

SUMMARY

How would you summarise in your own words the old and new ways of living in these verses?

How have you experienced these two different ways of living?

How can this passage help us to follow Jesus this week?

Preparation for next study:

- Read 2:6-3:17 and then reread 3:1-17 twice
- How does what we learned in the last study affect how we read this passage?
- What's been your experience of community?

COLOSSIANS FOUNDATIONS

STUDY 5: COLOSSIANS 2:20 – 3:4 RULES VERSUS GRACE

Start by praying for your study

Feedback from Preparation:

What does Paul connect with life and death in today's verses?

How do these verses build on the previous study?

Read the following passage in the group:

Colossians 2:20-3:4 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations,²¹ “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch”?²² All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings.²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence.^{3:1} So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth,³ for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.⁴ When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

What stands out to you from this passage?

DYING TO EMPTY RELIGION 2:20-21

²⁰ If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, ²¹ “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch”?

Why is Paul concerned for the Colossians?

How have you experienced pressure to conform to rules?

What does it mean for us to have died with Christ

(see also 1:13-14, 1:22, 2:11-16)?

RULE KEEPING IS USELESS 2:22-23

²² All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings. ²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence.

Why doesn't living by rules work?

Why might rules and regulations be attractive to us?

What would happen in our lives if we didn't live by rules and regulations?

NEW LIFE, NEW PERSPECTIVE 3:1

¹ So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

If we've died to the old life of rules and regulations, what's the new life we've been raised to?

How is seeking different from submitting?

Paul speaks of Christ being seated at the right hand of God as a short hand summary of 2:15

NEW HOPE, NEW MIND 3:2-4

² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, ³ for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

What's true of us in these verses?

How do we set our minds on things above (see also 1:9-10, 1:25-28, 2:2-3)?

How does what has happened in the past and will happen in the future shape our present?