



January 31 and February 3

Steve Cuss

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE:

Col. 2: 16-23

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.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Paul is showing that humans tend toward two extremes in our ongoing effort to follow Christ: asceticism and syncretism. Asceticism is simply 'doing weird things to feel more spiritual.' Syncretism is 'joining together two clashing religions.' Where have you seen either of these in this culture or another culture? (Sometimes this is easiest to see in another culture.) Where have you seen either of these in your own life?
2. Joshua Ryan Butler says "Our problem is not that we're reaching for God while he refuses to be found, rather, God's reaching for us while we're clutching our idols."
What is your reaction to this?
3. Are there any ways in which you find yourself 'hedging your bets' with God?
(i.e. counting on someone or something other than God?)
4. Our souls need to be connected to Jesus on a regular basis and we can tend to think of our soul as a floating, disembodied thing, but our soul *is* embodied. It is deeply connected to our body, our mind, our desires and our emotions. Therefore, we can feed our soul through those same means. What is one way your soul is 'fed' and how do you know when it is?
5. Steve suggested making a concrete list of people, places and activities that connect your soul to God.
What are some examples of items on that list for you?
6. Steve also talked about the challenge of noticing God's presence. We can all be on the journey from 'its all on me' to 'God is with me and I am taking God into the situation' to 'God is already present and at work in the situation.'
What helps you move on that journey?