioned in verse 8.
 - Describe the first one in verses 16-17 and how it takes away from the reality found in Christ.
 - Describe the second one in verses 18-19 and how it is detrimental to the church.
 - Describe the third one in verses 20-23 and how is it worthless in helping believers grow closer to Jesus.
- Why do you think people fall prey to these kinds of philosophies?
- Which "rules" do we, as American Christians, tend to tack on to the gospel message?
- Which "rules" do you, personally, tend to place on yourself as you seek to live out your faith? How have these things hindered you?
- How are believers in Christ set free from these "spiritual forces"? (Use this passage and last week's to help you answer.)
- In the chapters to come, Paul will talk more about *how* we can live in the reality of the freedom we have as Christ followers. For now, describe what it means to you that we as Christians have been set free from the rules that "religion" might put on us.

PRAY:

- Pray in thanksgiving for the freedom we have in Christ and for protection from deceptive spiritual forces!

Colossians 2:16-23

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

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!"? 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. 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.