

▼ Things Above - Colossians 3:1-4

- Colossians 2:21-23

"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."

- ▼ Consider Matthew 23: 25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence! 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so the outside of it may also become clean.

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every impurity. 28 In the same way, on the outside you seem righteous to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

- **HOW** did the Pharisees seem righteous to people? Because they were **GREAT** at following the extrabiblical rules!! But Jesus points out here that those external rules could not change them - they were full of lawlessness and hypocrisy, though they were **GREAT** rule followers.
- We Christians have a tendency to make up rules - thinking that they will enforce morality. When our rules are Biblical rules, they

are powerful and good...but when we go beyond the Bible, we get into dangerous places. Rules aren't beneficial, generally, unless they are biblical rules. Such regulations, indeed, have an appearance of wisdom. They might sound good, but they don't have value to restrain sensual indulgence, or the passions that war against all of us.

- Think about it - Consider kids that grow up in a home filled with love, Joy, peace, patience, kindness, grace, affection, freedom and (FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT) and compare them to kids that grow up in houses dominated by legalism, rules, sternness, etc. I've seen more kids rebel and go hog-wild that grew up in houses of stern legalism, than I have seen kids rebel who grew up in houses marked by the fruits of the Spirit. (I'm not talking about permissiveness here). Kids that come out of very strict (beyond Scripture strict) homes can have a tendency to rebel hard. Why? Perhaps, because we have a sin-nature in us that is geared towards breaking rules, and where there is an over-abundance of rules, there is a greater opportunity to sin and break those rules. Legalistic rules give sin-oriented humans something to fight against.
- The more rules, the harder we fight against them. Why? Because, as Colossians tells us, rules based on mere human commands and teachings HAVE NO VALUE IN RESTRAINING THE SIN NATURE. They may enact temporary obedience, but that obedience will break down at some point because there is no heart change.
- It is harder (not impossible) to rebel against a parent who loves you, pursues you, extends grace and forgiveness, and demonstrates the fruits of the Spirit in your direction. Kindness, Gentleness, Goodness, Self-Control. It is hard to fight with a parent like that. But a parent who who is characterized by sternness, rather than joy; by harshness, instead of grace, by temper instead of patience, by yelling, instead of gentleness and who multiplies rules for the sake of rules (especially those parents who seem to believe that rules change hearts) It is much easier to rebel against that.
- Don't get me wrong. I am not antinomian or anti-rules. I just want to avoid mere human rules AND point out that rules and regulations and forbiddings don't change hearts nor do they help

us to fight against those lusts and temptations that wage against our souls. What does??? WE WILL SEE IN COLOSSIANS 3!!

▼ Speaking of rules that aren't in the Bible...i have a question. Did you know that Paul warns Timothy that, in the Last Days, there will be a tremendous falling away from faith, and that deceitful spirits and demonic theology will abound? Have you ever thought about what kind of theology demons would try to introduce into the church in the Last Days? What would demons teach? Something awful, right? Something terrible, and wicked and evil, and shocking...right? Actually, demonic theology is MAJORLY characterized by the PROMOTION OF UNBIBLICAL RULES.

- **1 Timothy 4** Now the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will depart from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons, **2** through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared. **3** They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods that God created to be received with gratitude by those who believe and know the truth. **4** For everything created by God is good, and nothing should be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, **5** since it is sanctified by the word of God and by prayer.
- **DEMON TEACHING** seems to be more about legalism and adding rules to Scripture, then it does about things like sacrificing humans and drawing pentagrams.
- Unbiblical rules AND Works human effort Have **NO EFFECT** on restraining our sin nature, or leading us into mature Godliness. There is more **POWER** in doing something Godly and ordained in Scripture than in **NOT** doing something bad. And there is especially more **POWER** in doing something Godly than there is in having unbiblical rules, and counting on them to promote Godliness. Unbiblical (Rules **NOT** clearly specified in the Bible) do **NOT** have the power to restrain your desires.

- **Monty Python Aesthetic Monks - Flagellants NO VALUE in producing Godliness.**
- ▼ **Story - I used to try to fight my sin nature so hard by human efforts of the flesh. I've punched or slapped myself in the face multiple times (as a teenager) to 'punish' myself for sinning. Branding on my hand. Convicted of the worldliness of my tv watching, I took a hammer to one cable box, and then, a few years later, chucked another satellite box into the pool. WHY? Because, in part, of a partial understanding of passages like:**
- **1 Peter 1: 13 Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be serious and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. 15 But as the One who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy.**
 - **My first run at Youth Ministry in the 90s. I taught passages like 1 Peter above SO STRONGLY. I loved the kids, spent tons of time with them, and called them to holiness. One of my great regrets in ministry was that I didn't really point them to HOW to be Holy.**
- ▼ **In grace, holiness is a work of God in us called sanctification. Praise God that we don't have to make ourselves holy, and we aren't really able to do that anyway. HOWEVER, there are ways that we can AND MUST put ourselves under the sanctifying power of God. And Paul calls us to this in Col 3.**
- **Colossians 3:1-6**
"1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ,

who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming."

- Kevin DeYoung - MOST PROFOUND STATEMENT IN A LONG TIME: "What you spend your time looking at, meditating on, thinking about, ruminating on; what you behold is, over time, what you will become." (courtesy of Terre, who does nothing but post good quotes on FB)

- ▼ Consider this teaching of Jesus in Matthew 6 - 19
"Don't collect for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But collect for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. So if the light within you is darkness—how deep is that darkness!

- ▼ What we SEE is what we think about. I've always struggled to understand exactly what Jesus means here...I actually think it is a statement WAY beyond His time. What we see - movie wise, tv show wise, etc. Leaves an imprint on us - on our inner person. If we see and intake good things, then there will be good light. If, however, we see and intake bad things - WATCH bad things - worldly things, then HOW GREAT THE DARKNESS THAT WILL DWELL WITHIN. The Light of moving pictures and the sound of music and reading, etc. Leaves an imprint on our inside - on our inner-being. One of the big struggles in our house is what series do we let the kids watch. The reason we say no to so many serieses is

because of this principle ultimately. **WHAT WE WATCH IMPRINTS ON US.**

- Illustration: World of Warcraft 2005, swept through our church of computer type people. It infected my DREAMS. It imprinted on my soul. Had to stop.
- Jelly bean bag illustration - put worldliness or sin into a bag, along with a sprinkle of God's truth, and what do you have?

▼ Consider Proverbs 4

- Proverbs 4

"18 The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, shining brighter and brighter until midday.

19 But the way of the wicked is like the darkest gloom; they don't know what makes them stumble.

20 My son, pay attention to my words; listen closely to my sayings.

21 Don't lose sight of them; keep them within your heart.

22 For they are life to those who find them, and health to one's whole body.

23 Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life.

Vs 23. A rather literal translation of 4:23 - Guard Your Inner person as a watchman, for you live out of it."

▼ SO - how do we set our minds on things above?

How do we guard our inner person like a watchman, and live out of it?

- Romans 8:6-7

"6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so..."

- John 6:63

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life."

- **Jesus is the Word. His Words are Spirit and Life. The NUMBER ONE way we set our minds on things above is by filling ourselves with the words of Jesus' teaching and Scriptural truth.**
- **Deuteronomy 11:18**
"18 Imprint these words of mine on your hearts and minds, bind them as a sign on your hands, and let them be a symbol on your foreheads."

▼ CLOSE

- **John 6:67-68**
67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.
- **THE WORDS OF JESUS ARE LIFE. THROUGH THEM AND THROUGH THE WORDS OF SCRIPTURE, WE SET OUR MINDS ON THINGS ABOVE.**