

Colossians
Truth Matters
Colossians 2:8-10

September 4 , 2022

HDBC

I **few weeks** ago during the takeaways of a sermon I encouraged you to be skeptical but not cynical. Essentially it was a challenge to have some discernment. Don't believe everything you see or hear. Here's something to think about, "truth may not be the dominant ingredient in your information diet." So, be careful. I realize that skepticism can easily slip into cynicism. It happens to me often. I admit that I have a tendency toward that. It's something I need to guard against. But I think I would rather struggle with being cynical from time to time rather than being gullible and naïve. I think the apostle Paul would agree. In his letter to the Colossians, he pretty much says so! Let's take a look. **Col. 2:8-10.**

I'm going to be **heavy** on application this morning. But first let me read the text and offer some commentary on it. Then I'll share some applications. In the previous verses we are called to walk a certain way. Walking is simply a metaphor for living. We are live a certain way. To be more specific, our walk or our lifestyle is to mimic our salvation. In the same way that we were saved, we are to live. How were we saved? Faith in Christ and Surrender to Christ. That's how we are to live. That leads us right into today's text. As we seek to walk by faith in Christ and in surrender to Christ, there are some dangers that are to be avoided. Primary among those dangers, is the temptation to believe what is false.

God has a plan for your life. Satan also has a plan. His plan includes leading you trade truth for lies, right for wrong, reality for fantasy. Let's get into the text.

1. The strategy of the devil

1) He wants to capture your mind

The image that Paul has in mind here is not simply of a person being led down the wrong road but of being snatched and dragged off into bondage. Rare verb used only here in the NT. Used in that day in variety of ways. Kidnapping of a child or plundering of a man's house. In each case the image is violent and sobering. Paul was clearly using this language to get

the attention of the Colossians and of us. Falling into false belief is a very serious thing, not to be taken lightly.

It is a tragedy when a person who has been rescued from the ***domain of darkness*** are led again into captivity. Paul is not writing about physical captivity but mental and spiritual captivity.

2) He uses worldly philosophies

Paul is not condemning all philosophy, but the false philosophies that are used to confuse and deceive others. In Colossae they were being bombarded by the philosophy of Gnosticism. It was a merging of some Christian teachings, with pagan mysticism twisted together in a way that distorted the truth. Today, we too are facing a plethora of worldly philosophies that are not grounded in truth but in self-worship, emotionalism and idolatry.

3) He uses the traditions of men

There is nothing wrong with tradition, as long as it is kept in its proper perspective. But tradition must never be authoritative. There are so many traditions in the history of humankind that are wicked and evil. Just because something was practice and accepted at a past time does not mean it is right or true. Tradition is a poor foundation for determining truth.

Elementary principles of the world may very well refer to wicked spirits or demons who are very much present and who work for the destruction of every person.

2. The solution of the Lord

The protection against these attacks by the enemy is to focus on Christ. That's what Paul leads us to do in this text. He offers a powerful theological statement confirming the dual nature of Christ as the God-man! He is fully God and fully man. Swindoll says, ***a single dose of the doctrine of the Incarnation would instantly cure the disease of Christ-denying heresy.*** In other words, we have to get this right. Once you realize just who Jesus is, as fully God and fully man, that influences your thoughts and provide a powerful defense against the schemes of the devil.

TAKEAWAYS:

1. Don't believe everything you hear.

Just because you have read it or been told it, does not mean it is true. So, I came across a list of things people have generally believed, which are apparently not true.

- 1) Carrots improve your vision
- 2) It takes seven years for gum to digest. (actually it doesn't at all)
- 3) Cracking your knuckles will cause arthritis.
- 4) Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Ad slogan from Kellogg's
- 5) Touching a frog will give you warts
- 6) Sugar makes kids hyper
- 7) Sharks don't get cancer

The enemy will whisper all kinds of untruths about God. But he will also whisper all kinds of untrue things about you. I heard a story the other day.

A woman got a new job that was close enough to her home that enabled her to walk to work. Walked through town she passed a pet shop. Talking parrot in the front window. When she passed by it said, ***Hey lady . . . you're ugly!*** She was greatly offended but kept walking. Next day the same thing happened. So she went in and complained to the owner. He apologized and assured her that it would never happen again. Next day as she walked by the store the parrot said, ***Hey lady . . . you know!***

The enemy may not always be direct, but he will be relentless in his attacks on the truth about who God is and about who you are. Don't believe everything you see or hear.

2. Being passionate about it will not make it true.

People get passionate about what they believe, especially if they are trying to convince others that they are right. Just because someone is passionate about an idea or belief does not make it true. ***Some people are passionate about the belief that a biological boy can truly become a girl.*** Just because someone is passionate about it, does not make it true. Some people are passionate about their belief that God is only a God of love and not of judgment. Their passion does not change the truth.

Be careful not to get deceived simply because someone is intensely passionate about what they are saying. They can be sincere, but sincerely wrong. They can be passionate, but be passionately wrong.

3. Guard your exposure to that which is harmful.

What you see, hear, touch and think about influence your thinking. Be careful of too much exposure to things that will lead you away from the truth. Social media. Streaming movies and shows. Video games. Other people.

Hear the words of Lauren Winner, in an article in Christianity Today.

While studying my way through a Ph.D program, I worked part time as the book review editor for a large website devoted to religion, spirituality, and morality. Beliefnet.com is multifaith. It has articles that would be of interest to evangelicals, Mormons, Reconstructionist Jews, Wiccans, Baha'is, Hindus, and just about everyone else on the planet.

I started this job with the naïve assumption that even though I'm a Christian, I could sally forth into this interfaith Web world unharmed. *I'm capable of separating fact from fiction, truth from falsehood, I thought. I can do the interfaith thing and stick to my guns.*

For the most part, I still think that's true—I think God does want me to participate in interfaith conversations, both because I can offer a little leaven to the loaf. But I have also learned that the spiritual world, even just a spiritual website, is a dangerous place.

For the better part of a year, I had been happily reading and reviewing books about all sorts of faith traditions: volumes of Rumi poetry, memoirs by Jack Spong and John Dominic Crossan, books with titles like *Two Days to a More Spiritual You* and *If the Buddha Dated*. One night at about 11, I was sitting at my desk reading a vegetarian Wiccan cookbook when I got it: *I read and write about books because I think they are important. I believe the books we read form us, and as a lifelong bibliophile, I think especially that they form me. What am I doing?* I thought frantically. *I've been spending eight months forming my spiritual self on books about the Greek goddess of earth!* I hit the floor. I had words with God. I left the office and didn't finish the cookbook review that night.

After my epiphany with the cookbook, I began praying for discernment before I went to work. I prayed to be surrounded by a battalion of angels. I prayed that Satan would be kept far behind me. I prayed before I opened a book, any book—even one published by a respectable evangelical publisher.

I prayed that God would make it clear if I was not supposed to read the book in question, and I prayed that if I was meant to read it, he would give me the right eyes with which to do it. If he told me not to read a book, I didn't read it; I found someone else to write the necessary review. *Source: Lauren F. Winner, "meetingGod@beliefnet.com," Christianity Today (11-12-01), p. 70-73*

4. Think beyond the moment.

False teaching, false ideas often appear good in the immediate. Think about what they could mean long-term. **Socialism and communism have appeared really good to some, in the short-term.** But those who look beyond what appear to be the immediate perks realize that neither are sustainable and are indeed a bad idea.

I understand why some people want to believe there is no hell or that all people are going to heaven. But it is important to think beyond how that makes you feel in the moment. One day you will leave this life . . . then the TRUTH will be much more important than your feel-good thoughts.

Some long-term dangers of believing the wrong things.

- 1) You could fail to know God
- 2) You could miss Heaven and find yourself in hell
- 3) You could lead others into the same error as you

5. Recognize the danger of self-deception.

It's easy for us to talk ourselves into believing what we want to believe, even if the evidence points to it being untrue. Relationships. Eating. Entertainment. A slice of apple pie is going to have more calories than a plate of broccoli regardless of what you want. That person you are dating that has serious character flaws is not going to change, Not good for you.

6. Trust the Word of God over the opinions of people

Where God has spoken in His word, trust it, period. People will try to twist it, soften it, and even deny it. Don't believe them. There is a growing lack of trust

in what God has made clear in His word, even among those who claim to be Christians.

LifeWay Research and Ligonier Ministries have examined the theological awareness, or lack thereof, of American evangelicals. Below are the areas where believers have most gone astray in their theology:

People have the ability to turn to God on their own initiative. 82% Agree

Individuals must contribute to their own salvation. 74% Agree

Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God. 71% Agree

The Holy Spirit is a force, not a personal being. 56% Agree

God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, & Islam. 48% Agree

My good deeds help to earn my place in heaven. 39% Agree

God will always reward faith with material blessings. 37% Agree

There is an enemy who wants to . . .

. . . confuse, deceive and distort. Be wise.

. . . destroy your life. Be alert.

. . . capture the minds & hearts of your kids. Be protective.

. . . intimidate and frighten you. Be courageous.

. . . lull you into apathy about the truth. Be proactive.

. . . lure you away from Christ. Be focused.