

Who Is Umpiring Your Spiritual Walk?

Colossians 2:18-19

BGT	¹⁸ μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς καταβραβεύετω θέλων ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἃ ἑώρακεν ἐμβατεύων, εἰκὴ φυσιοῦμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοῦς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ, ¹⁹ καὶ οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλὴν, ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τῶν ἁφῶν καὶ συνδέσμων ἐπιχορηγούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον αὖξει τὴν αὖξησιν τοῦ θεοῦ.
NKJ	¹⁸ Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in <i>false</i> humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹ and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase <i>that is</i> from God.

Christ is supreme and His work is sufficient...

External Standard Based Upon OT Diet and Days (2:16-17) – False Spirituality of **Legalism**

External Standard Based Upon Individual Experience (2:18-19) – False Spirituality of **Experience**

External Standard Based Upon Man-Made Rules (2:20-23) – False Spirituality of **Aceticism**

I. Review

II. The Command to Resist Experiential Standards (Mysticism)

(μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς καταβραβεύετω – no one you let be umpiring against you)

A. The Potential Threat

1. *Lit. “not one”*
2. *No one, regardless of position, popularity, charisma, personality, published works, etc.*

B. The Potential Target

1. *“you” (humas) – plural*
2. *Any believer can succumb to this – living by any of several counterfeit forms of spiritual living.*

C. The Prohibited Task

1. *The Form of “katabraueeto”*
 - *Present – continuously*
 - *Active – voluntarily choose*
 - *Imperative – to obey*
2. *The Meaning of “katabraueeto”*
 - *Used only here in the NT*
 - *kata – down or against*
 - *braueeto – to umpire (used only in 3:15 – “let the peace of God rule in your hearts”)*
 - *thus “to umpire against; to make a call against; to disqualify; to judge unworthy”*

III. The Characteristics of Those Living by Experiential Standards (Mysticism)

(θέλων ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων – delighting in humility and worship of the angels)

A. They Have a Self-Directed **Role** (Umpire over the lives of others)

B. They Have a Self-Dictated **Focus** (“desiring” – living by what they wish or desire or delight in)

C. They Have a Self-Defined **Humility** (based upon experiences & feelings, not grace in Christ)

1. *This humility appears to be grammatically connected to the worship of angels.*
2. *Possibly they reasoned that they were more humble (and thus more spiritual) by not approaching God directly, but through angels.*
3. *This same term is used negatively in 2:23, and positively in 3:12.*

D. They Have a Self-Designed **Religion**

1. *Possible meanings of “worship of the angels”*
 - *The objects of worship – worshipping angels*
 - *The mediators of worship – worshipping through angels (too humble to approach God)*
 - *The type of worship – angelic form of worship (the way angels worship)*
 - *The quality of worship – elite angelic level of worship (superior)*
 - *The attitude of worship – angelic piety*

- *The feeling in worship – ecstatic worship*
- *The speech in worship – angelic language*
- *The presence of worship – worshipping with angels*
- *The experience of worship – in visions or mystical experience*
- *The counterfeit worship – demonic worship (1 Tim 4:1)*
- *The messenger of worship – idolizing the human representative (Rev 2-3)*

2. *Regardless, it discards the supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ (Col 1-2)*
3. *It redefines religion and its proper focus upon Jesus.*
4. *It rejects salvation and sanctification by God's grace through Christ's finished work.*

E. They Have a Self-Determined Authority (ὃ ἑώρακεν ἔμβατεύων – which things he has seen standing on)

1. *Their religion based upon experiences, visions, feelings, impressions, etc. and not the Word*
2. *This is known as “mysticism” – external, personal experiences serving as one's standard rather than the revelation of God. Often these are elitist, secret, spooky, or involve intimidation.*
3. *Rokser – Mysticism is a false belief that encourages its adherents to possess a deeper or higher spiritual state based on some personal feelings, subjective experience, inward intuition, or extra-biblical revelation.*
4. *Key words: Experience, Feelings, SELF*
5. *Examples of Forms of Modern Mysticism:*
 - *Visions, direct revelation*
 - *Charismatic Movement (speaking in tongues, being slain in the spirit, etc.)*
 - *Eastern mysticism and the pantheistic New Age movement*
 - *Mormon mysticism (a burning in one's bosom; God will confirm it to you)*
 - *American Native (sweat lodge and visions)*
 - *Secret Lodges*
 - *Evangelical “impressions,” “God told me to do this,” “road signs” etc.*
 - *Spiritual elite teachers that are the only avenue of truth*
 - *Scientology*
6. *The Difficulty:*
 - *This is based upon experiences, feelings, etc. – totally subjective – the Bible has no bearing*
 - *People no longer care what the Bible says – “I know what I choose to believe, feel, etc.”*

F. They Have a Self-Deceived View

(εἰκῆ φουσιούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοῦς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ – vainly is puffed up by the mind of the flesh of him)

1. *Instead of having higher knowledge, they are self-deceived*
2. *Instead of humility, they are puffed up with empty pride*
3. *Instead of true spirituality, they are driven by carnality (a fleshly mind)*

IV. The Correct Source of True Spiritual Vitality and Maturity

(καὶ οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλὴν, ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τῶν ἄφῶν καὶ συνδέσμων ἐπιχορηγούμενον καὶ συμβιβασόμενον αὖξει τὴν αὖξησιν τοῦ θεοῦ. – and not grasping the Head, out of Whom all the body through the joints and ligaments being supplied and being held together is growing the growth of the God.)

1. *The Head (Christ) is the source of all spiritual nourishment and connectivity (He supplies all that we need and He binds us together)*
 - *We are to be grasping – holding on to – standing fast in the Head – Christ.*
2. *The Body (the local assembly) is the means by which God brings this nourishment and relationship to bear (Rom 12; 1 Cor 12; 1 Pet 4)*
3. *The Growth of God – God's growth happens when Christ is given rightful place as Head, and the Church is given the priority and participation as the body.*

Are you caught up following the dictates of a personality, a celebrity, an experience, a feeling, instead of building your life on the finished work of Christ and the clear teachings of the Word of God? Are you faithfully attending your local assembly, so that God can accomplish His growth in you?