

Supreme



Isaac Dailey, Executive Pastor
Church

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Week 5 – Supreme in our Freedom (Col. 2:16-23)

Introduction: Everything outside of Christ ultimately amounts to self-righteousness and legalism. Every religion and belief system in the world – except for Christianity – is focused on human performance and “earning our way...”

No matter WHAT label you put on it, EVERY system outside of Jesus Christ is based on *works* in order to please God. In other words, ALL religions require something from US that needs to be done or followed before we can be OK with God.

Our Buddhist friends must follow the Noble 8-fold path
Our Muslim friends must keep the 5 Pillars
Our Hindu friends must adhere to the 4 Yogas
Our Sikh friends must live a life of great personal discipline
Our Jewish friends must live according to the Torah
Our Mormon friends must live by the doctrines of the church

That's not to say that there aren't elements of these religions that may promote truth or good values – but each of them is ultimately based on the same idea: That if I'm going to be OK with God or the “gods,” or “the universe,” it's going to cost me.

ONLY the Jesus of the Bible presents the exact opposite offer. Whereas the WORKS-system costs US, the GRACE-system costs Christ – who paid everything for us so that we could have a relationship with God apart from anything we could ever do to try to earn or deserve it!

Key Points:

1) **Real freedom cannot be found in religious** _____ 2:16-17

There is nothing wrong with traditions in themselves, but they are not the point. At best, they can only point us to the Point.

2) **Real freedom cannot be found in religious** _____ 2:18-19

There is a false humility in religion. God causes spiritual growth through the proclamation and understanding of the Gospel of grace to daily life.

3) **Real freedom cannot be found in religious** _____ 2:20-23

Religious training focuses our attention primarily on behavior modification, rather than spiritual transformation. Rules and regulations have no ability to produce genuine fruit in our lives.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS AND PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Personal Life:

1. As a child, what did you think a “religious” person was like?
2. Did you consider your parents “permissive” or “strict”? Why? (Did they have a lot of rules for you, or just a few? Which one was the biggie?)

Ponderings:

3. What experiences does the believer share with Christ? What implications are drawn from this (vv. 16-17, 20-23)
4. What is the result of trying to base one's relationship with God on rule keeping or on private visions, as the false teachers were doing?

Promptings:

5. What additions to the faith have you encountered from people who try to encourage you to be “more spiritual”?
6. What convinced you that trying to live up to religious rules couldn't change you on the inside? In what area are you still susceptible to getting caught up in rule keeping?