

The Things that Can Ruin Your Faith

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I. Introduction. Text: Colossians 2:16-23.

II. Things that can derail your Christian faith.

A. Empty ritualism.

1. This is seen with people who place high value on religious practices.
2. The religious practices of the Old Testament are shadows that are no longer needed if one has found Christ.
3. One does not need to join a cult to engage in ritualism.
4. God is not fooled when a believer goes through the motions.
 - a. The service becomes boring.
 - b. Christ becomes distant or far off.
 - c. Life becomes dull.

B. Mysticism.

1. This results in false humility and the worship of angels.
2. Many cults are designed to get someone to discover the potential within, which is false.
3. The danger of cultic activity is that it disqualifies one from the possibility for continued experience for love, joy, and peace.
4. Demons masquerade upon the earth giving credence to false teaching.
5. Centering upon visions creates pride.
6. A person who gets into these kind of teaching cuts himself off from the head--they have to grow up all over again.

C. Asceticism.

1. Dedication is right because of God's love.
2. Discipline can be made a god.
3. Christianity is a positive faith. (Romans 12)
4. What is wrong with this?

a. It shows that one does not understand the death of Christ and what it accomplished with regard to "rules." Legalism pursues acceptance by self-effort instead of by God's love.

b. Whatever benefit these things have will end at death.

c. These things do not restrain the flesh.

5. The believer needs to return to Christ when he sees these things creep into his life.

Application questions:

1. How have you caught yourself going through the motions of ritualism? Why does this fail to live up to the dynamic life pictured in the New Testament?

2. What is mysticism? Why is it dangerous?

3. Why does asceticism fail to provide for holiness? Explain.
