



May 24, 2024

Keeping It Real
Part, 4, Discernment

Have you ever been lied to? Most of us have probably been deceived by a lie, and we know the anger, hurt, and distrust that deception creates. And if asked, I doubt anyone would say they enjoy being lied to. But one of the greatest ironies in life is that humanity is lied to constantly, to some degree, by governments, by politicians, by advertisers, by salespeople, by scammers, and certainly by Satan! Regarding the Devil, Jesus said, *When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it* (John 8:44).

And sometimes we not only expect and tolerate the lies, but we seek and enjoy the lies! The Apostle Paul wrote that this “self-deception” would be #1 on the public menu in the last days, a time that has now come, when men and women reject sound doctrine because of their *itching ears* (2Timothy 4:3). What a picturesque description of people who heap to themselves one false teacher after another, to the end that they might have their consciences soothed and their false notions celebrated.

We like to be told we are “okay” by experts in mental health, ethics, and religion. We subjectively compare ourselves among ourselves to achieve some standard of normalcy or goodness. We convince ourselves that we are “good people” because (most certainly) our “good” outweighs our “bad”, and since we have not murdered, abused children, or robbed banks, then surely God smiles down upon us and whatever there is out there beyond our last breath—be it Heaven, or Paradise, or Moksha, or Nirvana, or Valhalla—it will be swinging on the front porch on a warm spring day with a glass of lemonade from there on out!

And yes, we even lie to ourselves, and then believe our self-conceived ideas! And we do so because they are accepted culturally, politically, or by religion! How ultimately ironic it is that 1) we are taught to be a skeptic and to survive as a skeptic, but 2) we so willingly seek out and swallow The Chief Lie! The chief lie is this: we are “good” people, that everyone has “good” inside, and that if people were just educated more, or had access to basic resources, or were taught love and compassion, then we could all co-exist, sit around the campfire, eat s’mores and sing Kum Ba Yah.

Well, a modicum of skepticism IS good; we call that discernment. As the Hebrews author proclaims in v5:13, we need our senses trained by practice (experience) to discriminate and distinguish between what is morally good and noble versus what is evil and base. In short, we need to be able to recognize a lie, and thereby, avoid self-deception. But that training only comes by the enlightenment from the indwelling Holy Spirit as we learn God's Truth from God's Word. And in His Word, God's Word declares, ...*there is none that doeth good* (Psalm 14:1, 3; 53:1, 3; Romans 3:12). If we are left to our fallen natures, we have no hope, because we are without God (Ephesians 2:12).

So, let me ask the obvious question: who and what do you believe? Sadly, those who willingly choose to believe The Lie will one day even argue their own goodness before the Creator. Jesus will reply as recorded in Matthew 7:23, *I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*. I can't imagine anything more terrifying. Don't be deceived! Be discerning!

God bless and consider!