

Spiritual Intimidation (Part 2)
Selected Scriptures
March 25, 2012

Introduction

Last week, we looked at what Paul was saying about false teachers telling the Christians in the Colossian church that they were not spiritual enough if they have just Christ. They would judge and disqualify anyone who was not spiritual enough. In order to reach “true” spirituality, they had to do certain things in order to prove that they were spiritual. They tacked on legalistic rules (concerning food, drinks, and celebration days), mystic experiences (false humility in describing their visions), and ascetic lifestyles (forbidding certain activities and food and promoting harmful treatments to the body). All of these were manmade and not in Scripture. Paul said that those are nothing and had no value for the flesh because they did nothing inside.

Paul says that we are complete in Christ. We do not need anything else plus Christ to attain true spirituality because Christ has already taken care of that for us in His life and on the cross. Paul is in essence saying that we are free in Christ. There is nothing in the externals that we do that add or subtract our spirituality in regards to things not mentioned in Scripture. What Paul was not promoting was that we have a license to sin...that we can do whatever we want because we are saved by grace. This is the furthest thing from Paul’s mind.

What is true spirituality is to do the things that are pleasing to the Lord. Jesus always did the things that pleased the Father:

***John 8:29** And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.*

If we are in the flesh (doing the things based on our fleshly desires), then we cannot please God (**Romans 8:8**). If we have Christ Jesus, then we live to serve Him. What’s more we see that when we are in Christ, we obey Him all the more.

***1 Thessalonians 4:1-2** Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; ²for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.*

Before we get into chapter 3 of Colossians, I want us to look at how God views true worship and true spirituality. Our worship goes hand-in-hand with our own spiritual practices, and we see in Scripture what God approves and does not approve.

I. True Spiritual Practices

***Ephesians 5:1-7** Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ³But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. ⁴Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be partners with them.*

- Imitators of God (as children)
 - How?
 - Loving others as Christ loved us
 - sacrificially
- Imitating God
 - Hating what He hates
 - Sexual immorality
 - Gk—*porneia* (refers to all sexual activities, which are sins against God)
 - God created marriage between man and woman

***Genesis 2:24** For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*

Matthew 19:4-6 "Haven't you read," He [Jesus] replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' ⁵and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? ⁶So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

- Sexual union only between husband and wife
- Anything else is sin against God
- Impurity
 - Impure thoughts, fantasies, ideas, passions
- Greed
 - Getting something for self at expense of others (money, things, relationships, etc)
- Obscenity
 - Dirty speech
- Foolish talk
 - Drunken talk or gutter talk
- Coarse joking
 - Talking about something and turning it to something obscene or suggestive
- All those have no place in His kingdom.
- God does not tolerate sin
- We are not to be partners with them
 - Best friends with people like those
 - Marriages to such people
 - Why? Because we'd be showing approval to their actions to which God opposes
 - Does that mean we have no relationship with our friends who do those things? No
 - What it means that we need to show them that the belief in our Lord Jesus Christ is for the better! For the best!
- Loving what He loves
 - Loving others
 - Thankfulness
 - Obedience to His words

II. True Worship Practices

- **I Samuel 15:1-23**
 - **1-3**
 - God's charge to Saul: kill everyone and everything
 - Do not let any live
 - Because the people treated the Israelites horribly during the exodus
 - **4-9**
 - Saul gathered armies
 - Spared Kenites
 - From border to border, killed Amalekites
 - However King Agag was kept alive (though he killed everyone else)
 - "But" contrary to word of God (kept best "sacrifices", destroyed everything else)
 - **10-11**
 - Lord was grieved He had made Saul king
 - Samuel cried
 - **12-15**
 - Samuel meets with Saul
 - Saul said that he has done what the Lord had said
 - Samuel basically asks "what is going on?"
 - Saul—I spared the best sacrifices for God

Note: Sounds like a great idea. It seems that Saul had a heart for worship! How can we judge people like that?

- **16-19**

- Samuel tells Saul that God is upset with him because he did not obey God
- **20-21**
 - Saul persists that his motives were pure and that he indeed obeyed God
- **22-23**

So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. ²³For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

- God wants obedience to His words rather than the acts of worship themselves
 - True worship is always obedience to His words
- Application
 - We do not add to the worship of God to what He has said in His Word. If our life is a pattern of obedience to His word, then our worship is valid and does not disqualify us. Think of the legalists and the ascetics.

- **2 Samuel 6:1-15**

- **1-5**
 - Ark of Covenant was taken by Philistines (1 Samuel 5-6)
 - Left in house of Abinadab (1 Samuel 7:1)
 - David gathered the ark and placed on new cart
 - New cart?!?
 - **Numbers 4:1-15** prescribes a specific method of carrying the ark...with poles by those in the tribe of Levites (Kohathites)
 - If anyone should touch the ark, then s/he would die
 - They have a grand time worshipping God, playing music for His glory! Wonderful worship scene!
- **6-8**
 - One of the ox stumbled
 - Uzzah placed his hand on it to stabilize it (to keep it from falling over or off)
 - He was caught up in a worship experience too
 - God killed him on the spot for his error

Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his error; and he died there by the ark of God.

- Why did God kill Uzzah for such a very minor thing?
 - Because God specifically said it in His word...He was not playing games
 - David should not have placed it on the cart (if he had known what he was supposed to be doing, then none of this would have happened)
 - Uzzah was supposed to have known that he was not supposed to touch the ark
 - If Uzzah had shown knowledge of the word of God, then he would not have touched it
- David became angry with himself and afraid of the Lord...how can we get the ark to Jerusalem
- **13-15**
 - They do the right thing this time around (after 3 months)
 - Levites to bear the ark and sacrifices after 6 paces
 - They resume the worship!
- Application
 - True worship is based on God's words and not based on how we feel or what's convenient (the cart).

- **1 Kings 13**

- **1-3**
 - When Solomon died, civil war happened when Rehoboam was very evil.
 - Jeroboam led the northern kingdom to split from the South
 - God was angry with Jeroboam because he had set up worship contrary to His words
 - Set up worship at Dan and Bethel (as opposed to Jerusalem)
 - Jeroboam set up priests himself (not from Levites)

- Set up days of sacrifices on day of his choosing
- God sent a man of God from Judah to prophecy against Jeroboam
 - Josiah would come 300 years later to destroy the altar
 - Places bones of high priest on it
 - Fulfilled in (2 Kings 23:15-20)
 - Current sign—altar breaking and ashes falling out
- **4-7**
 - Jeroboam orders arrest but hand withered and cannot pull back
 - Asks man of God to ask God to heal him and God does
 - Jeroboam invites him to eat and drink at his house
- **8-10**
 - Man of God declines because God had forbidden it
 - Left the other way
- **11-15**
 - Old prophet heard about the man of God and asks for him
 - Finds him under an oak tree resting and asks the man of God to join him at house
- **16-19**
 - Man of God refuses...same story with Jeroboam
 - Old prophet says “an angel spoke to me and told me.”

1 Kings 13:18 *He said to him, "I too am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.' " (He was lying to him.)*

- Man of God accepts and followed the old prophet
 - Revealed word from the Lord vs experience of another

Galatians 1:8 *But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!*

- **23-25**
 - God's judgment
 - Lion kills the man of God and stands by the corpse along with the donkey
- Application
 - Do not allow other people's mystical experiences distract you from God's revealed word.

Conclusion

How can we know we are achieving true worship and true spirituality? We concentrate on Christ...only on Christ. And how can we know we are concentrating on Christ?

Colossians 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

It is only through Christ's word that can change us and help us with our spiritual practice and our worship. We learn to imitate Christ when we study His life, His words, His impact, His fulfillment, and His future coming!