

THURSDAY

Which of these comments do you most identify with:

_____ **1.** I fear I may lose favor with God if I miss church or daily devo time. Or I substitute those things for a vital relationship with God.

_____ **2.** I feel I'm missing out if I don't have a "God buzz" - a sense of euphoria or happiness.

_____ **3.** I repeatedly make promises to God that I'll never _____ again. I even set up obstacles to doing it again, but somehow I fall anyway.

If you checked number one, you may find yourself falling into the "freedom killer" of traditionalism. Remind yourself of Paul's words in Col. 2:13-15.

If you checked number two, you may be in danger of glorifying your own sensations. Remember to see the Giver, not the gift!

If you checked number three, you have discovered what Paul talks about in Col. 2:20-23. Reread that passage and the first two verses of chapter 3 for Paul's solution: Focus on Jesus instead of your problem/temptation.

Thank God today for His relevant word! Ask Him to help you retain a simple and clear devotion to Jesus.

FRIDAY

Last weekend we looked at the riches we already have because of Christ. But we're so easily distracted! Read Ephesians 3:14-21. Paul prays that the Ephesian Christians will understand the wonderful things God has given them. In your own words, what does he mention specifically? Which of these things do you most need to focus on more often?

Today read through Paul's prayer again and make it a prayer for yourself and our church too!

SATURDAY

Read through Colossians 2 again. What stands out to you most today as you read this passage?

Please pray for the services for this weekend. Pray that God will continue to grow our church in grace and knowledge of Jesus.

FOCUSED

ON FREEDOM

RENÉ SCHLAEPFER

JUNE 30 & JULY 1

See to it that no one takes you **captive**... Colossians 2:8a

REVIEW OF COLOSSIANS SO FAR...

The belief system of the Colossians emphasized:

Do _____

Experience _____

Give up _____

Their key word was _____!

In answer, Paul reminds them Jesus is _____!

Three Religious Freedom Killers for Christians:

1. _____

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. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in **Christ**. Col. 2:16,17

**Solution: Remember the _____
behind the _____**

2. _____

Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person **goes into great detail** about what he has seen, and his **unspiritual mind puffs him up** with idle notions. Col. 2:18

**Solution: Worship the _____
not the _____**

He has 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**. Col. 2:19

3. _____

Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its **rules: “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”**? Col. 2:20,21

These are all **destined to perish with use**, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Col. 2:22

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**. Col. 2:23

**Solution: Refocus on the _____
not the _____**

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, **set your hearts on things above**, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. **Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things**. Col. 3:1,2

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Let your heart be _____ ... by _____ !

DAILY MEDITATIONS

This week’s memory verse: “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” Colossians 3:2

MONDAY

Read Colossians 2. What hit home for you in the weekend’s message? Of the three “freedom killers”, to which are you most likely to fall prey? What is Paul’s solution for the “freedom killer” you listed above?

Thank God for the freedom offered to you in Christ. Ask God to help you realize the fullness of all the good gifts you have in Christ!

TUESDAY

This weekend we talked about how faith can become complicated and distracted. Read 2 Corinthians 11:2-4. What is Paul afraid of, according to v3? What sorts of things can complicate your simple devotion to Christ? What does Paul observe about the Corinthians in v4? Remember, one of the best tools to discern truth is memorized Scripture!

Thank God for the Bible. Ask God for discernment when it comes to spiritual teachers.

WEDNESDAY

This weekend we talked about how religious tradition can be a substitute for true Christian spirituality. Read Matthew 23:23-28. What point is Jesus making about the Pharisees’ religion?

What religious issues can distract you from your simple focus on Jesus?

- _____ Focusing on my own performance
- _____ Being prideful about my Bible reading, prayer, church attendance, etc.
- _____ Feeling God doesn’t like me as much as He would if I did more
- _____ Looking down on others who don’t do as much as me
- _____ Other:

Pray that you’ll view prayer, reading the Bible and other spiritual practices as the way to grow your relationship with Jesus--not get Him to love you more.