

Expanded Report: Freedom in Christ (Colossians 2:11-23)

Prologue: The Freedom Believers Have in Christ

As the family gathered in the living room for their evening study, Ryan opened the Bible to Colossians 2:11-23. In this passage, Paul explains the freedom that believers have in Christ—freedom from sin, legalism, and human traditions. Through Christ’s death and resurrection, believers are spiritually circumcised, forgiven, and victorious over sin.

“Tonight, we’re going to talk about the freedom we have in Christ,” Ryan said. “Paul reminds us that, through Jesus’ death and resurrection, we are free from sin, legalism, and the traditions of men. We don’t have to follow rules or rituals to be made right with God—Jesus has already set us free.”

Ariel, who had been learning about the differences between rules and freedom, asked, “So, Paul is saying we don’t need to follow all these extra rules to be saved?”

“Yes,” Ryan nodded. “Paul is reminding the Colossians—and all believers—that Christ is enough. We don’t need to rely on human traditions, laws, or religious rituals. Jesus’ work on the cross is sufficient for our salvation.”

Alice, cuddling with Mr. Fluffernutter, asked, “Does that mean we don’t have to follow rules to be happy?”

“That’s right, Alice,” Yaya said. “The rules that people make can’t make us right with God. It’s only through Jesus’ work on the cross that we have true freedom.”

Key Teachings: Freedom in Christ, Forgiveness, and Victory Over Sin

1. Spiritual Circumcision and Freedom from Sin

Colossians 2:11

“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.”

- **Spiritual Circumcision:**

Ryan explained, “Paul uses the example of circumcision to describe the spiritual change that happens in the life of every believer. In the Old Testament, circumcision was a physical sign of being part of God’s people. But now, through Christ, believers are spiritually circumcised—our old sinful nature is cut off, and we are made new in Him.”

Ariel asked, “So, we don’t need to be physically circumcised anymore?”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “In Christ, the old way of doing things is replaced with something better—being spiritually transformed by His grace.”

- **Freedom from Sin's Power:**

Yaya added, "This spiritual circumcision means that sin no longer has control over us. We've been set free from the power of sin, and we now have the ability to live for God."

2. Forgiveness and the Removal of Our Sins

Colossians 2:13-14

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

- **Forgiven Through Christ's Death:**

Ryan explained, "Before we came to Christ, we were dead in our sins. But through His death and resurrection, Jesus made us alive again and forgave all our sins. Our sins were like a legal debt, but Jesus took that debt and nailed it to the cross—completely canceling it."

Ariel asked, "So, Jesus paid the price for all the bad things we've done?"

"Yes," Ryan said. "Jesus took our punishment on Himself, so that we could be forgiven. The record of our sins is gone because of what He did."

- **Blotting Out the Ordinances Against Us:**

Yaya added, "The 'handwriting of ordinances' refers to the legal requirements and rules that stood against us because of our sin. Jesus took those rules and nailed them to the cross. There is nothing left to condemn us."

3. Victory Over Sin and Spiritual Forces

Colossians 2:15

"And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

- **Christ's Victory Over Spiritual Forces:**

Ryan explained, "Through His death and resurrection, Jesus also triumphed over the spiritual forces that once held power over us—sin, death, and Satan. He defeated them publicly, showing that He is victorious over every power in the universe."

Ariel asked, "So, Jesus won the victory over sin and evil for us?"

"Yes," Ryan said. "Through His sacrifice, Jesus defeated sin and Satan once and for all. Now, we can live in the victory He has won."

- **Living in Christ's Victory:**

Yaya added, "As believers, we share in that victory. We don't have to fear sin or spiritual darkness because Jesus has already overcome them. We live in His victory, and that gives us freedom and confidence."

4. Freedom from Legalism and Human Traditions

Colossians 2:16-17

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

- **Freedom from Legalistic Rules:**

Ryan explained, “Paul tells the Colossians not to let anyone judge them based on external rules like dietary laws, religious festivals, or keeping the Sabbath. These rules were part of the Old Testament law, but in Christ, we are no longer bound by them. They were a shadow pointing to the reality of Christ.”

Ariel asked, “So, we don’t need to follow all those old rules anymore?”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “Christ is the fulfillment of those things. Now, we focus on Him and the relationship we have with Him, not on following rituals or traditions.”

- **The Shadow vs. the Reality:**

Yaya added, “The rituals and laws in the Old Testament were only a shadow of the things to come in Christ. Now that we have Christ, we don’t need the shadow; we have the substance. Our relationship with Him is what matters most.”

5. Freedom from Spiritual Mysticism and Self-Discipline

Colossians 2:18-19

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.”

- **Avoiding Mysticism and False Humility:**

Ryan explained, “Paul warns the Colossians about false teachings that promote mysticism—worshipping angels, seeking visions, and trying to experience things that are outside of Christ. These teachings may sound humble, but they lead believers away from the true source of spiritual growth, which is Christ.”

Ariel asked, “So, people were worshipping angels and looking for things other than Jesus?”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Some false teachers were claiming that these spiritual experiences were necessary for true spirituality. But Paul reminds us that all we need is Christ, and we must stay focused on Him, who is the Head of the Church.”

- **Christ as the Source of Spiritual Growth:**

Yaya added, “True spiritual growth comes from being connected to Christ, the Head of the body. We grow through Him, not through external practices or seeking mystical experiences. It’s through Christ that the whole body is nourished and grows.”

6. The Key Teaching: Freedom from Legalism and Spiritual Mysticism

Key Teaching:

The key teaching in this passage is that believers are free from legalism, human traditions, and spiritual mysticism. In Christ, we are complete—our salvation is secure, and we don't need to add anything to it. Jesus' death and resurrection set us free from the law, sin, and any external practices that try to take away from His sufficiency. Christ is the source of all spiritual growth, and in Him, we have everything we need.

Ryan summarized, "Paul is teaching that in Christ, we are free from all the things that people try to add to the Gospel. We don't need to follow legalistic rules, pursue mystical experiences, or depend on human traditions. Jesus is enough. He is the fullness of all we need for salvation, spiritual growth, and victory over sin."

Practical Applications: Living in Freedom in Christ

The family discussed how they could apply the teaching of freedom in Christ in their daily lives:

1. Focus on Christ, Not on Rules:

Ariel suggested, "We can remember that Jesus is all we need. We don't have to follow rules or rituals to be loved by God. We can focus on our relationship with Him."

Alice added, "I can love Jesus and follow His teachings without worrying about following extra rules."

2. Rejecting False Teachings:

Ryan encouraged them, "Let's be careful not to be led astray by things that sound good but aren't true. Jesus is enough for everything. We don't need to look for mystical experiences or extra teachings to be close to God."

3. Living in Christ's Victory Over Sin:

Yaya reminded them

, "Because of Christ, we have victory over sin. When we face temptation, we can rely on Him for strength and walk in the freedom He gives us."

Takeaway: Freedom in Christ

As the family reflected on the passage, Yaya shared a personal story about a time when she struggled with legalism but found freedom in Christ. "There was a time when I tried to follow all the rules perfectly, thinking that would make me right with God. But when I realized that Jesus had already done everything for me, I was set free from that pressure," she said.

Ariel smiled. "So, we don't have to do everything perfectly to be loved by God?"

"No," Ryan said, "Jesus has already done the work. We are free in Him, and that freedom allows us to live for Him, not out of duty, but out of love."

Key Points Summary

1. **Spiritual Circumcision and Freedom from Sin:**

- Through Christ, believers are spiritually circumcised, symbolizing the cutting off of sin's power and the beginning of a new life in Him.

2. **Forgiveness and Victory Over Sin:**

- Jesus' death on the cross canceled the debt of sin and gave believers victory over the powers of darkness.

3. **Freedom from Legalism and Mysticism:**

- Believers are free from human traditions, legalistic rules, and spiritual mysticism. Christ is sufficient for all of our spiritual needs.

4. **Christ is the Head and Source of Our Growth:**

- Jesus is the Head of the Church, and through Him, the body of believers grows and is nourished. We are complete in Christ alone.
-

Key Verse:

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, nailing it to his cross.”

(Colossians 2:14)

This passage teaches that Christ's work on the cross has set believers free from the power of sin, legalism, and human traditions. In Christ, we are complete, and we don't need anything else to be made right with God. We are free to live in His victory and grace.