

# Trying To Dig A Hole Full

## Introduction

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Buy some property with a hole on it. Need to fill it. Start by using a shovel and using the dirt on your property, but end up with another hole. One neighbor tells you to rent and use a small back-hoe, same thing (his yard is also full of holes BTW). Another tells you to hire a contractor, same thing. A hole guru tells you not to use tools or machines, but your own hands. Could go on forever. Is it ever going to be filled in this manner? No. You know your property is supposed to look nice, but none of these methods are of any value. They in fact make it worse.

Does your relationship with God ever feel like that? Does it feel like you are in a constant state of adding this in or taking that out, but you don't feel any closer, any more peaceful, any more free, complete than before. Have you given up on what is yours and retreated into the house, your own little comfy zone?

## Ingression

If so, you are letting yourself be lead away from and cheated out of continually experiencing the sense of completeness, freedom, and peace that comes from living in Jesus alone. Open up to Colossians 2:8 and we will look at three essential truths that Paul gives us to keep that from happening.

## Inspiration

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Review Systemic Christianity

Good Start - Personally, spiritually. Need reminders.

Dedicated to the Task - Paul and others were in chains for the gospel, but with joy because of it's fruit in them. Should motivate us. Purpose - [2:6-7](#).

Read through [2:8-23](#) together.

## Ingression

Let's take a look at how we can avoid being led astray from and cheated out of continually experiencing systemic completeness, freedom, and peace that comes from living in Jesus alone.

# In Jesus alone we are systemically complete.

## 2:8-12

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## Ideation

### Instruction, Illustration

At the heart of 1st-2nd century gnosticism is dualism. Flesh bad, spirit good. Things of the physical bad, things of the spiritual good. There is something very Christian-y about it which is probably why it was so influential. It would blend nicely with the Jewish legalism.

**2:8** **beware** - look out! **cheat** - lead captive, **like tricking Wilson with fake treat**. **philosophy** - "lover of wisdom" 1st cent. narrow context, all bad. **empty deceit** - **hollow chocolate easter bunny!** **tradition** - doctrine handed down, of men bad. **basic principles** - gnostic context, angelic organization. **Christ** - are to be led captive to Him!

**2:9** **in Him** - emphatic! **dwells** - in a fixed structure, not a temp, anti-gnostic. **fullness** - gnostic term for angelic levels between high good god and low evil matter. **Godhead** - "Jesus is the full and complete revelation of God, not the levels of angels or secret knowledge." **bodily** - Again, anti-gnostic, but cool for us! This is the truth that is contrary to that which cheats in **2:8**.

**2:10** **you are** - present, active, now! **complete in Him** - have been and continue to be filled. **head** - literally and figuratively. **Paul is a minister to Jesus' body, the church**. **Jesus is the head in every sense**. **principality** - In this context, princes or chiefs among angels. Has to do with structure. **power** - has to do with authority of the structure.

**2:11** **in Him** - emphatic! **putting off** - stripping off, removal (ala circumcision), undressing. **the body of the sins of the flesh** - body meaning the organized whole, flesh meaning literal and figurative NT stuff. **It's not the physical body that is the issue (gnostics), it's the part of our nature that is the body of sins that lives in the flesh, as opposed to the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-18)**.

**2:12** **buried with Him** - buried together. **baptism** - dipping, soaking. **Remember key industry of red and purple dyed wool**. **Buried with Him in baptism**. **raised with Him** - raised together. **through faith in the working of God** - Our faith is in God's working, specifically faith in God's work of raising Jesus from the dead (Romans 10:9-10). Bodily resurrection was also a problem for the gnostics.

The gnostic Christians allowed their philosophy to filter their understanding of what it meant to be in Christ. It implied an incompleteness because we are still in the flesh, and a means to earn/reach completeness when we die.

Paul tells them not to be led captive and therefore cheated by this because it's BS. It's not the physical body of our flesh that is the problem, it's the spiritual body of flesh, our flesh nature. **2 Cor. 5:17**. **Jesus - deny self, pick up cross, follow Me**.

## Implementation

Do you feel incomplete, spiritually or otherwise? Feel like you want to die, or are dead, and want a do-over? It's done!

Don't need anything else to make us really be or feel complete. No make-up, clothing, house, muscles, car, job, fame, fortune, acknowledgment, form of spirituality.

If you are feeling incomplete it's because you are trying to be filled up with something other than Jesus. Other things aren't necessarily bad, except when you use them to do what only Jesus can do and has done.

**Don't let anyone, especially you yourself, rob you of that. Stop trying to dig that hole full.**

## Interconnection

In Jesus alone we are systemically complete. That's the first essential truth Paul gives us. The second one is...

# With Jesus alone we are systemically free.

## 2:13-14

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## Ideation

### Instruction, Illustration

**2:13 being dead** - our status not in Christ. **trespasses** - lapse, error, mistake, wrongdoing, but still carries responsibility. **Regardless of if something was an accident or unintentional, there is still fault. People want to be judged on intentions. Try that in traffic court.** With **circumcision**, perhaps Paul is addressing both Jews and Gentiles, lumping them together? **made alive together with Him** - loving all the "in Him" and "together with"! **having forgiven** - It's a done deal!

**2:14 having wiped out** - to smear out, blot out, expunge, wipe off. **Erased, deleted. handwriting of requirements** - **handwriting** : written record of debt, the bill, **requirements** : the thing that was owed, in this case God's law that we have broken. **This is what was smeared out, erased. against us** - that we still owed. **contrary to us** - opposed to us. **More like what we think of with the word "against"**. **Not only was the bill being held against us, it was itself against/opposed to us. He has taken** - grabbed it up **out of the way** - from in the middle, between. **Remember, it was contrary, opposed, in our way of freedom. nailed it to the cross** - just so.

You eat out at a restaurant. The bill comes to the table. Jesus is with you, it's His restaurant, He erases the bill like it was never there. **Justification**. Paul goes further. The bill comes, We get up and try to leave, the waiter hold it up to our face between us and the door. Jesus grabs it up before you can reach for it and pins it to a cork board labeled, "Jesus Tab."

Our problem is that we keep going back into the kitchen to do the dishes to pay off the bill.

How would you feel is someone asked you to show them all of your debts, and then paid them all off in full? Pretty good? Pretty relieved? Pretty freed up? Those debts you can pay off. The debt we owe God we have no means to pay off, so Jesus did it for us in full. How does that make you feel?

This may come as a shock, but you don't owe God anything apart. You don't. Anymore than something you go and buy at a store owes you something. When you buy something you buy it to fulfill a purpose, but you don't have a, "You owe me," attitude toward it.

Jesus bought us, and He has a purpose for us to fill, but He doesn't have a, "You owe me," attitude towards us. Yet that's often how we respond to Him. You can't repay someone to whom you are not indebted. Having said that, we do need to fulfill the purpose for which we were purchased; relationship. Sons, daughters, friends, servants, spouse, body.

## Implementation

Do you, consciously or not, live with a sense that you owe God, that you need to pay Him back? Santa God? Is that how you live with your spouse? Is that how your friendships work? Do you still feel dead to Jesus instead of alive with Him?

If you feel dead to Jesus, if you live with a sense of indebtedness to Him instead of relationship with Him and love for Him, it's not Him, it's you.

**Let yourself be alive with Him, let yourself off the hook, and enjoy the freedom of fulfilling the purpose for which He bought you; relationship. Stop trying to dig that whole full.**

## Interconnection

With Jesus alone we are systemically free. That's the second essential truth Paul gives us. The third is...

# Because of Jesus alone we are systemically at peace. 2:15-23

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## Ideation

### Instruction, Illustration

2:15 Paul is painting a picture of a Roman army triumphantly returning from conquering an enemy, in a public parade showing off their spoils of war and disarmed enemy combatants. These angelic/spiritual structures and authorities that the gnostics revered, yeah, Jesus owns them. Jesus leads them, stripped and/or disarmed in a public parade of triumph. Ha! Connection to 2:8 cheated and 2:10. There is nothing to fear from these things. They have no power except what power you give them. How's that?

2:16 let no one judge you - to form an hold an opinion, to come to a conclusion. People are going to do what they are going to do. The point here is don't let the opinions or conclusions of others have any power over you. More on this in a sec.

2:17 shadow, substance - the shadow of a person vs. their actual body. Legalism around baptism today.

2:18 let no one cheat you of your reward - present active imperative, stop letting others cheat you, Diff. from 2:8. A judge or umpire making a bad call that results in you not getting the prize. What reward? The reward of systemic completeness, systemic freedom, and systemic peace in Jesus alone.

Again, don't let the opinions or conclusions of others have any power over you. They only have as much as we give them, because Jesus has already disarmed the judgment of others. Repeat, think about that.

Not preaching the power of positive thinking, preaching the reality of in-Jesus living. Peace as opposed to what? The conflict that the opinions and conclusions of others concerning what it means to be spiritually on track can introduce into our lives.

Summarize rest of 2:18 in this regard. Really spiritual people deny themselves anything that makes them happy, are a part of this movement, have been to that place, have a big church, etc. Not the sources of peace!

2:19 This is the source of peace and growth. Who is the **Head**? What are we to do to it? **Hold fast**. What **body** is this? His body, the church. Who is the **source of growth**? He is, by means of the interconnectedness and interdependence of the **parts**. Our physical bodies aren't the point, Jesus' body is, as is our flesh nature as we'll see soon.

2:20 Paul brings it together. Who is **subjected** and who does the subjecting? The Devil made me do it is BS.

2:21-22 The well-intentioned legalism of others cheating us of our peace to live holy as He directs us. Not relativism, but maturity.

2:23 Are we supposed to deal with the **indulgence of the flesh**? Absolutely. How? Dying to it in Jesus. **Galatians 5:24-25**.

## Implementation

Are you hung up in legalism that you have imposed on yourself or allowed others to impose on you? Have you allowed your sense of peace to be cheated from you by the bogus expectations you have setup yourself or others have setup for you?

If you have lost your sense of peace, or if you have never had it, it's because you have let other well intentioned people cheat it away from you.

**Remember that you have died with Jesus and that the things that cheat you of your peace have no power over those who have been made alive with Him, except that which you give them. Stop trying to dig that whole full.**

## Interconnection

Because of Jesus alone we are systematically at peace.

## Imploration

The Colossian believers were experiencing a lack of understanding which resulted in a lack of peace concerning how and why believers are to battle the "indulgence of the flesh" in Christ. This was causing people to seek out false wisdom and legalism.

Systemic christianity means that disciples of Jesus experience a continual sense of completeness, freedom, and peace by means of Jesus alone. We need to be on guard against empty ideas that can lead us away from and cheat us out of these rewards by adding to or taking away from what Jesus has already done.

- **Don't let anyone, especially yourself, rob you of the completeness that you have in Him.**
- **Let yourself be alive with Him, let yourself off the hook, and enjoy the freedom of fulfilling the purpose for which He bought you; relationship.**
- **Remember that you have died with Jesus and that the things that cheat you of your peace have no power over those who have been made alive with Him, except that which you give them.**
- **Stop trying to dig that whole full.**