

The Christian and Minimalism

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Colossians 2:8

When Paul wrote to the Colossians, he warned about human philosophy leading us away from Christ. Today, many promote the philosophy of minimalism. Some concepts in this philosophy will be appealing to many, even if they don't embrace it in its entirety. What is minimalism? What place, if any, does it have in the life of a Christian? Let us consider it in light of the Scriptures.

Positive Ideas in Minimalism

- Reduce excess and eliminate what is unnecessary – some will limit the number of things they own or eliminate duplicate items
- Focus on what is necessary/fulfilling – focus as much attention as they can on what they're passionate about, even limit time spent on work and social engagements that would interfere with this
- Freedom from unnecessary burdens – as they try to intentionally focus, they often avoid the obligations and debts that are common in our society
- Benefits to this approach – less stress, less debt, more time for things that matter

Benefits to Our Spiritual Lives

- We can focus more on spiritual things – seek first the kingdom (Matthew 6:33)
- We can reduce distractions – lay aside encumbrances and fix our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2)
- We can become unburdened from materialism – free from the love of money (Hebrews 13:5)

Potential Dangers of Minimalism

- We think we can eliminate “unnecessary” assemblies – Christians are to assemble AT LEAST once a week on Sunday (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 16:1-2); we are often blessed with additional opportunities; we also have obligations as members of a local church (Hebrews 10:24-25); if we're minimalists first, we'll be tempted to reason that other assemblies are unnecessary and eventually may reason that assembling even once a week is not necessary
- We ignore “unnecessary” doctrinal matters – those who teach have an obligation (1 Peter 4:11; Acts 20:27); churches are to support those who teach the truth this way (3 John 8) and reject those who do not (2 John 10-11); we must be careful not to bind the teachings of men (Matthew 15:6-9), but not discard Bible teachings; many have rejected teachings that they deem “unnecessary” (days of creation, instrumental

music, MDR, etc.); if we're minimalists first, we'll be tempted to cast aside any teaching that is difficult, controversial, or unpopular

- We seek personal fulfillment first – we will pursue whatever brings us joy and meaning; this should be found in the Lord (Philippians 4:4; Ecclesiastes 12:13); yet too many put temporal things before spiritual things (Matthew 22:5); the things of this life that bring fulfillment must never trump our spiritual obligations; if we're minimalists first, we'll pursue personal fulfillment and fit spiritual things into our lives if/when it's convenient

Conclusion

- We must do all things in the name of the Lord (Colossians 3:17) – discipleship is more important than minimalism
- Human philosophies can be deceptive (Colossians 2:8) – some tenets harmonize with the Bible, but not all will
- We must never become so zealous to implement any philosophy (minimalism or anything else) that we fail to live up to God's standard
- We will be judged by His word (John 12:48), not by how well we have adopted the principles of minimalism