Rock Valley Bible Church (www.rvbc.cc)

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**Spiritual Peer Pressure (part 3)**

**Colossians 2:20-23**

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1. Have you been redeemed? (verse 20a)
2. Are you being regulated? (verse 20b-23)
   **a. Rules deal with temporary things (verse 22a).**
   **b. Rules are man-made (verse 22b).**
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Colossians 2:20-23
If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)--in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

As we have seen the past few weeks, there was a form of “Spiritual Peer Pressure” taking place in Colossae. There were those who had come into the church, applying high pressure to those in the church to conform their religious practices to meet a certain standard in an effort to make them more spiritual. My message this morning could easily be subtitled, "Fighting Fleshly Indulgence."

Many have divided these pressures using these three words: Legalism, Mysticism, and Asceticism. The first word, “Legalism” describes the submission of one’s heart to external standards, as if they are needed in religion. Two weeks ago, we saw this (in verses 16 and 17), with the elevation of the role of the Jewish culture

into the church. These false teachers focused their attention upon diets and days as necessary for your salvation. But, in reality, they are simply shadows, which point to Christ.

The second word, “Mysticism” describes a religion that is based upon feelings and impressions more than it is focused upon the reality of history and the truth of God's word. Last week, we saw this (in verses 18 and 19), with the elevation of experience over truth. These false teachers focused their attention upon the worship of angels and upon visions that people had seen. Such a focus will dethrone the authority of Jesus, the head of the church, as the authority is based upon your own experience, rather than the truth as it is in Christ (verse 19).

This week, we come to the third word, “Asceticism.” This word describes a self-induced discipline as the key to becoming closer to God. The idea is that when you deprive your physical body of what is comfortable for life, somehow, it makes you more alive in the spiritual realm.

In many ways, asceticism is the partner to legalism. The differences between these two is simply that asceticism usually contains a voluntary element, whereas legalism is generally forced upon you with high pressure to conform. Also, asceticism, describes a rigid discipline of depriving yourself of certain earthly pleasures. Legalism, on the other hand, focuses upon external practices, most of which have no effect upon your body.

These ascetic practices are shown clearly in our text this morning. Look down at verse 21. There were those who were putting forth certain man-made decrees, such as “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” and encouraging others to submit to such rules. If you continue to go down to verse 23, you see more of the same. In this verse, Paul describes a certain sort of “self-made religion.” He describes a “self-abasement” that was encouraged as well. He also describes this as “severe treatment of the body.”

The idea behind each of these practices is that somehow, in some way, you can “beat your body into submission” by denying yourself of certain earthly pleasures. As you do this, you can thereby become closer to God.

Don’t we all want to become closer to God? Why are you hear worshiping at Rock Valley Bible Church this morning? I trust that you are here to worship the Lord

and to grow in your faith and to increase in your love for him and to see your sin in your life diminish? And ultimately, to walk closer and closer and closer to God. Asceticism isn't the answer to a closer walk with the Lord.

By way of outline this morning, I want to ask you two questions. Each of them get to the root of how to become closer to God. My first question is this:
1. Have you been redeemed? (verse 20a)

Perhaps this is the greatest question that anyone might ever ask you: “Have you been redeemed?” By this, I simply mean, “Have you experienced the forgiveness of your sins that is offered to you through faith in Jesus Christ?”

The plain teaching of the Bible could hardly be more clear. If you repent from your sins and believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be saved (Acts 16:31); your sins will be forgiven (Col. 1:14); you will have peace with God (Rom. 5:1); you will spend eternity in His presence (John 3:16), where there are pleasures forevermore (Ps. 16:11). But, if you fail to believe upon the Lord, you will not be saved; you will not be forgiven; you will face the wrath of God; you will spend your eternity bearing your just eternal punishment for your sins (Matt. 25:46).

And so, I ask you, “Have you been redeemed?” This is the idea that Paul is getting at in verse 20, “If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world.” And so, I ask you, “Have you died with Christ?”

The great reality of our salvation is that through faith, we have become partakers of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is a very real sense where believers in Christ are sharers with Him, not only in his sufferings, but also in His victory as well. As Jesus died to sin, so also did we die to sin. Look back at verse 11 (of chapter 2). I’m going to read verses 11-14 for you. And as I read them, I want for you to notice how your life is interwoven into the life of Christ. When He died, you died. When He was buried, you were buried. When He was made alive, you were made alive. When He was raised, you were raised. Notice how many times we read that you were “in Him” or “with Him.”

> Colossians 2:11-14
> and **in Him** you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried **with Him** in baptism, in which you were also **raised up with Him** through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the

> uncircumcision of your flesh, **He made you alive together with Him**, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having **nailed it to the cross**.

As believers in Christ, we share in the life of Christ. We were buried with Him. We were raised up with Him. We have been made alive together with Him. Our sins have been nailed to the cross. This is the great reality that gives us the power and ability to conquer sin in our lives. This is the great reality that allows us to draw closer to Him. This is often repeated in the Bible.

Listen to how Paul says it in Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20). With these words, Paul is describing the life of a Christian. Through faith, His life has become a participant in the life of Christ. He has been crucified with Christ. Thus, he has died to his own life. His life is now totally different. He is no longer the one living. Rather, it’s Christ Jesus who lives in Him. He now lives by a different principle. He lives by faith in Christ, who loved him and was sacrificed for him. It is this new life that will give you the power to conquer sin in your life.

This is what Paul is getting at in verse 20 of our text this morning. “Have you died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world?” Have you died to the passing pleasures of this world? If you have died with Christ, then, you can be sure that you will also live with Him (i.e. Col. 3:1). If you are living with Him, it is because you have been redeemed by Him.

Romans 6 says the same thing: "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

If we have shared with Christ in his death by faith, then we ought to consider ourselves as dead to sin, but alive to God. The fleeting pleasures of sin are gone. It is through our sharing in Christ that we can conquer sin. The way to do that isn’t through rules and regulations. The way to do that is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you been redeemed? (verse 20a) If not, you will find no victory over your sin. Maybe you are here this morning, and really want to have victory over your sin. Perhaps you desperately want a close walk with God. Perhaps you have tried and tried and tried, but seemingly nothing has worked. Well, then, this next question is for you. ...

## 2. Are you being regulated? (verse 20b-23)

By this, I simply mean this, “Is your life being controlled by a series of rules and regulations that you are using in attempts to draw close to God?” "Are you trying to get to God through submitting to a series of do’s and don’t’s?” If so, I commend your effort. It’s a good thing to be seeking hard after God. It’s a good thing to be making great efforts to love and know God. But, may I suggest that your effort is misguided? It's commendable for a person who says he wants to travel around the world in this next month. But, the one who says, "I'm going to walk around the world in the next month," might well be misguided.

In the days of Paul, the Jewish people were doing a great job at pursuing righteousness, but they were misguided. Paul wrote, "I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:2-4).

This may be your case this morning. You have been making great efforts to follow hard after God. You have come to church consistently. You have fought hard to keep away from certain sins. You are trying to keep away from others, who would influence you badly. But, in doing so, it may well be the case that you have neglected the righteousness of God, which comes to everyone who believes.

Beginning in the last half of verse 20, Paul asks, “Why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, ‘Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!’” If you have been redeemed from your sins, you have been redeemed to live a spirit-filled life that is beyond this world. If this is the case, why are you living as if you were in the world? Your life should be different! As a believer in Christ, you are not bound to the rules and regulations to others. When Paul mentions these rules, “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch,” he’s talking about man-made rules (verse 22), which have been created for you to follow in an effort to make you holy and righteous.

He's not talking about the commands of God, which, of course, we need to follow. But, the one who has been raised up with God, His commands are a delight and joy. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). But, here in Colossians 2, Paul's focus is upon the external rules and regulations that men have created (verse 22).

We don't know exactly what these regulations were. But all of them had to do with staying away from physical things that were thought to defile you. Some of them focused upon what they couldn't handle with their hands. Some of them focused upon what into their mouths. Some of them were considered so contaminated that you couldn't even touch them with your fingertips. Paul's reference here seems to be quite broad, possibly referring to many different sorts of regulations that were being pressured upon the people in Colossae. Perhaps some of these rules had to do with Jewish purification rites: Don't handle these particular tools on the Sabbath; Don't eat pork; Don't touch a corpse, for then, you will be defiled. Perhaps some of these regulations came from a Gentile perspective: Don't celebrate your pagan festivals to your Greek gods; Don't eat any meat that was sacrificed to an idol; Don't even walk upon (i.e. touch) the pagan temple grounds. I would suspect that these are sufficiently broad to address those who would advocate abstaining from marriage or from specific kinds of people. We know that there were those in the early church who were going around forbidding marriage (1 Tim. 4:3). We know that there was a degree of prejudice in the early church (James 2:1-7). In so doing, they were placing hazard signs on all different types of activities.

For six years, I worked in a hospital environment. For the most part, I had very little contact with the patients who were in the hospital. But, there were times when I was called to help with some computers in sterile areas. On several occasions, I was called into a patient room that had some type of transmittable disease. It had this big sign on the doorway before you would enter that said, "STOP!" Before anyone entered the room, they were required to put on gloves, that they might not be infected by whatever was in the room. At other times, a mask was required, so as to protect against airborne pathogens.

This is how those in Colossae were being instructed viewing certain things. They were being told to stay away from the things that were being identified. They were being taught to keep apart from them. View them as radioactive material. View them as poison, which isn't to be touched. View them as a high-voltage electrical wire. View them as one who has leprosy.

Perhaps some similar regulations, which might help to put things into our modern context, might be the following commands:

> Stay away from Hollywood. Have nothing to do with theatres. Don't go near them. Don't touch them.
> Stay away from Rock and Roll music. Don't listen to it. Don't buy it. Don't go to stores that do. Don't even have drums in church -- the beat is wicked.
> Stay away from certain translations of the Bible. Don't read them. Don't purchase them. The King James is the only translation that is correct.
> Stay away from companies that support the gay agenda or planned parenthood. To support these stores is to support the causes. Don't go into their store. Don't go into their parking lot.
> Boys, don't you ever get your ears pierced. It's a sign that you have been sucked into the world's system.
> Girls, don't you ever wear pants.
> Don't send your kids to a public school. You are giving the training of your children to Babylon.
> Don't let your kids date. Courtship is the Biblical model.

Now, you need to realize the intention behind these regulations. The false teachers surely believed that these are the sorts of things that will only help people in their walk with God. They weren't trying to induce those in Colossae into sin. They were urging those in Colossae to keep as far away from sin as possible: don't even touch these things with their fingertips. But, you need to realize that these types of things are not helpful in bringing you close to God. Paul gives us three reasons why the rules and regulations don't help in your sanctification.

**a. Rules deal with temporary things (verse 22a).**

In the first half of verse 22, we see the helplessness of these rules. They are dealing with "things destined to perish with use."

In this instance, he points out that these rules and regulations are dealing with temporary things. Everything that you touch will eventually perish. We live in a consumable world. Things rot and decay and will all need to be replaced. Those things that you put in your mouth will simply go into your stomach and be digested and eventually eliminated. After you handle some object, it's eventually going to be discarded at some point. But realize, that it's not the staying away from physical objects that is going to make you righteous.

Righteousness has to deal with the heart. It's the eternal matters of the heart define righteousness. Righteousness is being kind to one another. Righteousness is bearing with one another. Righteousness is forgiving each other. Righteousness is loving one another. Righteousness is thankfulness.

Please know that there are many in the Christian world who think like these teachers in Colossae think. I remember talking with a pastor of a church. He told me that his people, through years and years and years of legalistic teaching, they were pretty good at "putting off" what they needed to avoid. But, he said that they weren't so good at "putting on" what they needed to practice.

People tend to be pretty good at religion, as long as you keep religion on the surface of things that you need to stay away from. But, once you seek to delve internally, into the soul, people struggle. Richard Sibbes, a Puritan pastor once wrote, "It were an easy thing to be a Christian if religion stood only in a few outward works and duties, but to take the soul to task and to deal groundly with our own hearts and to let conscience have its full work and to bring the soul into spiritual subjection unto God, this is not so easy a matter, because the soul, out of love of self is loathe to enter into itself, lest it should have other thoughts of itself than it would have. The soul (that is you), loathe to enter into self because of self-love and preservation. You do not want to acknowledge true things about yourself to yourself because if you have to, you would really have to deny it of yourself because those things hurt when you really truly look at self in reflection of what Scripture brings to self." [1]

The heart of Paul's argument is that your soul is the core of religion, not the things that we handle and taste and touch. But those in Colossae were being led to believe that keeping away from these things was the key to righteousness. Paul says, "Don't submit yourselves to these decrees" (verse 20). Because ...

**b. Rules are man-made (verse 22b).**

Look at the end of verse 22. Paul says that these rules are "in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men."

Do you realize that in almost every religion, there are always those who seek to make themselves holy by strict religious practices? Christianity has its monks, who seek holiness in the world of seclusion. Islam has its men who have memorized the Koran and are committed to leading the prayers. Buddhism has its monks, who seclude themselves high upon a hill and engage themselves in

prayers. Hinduism has its holy men, who live apart from society. Do you realize also that many religions have rules and regulations about what can and cannot be eaten. There are those in the Roman Catholic Church, who abstain from meet on Fridays during lent. Jews can't eat pork. Many Muslims stay away from pork as well. Hindus can't eat beef. Many Buddhists won't eat any meat at all. The fact that every religion has these types of rules demonstrate that these types of rules and regulations are all simply man-made attempts at seeking to be righteous.

Regarding this physical universe, there is nothing special about any substance upon the earth. With Jesus declaring all foods clean (Mark 7:19), there is nothing intrinsically wrong with any foods. Regarding physical objects to stay away from, Paul said, "We know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one" (1 Cor. 8:2). There is nothing in the physical matter of this world that we are prohibited from touching, as if keeping away from these things makes us holy.

Near the beginning of 1 Timothy 4, we have a few verses that help us to think correctly regarding these matters. Paul writes of those men "who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:3). He continues, "Everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4-5). As everything created in this world is good, there is nothing that we need to reject. There is nothing intrinsically evil about the matter that God has created.

But, keeping away from certain things tend to help people think that they are holy. All of those rules and all of those regulations that appear to make us holy come from other men. They don't come from our heavenly Father. Paul says, "Don't submit yourselves to these decrees" (verse 20). Because ...

**c. Rules are useless (verse 23).**

At this point, we get to the ultimate issue of rules and regulations. Rules and regulations and external demands have no power in curbing the desires of the flesh. Oh, they may make you look good. They may give you a shell of spirituality. But, in the end, they don't help you in any way.

This is exactly what Paul writes in verse 23, "These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and

severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.” In other words, Paul is saying that these rules and regulations have the appearance that you are practicing your religion nicely. But ultimately, they won’t work at curbing the appetites of the flesh. In fact, if anything, they create a greater desire for these things.

Have you ever seen a sign that says, “Wet Paint. Don’t touch!” What have you sought to do? You have sought to touch. Have you ever fasted for a period of time? What does your body begin to crave? It begins to crave food! It becomes all that you can think about. Have you ever decided to stay away from your television or computer games for a month? What has it done for you? It has given you a desire for your television. The way to conquer these things isn't through rules and regulations.

This is what Paul is talking about in Romans 7, where he gives testimony to his own conversion. He said, ...

> Romans 7:7-11
> I would not have come to know sin except through the law; for I would not have known about coveting if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the law sin is dead. I was once alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; And this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

So, it really has nothing to do with the quality of the rule or regulation put forth. Even the commandments of God create this similar phenomenon. The existence of a rule will not help you in achieving your righteousness. It will only expose your sin all the more.

I read this week of Paul the Simple, who lived in the fourth century. His practice was to carry three hundred pebbles with him wherever he went. Throughout the day, he sought to offer up to God three hundred prayers, one for each pebble. He was doing fine in his righteous practices, until he heard of a virgin who prayed 700 times each day. Such news troubled his soul, because he felt that he hadn’t done enough (Schaff, p. 165). [2]Such a realization ought to have simply exposed his sin, which is what the law does. It exposes sin. It exposes when you lack.

This is what commandments do. They aren't powerful to help you spiritually. They simply expose where you lack. In so doing, they show you of your need for something else, rather than a simple list of rules to follow. This is why Paul says, "The law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24).

In the church, there have always been those who have afflicted themselves with “self-abasement and severe treatment of the body” in attempt to get them closer to God. As Christianity began to spread throughout the known world, there were many who sought to achieve a higher spirituality by denying themselves of physical pleasures. These often took on extreme forms. For instance, in the third century lived a man named Anthony, who sold his three-hundred acres of fertile land and gave the money to the poor. He lived in complete solitude. His food consisted of bread and salt, sometimes dates. He only drank water. He ate once each day, (after sunset). He often fasted from two to five days (This reference and all others below are found in Schaff's History of the Christian Church. In this instance, the information is found on pp. 182-183).

In the fourth century lived a man named Macarius. For many years, he chose to eat “only once a week, and slept standing and leaning on a staff” (Schaff, p. 166). One of his contemporaries, named Hilarion, lived in the wilderness of Gaza in a small cell that was only five feet high (which was shorter than he himself was), so he was forced to stoop in his dwelling. He never ate before sunset. He slept on the ground and cut his hair only once a year, at Easter (pp. 190-191). My favorite of all of these early ascetics is Symeon. This man ate food only once each week (on Sunday). For twenty-six years, he would fast the whole forty days of Lent. For the last thirty-six years of his life, he lived on the top of a pillar, which was forty feet high (Schaff, p. 166). The platform on the top of this pillar was only three feet wide, so he could neither lie down nor sit. He could only lean upon the railing to get his rest each day. Philip Schaff, the great historian said, “There St. Symeon stood many long and weary days, and weeks, and months, and years, exposed to the scorching sun, the drenching rain, the crackling frost, the howling storm, living a life of daily death and martyrdom” (Schaff, p. 193).

These ascetics would often became the leaders of others who would follow in the ways of their practices. They would organize themselves into communities called monasteries. In these communities, monks would live lives of voluntary self-deprivation, as they cultivated lives of prayer and contemplation.

It is often the testimony of these men that they never achieved their freedom through their ascetic practices. Rather, they were often tormented by carnal lusts and by spiritual attacks by the devil. Philip Schaff wrote, "The temptations of sensuality, pride, and ambition externalized and personified themselves ... in hellish shapes, which appeared in visions and dreams. Especially besetting were the temptations of sensuality. ... The same saints, who could not conceive of true chastity without celibacy, were disturbed, according to their own confession, by unchaste dreams, which at least defiled the imagination. Excessive asceticism sometimes turned into unnatural vice; sometimes ended in madness, despair, and suicide" (Schaff, pp. 170-171).

Rigorous self discipline is obviously not the answer to achieving righteousness. One of the most famous monks of all time was Martin Luther, who was an Augustinian monk. Besides spending his time in prayer and meditation and confession. Martin Luther would go without sleep. He would lie on bone-chilling, cold floors without a blanket. He was whip himself to punish himself for his sins. So serious was Martin Luther that he later commented, “If anyone could have earned heaven by the life of a monk, it was I.” [3]

Following these types of rules and regulations ultimately do not help you to conquer sin. I remember reading the biography of a man named Rabi Maharaj. He wrote his testimony in a book entitled, “Death of a Guru.” He was a descendant from a long line of Brahmin priests and as a young boy was trained as a Yogi. He meditated for hours at a time. And yet, time and time again, he tells of how impossible it was for the hours he spent in meditation to help him overcome his fleshly habits. At one point, he talked about how he was a slave to smoking cigarettes. He said, “the habit was now beyond my power to break. I often thought how strange it was that I was so strict about my vegetarianism--I wouldn’t by cheese in a shop if it had been cut with a knife that had been used to cut sausage or other meat--and yet I couldn’t stop smoking even though I knew it was ruining my lungs. Out in the fields alone I chain-smoked one cigarette after another, inhaling deeply with every puff. And worst of all, because I didn’t want anyone to know of my secret habit, I had to steal the cigarettes, even though I had plenty of money, and that troubled my conscience deeply” [4]

Maharaj knew of his own sinfulness, and yet, he was considered to be a holy man because of his devotion to meditation. At times, he was even worshiped as a god. All of this filled his heart with pride. Later he would confess to the pride, selfishness and hatred that had filled his heart. Though he meditated for hours at a

time and obtained a peace, this was useless in transferring to daily life. He said, “It troubled me deeply to see how the state of blissful peace I had reached in meditation could so easily be destroyed by a scolding from my aunt accusing me of laziness or of failing to do my fair share around the house. Normally a peaceful person, at such times my temper would flare and I would use harsh language in defending myself.” And then, he asked the poignant question, ... “Why should I, the most religious one in the household, ... continue to abuse members of the family?” [5]

Here’s the issue: all of the religion in the world “are of no value against fleshly indulgence. I don’t care how much you fast. I don’t care how much you pray. I don’t care how much Scripture you memorize. I don't care how many rules you keep. I don’t care how self-disciplined you are or how severely you treat your body, these things “are of no value against fleshly indulgence" (verse 23). These practices may give you a “form of godliness,” but apart from the sovereign working of Christ in you, you will “deny its power” (2 Tim. 3:5).

I love the illustration that John Piper gives in his book, “Brothers, we are not professionals.” He said, “the enemy is sending against us every day the Sherman tank of the flesh with its cannons of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. If we try to defend ourselves or our church with peashooter regulations, we will be defeated even in our apparent success. The only defense is to be ‘rooted and built up in [Christ] and established in the faith’ (Col. 2:7); ‘strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy’ (Col. 1: 11); ‘holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together ... grows with a growth that is from God’ (Col. 2:19)." [6]

Piper is pointing out that the power of our flesh is comparable to an army tank, that is covered with armor, can travel in all types of terrains, and can blast rocket missiles out of the front end of it. We ought not to think that a few little spit-wads of rules that are spit out of a straw will have any hope in curtailing the power of the flesh. There is no way.

Rules and regulations directed toward seeking to make you pure isn’t going to make it. So, how can we be made holy? How can we overcome the power of the flesh? This gets us back to verse 20, “If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, ‘Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!’” It gets back to Jesus and the life that we share with Him by faith.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on August 27, 2006 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

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[1] I transcribed this quote from a message given by Bill Shannon to the Faith Builders Fellowship group of Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, California, on June 18, 2006. The following link can get you to his message: http://www.gracechurch.org/ministries/audiodownloads.asp?ministry_id=32&dlyear=2005.

[2] Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. 3. All of the following page numbers are from the same volume.

[3] Christian History, issue 34, p. 11.

[4] Death of a Guru, Rabi Maharaj, p. 70.

[5] Death of a Guru, Rabi Maharaj, p. 74.

[6] Brothers, We Are Not Professionals, John Piper, p. 156.