



**COLOSSIANS:
SATISFIED IN CHRIST**
An interactive Bible study for
individuals, families,
and LIFE Groups

~Week Three~
“Drifting Away from Grace”
Colossians 2:16-23

Welcome to UPC’s study of the book of Colossians entitled “Satisfied in Christ.” These weekly lessons are coordinated with the Sunday sermons at UPC. On Sunday morning you will hear a sermon on a selection from Colossians. That week’s study guide will focus on the NEXT section in the book of Colossians. If you miss a sermon, you can always listen to it online at www.upc-orlando.com.

WARM UP

In this week’s lesson we are going to learn about how easy it is to “drift” away from the simplicity of the gospel. For a few moments, think back over your time as a follower of Jesus. Has there been a period when your focus shifted from Christ and his grace to a popular Christian leader, or the success of your ministry, or personal and family concerns, or the teachings of a church or sect? If so, describe your “drift” and its effects upon yourself and others:

RECALL – Colossians 2:6-15

Sunday’s sermon was about the freedom that we have in Christ because we have been born again, forgiven, and justified through faith in Christ.

a) What does it mean to you to “continue to live in [Christ], rooted and built up in him” (2:6-7)? Be specific.

b) In 2:6-7, Paul makes a clear connection between the way we received Christ at the beginning of our walk with God and the way we maintain that walk. What is that connection? In other words, how is the gospel as important to the Christian as it is to the non-Christian?

c) What does it mean to you that “you have been given fullness in Christ” (2:9)?

d) When Paul speaks of “circumcision” and “uncircumcision” (2:11-13), what is he really talking about?

e) Share something you found particularly interesting or relevant in Sunday’s sermon.

REFLECT – Colossians 2:16-23

Paul was in a Roman prison when he wrote this letter to the Colossians. But he had heard through his friend Epaphras that the believers in Colosse were being drawn

away from Christ by false teachers. In 2:16-23 he warns them (and us) to be on guard against anyone who would seek to add to the gospel.

- a) Paul begins this section with a stern warning: "Therefore do not let anyone judge you" (2:16). What does the "therefore" refer back to? In other words, in light of what truth(s) should we refuse to let anyone condemn us? (See 2:13-15)

- b) Proverbs 25:12 says, "Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear." In Colossians 2:16, is Paul saying that we should not listen to criticism? That is, what is the difference between what Proverbs commends and what Paul condemns?

- c) From your reading of 2:16-23, summarize the views of the false teachers in Colosse.

- d) What was the net effect of all the various ideas being promoted by the false teachers? (2:19)

- e) In 2:20-23, Paul seems to argue against rule-keeping. What is the point he is trying to make here?

A Word of Explanation

It would be a mistake to read Paul's words in 2:16-23 as a rejection of all religious disciplines for Christians. He is not promoting a "No Rules, Just Right" type of Christianity. He is not saying it's wrong for people to hold to certain standards for eating, drinking, worship, etc. Rather, Paul's message is that Christian maturity cannot be manufactured apart from relationship with Christ. Rules and disciplines, while often beneficial, have no life in themselves. Many times they become substitutes for intimacy with Christ and reliance on the Holy Spirit. Christian maturity comes only as we stay closely connected with the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

RESPOND

- a) React to the "Word of Explanation" above. Does it ring true with you? How have you seen this issue surface in your own life?

- b) Read Jesus' words in John 15:1-8. How do they shed light upon Paul's teaching in Colossians 2:16-23?

- c) Have you judged others for things that fall outside the clear commands of Scripture? If so, what do you need to do?

The Christian life isn't difficult - it is impossible. If we don't know that, we will try to do things ourselves. Faith is not necessary when we think we can do it ourselves. Faith comes along when we realize that we cannot do it on our own.

(Joseph Garlingen)