



## SERMON STUDY

GUIDE

**Small Group Guide:** Colossians 2.8, 16-23

**Open with Prayer:**

**Sermon Summary:**

In Colossians 2.19, Paul anchors everything to one critical phrase: **holding fast to Christ**. From him, the whole body is nourished, knit together, and grows with a growth that is from God. But Paul identifies **four grip killers** that quietly loosen our hold on Christ: misdirected education, food and nutrition practices, religious tradition, and intense but misdirected devotion. None of these things are evil on their own, but when they move to the center of our lives, they promise life and cannot deliver it. The good news is that because we died with Christ, we are already free from the pressure to perform. We are simply invited to hold fast to him and let him do what only he can do.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. **Read Colossians 2.19 aloud together.** In your own words, what does it mean to "hold fast" to Christ? What does that look like in everyday life?
2. **Paul warns in Colossians 2.8** against being taken captive by "philosophy and empty deceit." Can you think of a belief system or way of thinking that sounds wise but quietly minimizes Jesus? How do you discern the difference?
3. **Colossians 2.17 says** that practices like food rules and religious calendars are "a shadow of things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ." What rhythms or practices in your own life have been genuinely helpful? Is there any area where a good practice has started to feel more like a scoreboard than a servant?
4. **Paul says in Colossians 2.23** that self-made religion and severe treatment of the body "are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh." Why do you think we are drawn to systems and rules even when they do not actually change us from the inside?
5. **Which of the four grip killers**, education, nutrition, tradition, or devotion, do you find most personally compelling or most subtle in your own life? Why?
6. **Colossians 2.20 asks**, "If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations?" What does it practically mean to live like someone who has already died with Christ and is no longer under the pressure to perform?

**7. The sermon closed with this question:** What are you holding fast to? How would you honestly answer that right now?

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Real knowledge tightens your grip on Christ.** If what you are learning is slowly replacing Jesus rather than revealing him, it is pulling you in the wrong direction.
- **Good practices are servants, not saviors.** Rhythms and traditions can point you to Christ beautifully, but they were never designed to carry the weight of your identity or your standing before God.
- **Misdirected devotion is still disconnected devotion.** The issue is never the intensity of what you feel. It is always the object of what you are holding onto.
- **You are already free:** Because you died with Christ, the pressure to earn, perform, and prove is finished. Growth comes from God, through Christ, for those who simply hold fast to him.

**This Week:**

- This week, identify one area of your life where you have been holding onto a system, a practice, a framework, or a habit more tightly than you have been holding onto Christ. It could be something obviously spiritual or something more subtle. Write it down.
- Then spend five minutes each morning this week reading Colossians 2.19 and praying one simple prayer: "Christ, you are the center. I am holding fast to you." At your next group meeting, share what you noticed about your grip by the end of the week.