

SO THAT NO ONE WILL DECEIVE YOU

Colossians 2:4-8

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Paul's deepest concern in writing the book of Colossians is that they would be deceived by false teaching and led away from Christ. This is the primary reason Paul wrote this letter.
2. The danger of false teaching is just as real today. Christians are constantly attacked with false teachings – on TV, on the radio, on YouTube, on Facebook and social media, on the news, at school, etc.
3. When you add to the danger of false teachings the fact that most Christians do not read and know their Bibles very well, and do not attend church very consistently, it is not surprising that so many Christians get carried away by false teachings. It is no wonder that 60-80 percent of young people leave the church after high school.
4. In this text Paul tells us how to avoid deception.

II. TEXT

1. **Colossians 2:4-8** “4 I am saying this so that no one will deceive you with arguments that sound reasonable. 5 For I may be absent in body, but I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see how well ordered you are and the strength of your faith in Christ. 6 So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, 7 being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude. 8 Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elements of the world, rather than Christ.”
2. Comments:
 - i. **Verse 4** “I am saying this so that no one will deceive you with arguments that sound reasonable.”
 1. What did Paul say? In verse 3 he said in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
 2. “So that no one will deceive you” – lead you into error.
 3. The purpose of verse 3 was so that the Colossians would not be deceived and led away from Christ into error. If anything contradicts Christ, or diminishes significance and supremacy of Christ, then it is wrong. It is to be resisted.
 4. “with arguments that sound reasonable” – persuasive arguments; enticing words; attractive arguments. The Greek word was use of a lawyer's persuasive arguments. Note:
 - 1) False teachers can be very persuasive. If not, nobody would listen to them.
 - 2) False teaching is often enticing and attractive. Sometimes it appeals to human reasoning; it makes sense. Sometimes it appeals to our sinful desires; it makes us feel good about ourselves and gives us permission to continue in sin.

- 3) The devil does not come at us in the form of a fire-breathing dragon, but as an angel of life. Not as a wolf, but as a wolf in sheep's clothing.
- ii. **Verse 5** "For I may be absent in body, but I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see how well ordered you are and the strength of your faith in Christ."
 1. "absent in body... with you in spirit" – Paul was thinking of them; praying for them; staying informed about them; writing letters to them; feeling love and concern for them.
 2. Paul rejoiced to see how "well ordered" they were and "the strength" of their "faith in Christ."
 - 1) Well ordered – They understood and believe in sound doctrine.
 - 2) The strength of their faith in Christ – Thus far they had resisted the attacks of the false teachers.
 - iii. **Verse 6** "So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him"
 1. Now Paul is going to urge them and teach them how to continue to avoid being led away into error.
 2. "Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord"
 - 1) Referring to conversion. Note:
 - i. Turning to Christ for salvation is receiving Christ, not merely believing in Him. It is establishing a relationship with a living person, not merely agreeing to some ideas about Jesus.
 - ii. Turning to Christ involves receiving Christ Jesus as Lord, not merely Savior. "Lord" means two things:
 1. Yahweh. It is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word Yahweh. Conversion means receiving Christ as nothing less than Yahweh God. This is a rebuke to:
 - a. Mormons, who believe that Jesus is the created spirit child of God the Father and His wife. Not eternal. Had a beginning. Not equal to God the Father.
 - b. Jehovah's Witnesses, who believe that Jesus is a created angelic being; Jehovah's first creation; not eternal; not equal to God; not to be worshiped.
 - c. Muslims, who believe that Jesus is merely a prophet, not even as great as Muhammed.
 - d. Jews, who deny the deity and Messiahship of Jesus Christ.

2. Master: Turning to Christ for salvation involves receiving Christ's Lordship over your life.
3. "Jus as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him."
 - 1) Do not fall away. Do not be led away into error. Do not fall away from Jesus Christ as Lord.
 - 2) How? Verse 7 "Being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude."
 - 3) Note – Christ wants you to grow, not just believe. This growth is key to avoiding deception.

III. 5 WEAPONS AGAINST DECEPTION

1. Grow deeper in comprehension.

- i. **Verse 7** "being rooted"
- ii. **William Barclay** "The word used for rooted is the word which would be used of a tree with its roots deep in the soil."
- iii. To guard against deception, you must grow deeper in your knowledge and understanding of sound, biblical doctrine. You must know what the Bible says concerning the doctrine of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of man, of sin, of Satan, of salvation, of the church, of the afterlife.
- iv. How to grow deeper in comprehension:
 1. Be consistent at church so you can hear the word preached.
 2. Read good Christian literature.
 3. If you are a parent, then I recommend the Home Discipleship Catechism that I've written to help parents disciple their kids. It teaches kids sound doctrine.
- v. Note that we are to be "rooted and built up in him". Any knowledge that distracts or subtracts from the supremacy and centrality of Christ must be rejected. Beware of teachers who focus too much on the end times, or on prosperity, or on the Holy Spirit, or Mary, for example.

2. Grow higher in character.

- i. **Verse 7** "and built up in him"
- ii. Avoiding deception requires growth in Christian character. Growth in Christlikeness.
- iii. Christlikeness can be summarized with two commands: Loving God and others more and more (Mark 12:29-31).
- iv. How to grow higher in Christlike character:
 1. John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me."
 2. Abide/remain in Christ. Keep a constant, close connection with Jesus. Stay connect, and fruit happens.
 3. We abide in Christ with the "means of grace" or "spiritual disciplines." A daily quiet time; church participation (attending, giving, serving, fellowshiping).

3. Grow stronger in conviction.

- i. Verse 7 “and established in the faith.”
- ii. “Established” – making firm or stable.
- iii. Darby Translation, “Assured in the faith”
- iv. Grow in the conviction of the truth.
- v. Years ago Christian teacher Josh McDowell wrote a book called “Beyond Belief to Convictions,” in which he wrote that one of the reasons so many young people are being led away from Christ into error is that they grow up believing the truth, but they never go beyond belief to conviction.
- vi. What is conviction? Conviction is when you believe something so strongly that your life changes, and nothing can pull you away.
- vii. **Josh McDowell** “Having convictions can be defined as being so thoroughly convinced that Christ and His Word are both objectively true and relationally meaningful that you act on your beliefs regardless of the consequences.”
- viii. If the only reason your kids go to church is because you drag them to church, then as soon as they leave home they will stop going to church. But if they develop a conviction about church attendance, then they will continue to go for the rest of their lives.
- ix. **Josh McDowell** “We no longer live in a post-Christian society, we live in an anti-Christian society, one in which the Christian faith is dismissed or ridiculed and Christians are considered suspect and their motives and behavior berated.”
- x. How can we avoid being led into error in such a society? Conviction.
- xi. How do you grow in conviction?
 1. **Josh McDowell** “Belief is knowing what you believe. Conviction is knowing why you believe it.”
 2. To grow in conviction, you must learn why you believe what you believe. This involves 2 things:
 - 1) Learning where the Bible teaches certain doctrines. This means you need to be reading your Bible.
 - 2) Studying apologetics – the arguments against sound doctrine, and why they are wrong.

4. Grow louder in celebration.

- i. **Verse 7** “being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude.”
- ii. To overcome deception, you must grow louder in celebration. Overflowing with gratitude, and thankfulness, and praise, and worship.
- iii. When you praise God for the truth, the devil cannot deceive you with a lie. Your focus is not only on truth, but on the goodness of the truth; the rightness of the truth; the blessedness of the truth.
- iv. **William Barclay** “The distinguishing mark of the true church is an abounding and overflowing gratitude. Thanksgiving is the constant and characteristic note of the Christian life.... The one concern of the Christian is to tell in

words and to show in life his gratitude for all that God has done for him in nature and in grace.”

5. Grow wiser in caution.

- i. **Verse 8** “Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elements of the world, rather than Christ.”
 1. “Be careful.” Be cautious. Beware. Be on the lookout. Watch out. Be alert.
 2. “that no one takes you captive.” NKJV, cheat you. It is a term for theft. False teachers rob people of truth, of salvation, of blessings, of abundant life.
 3. “philosophy.” Not merely the academic discipline, but any theory about God, the world, or the meaning of life. Beware of any philosophy that is not based on Christ.
 4. “empty deceit.” Worthless deception (MacArthur). False teachings are worthless; they do not help us at all.
 5. “based on the elements of the world.” Immature. Simplistic.
- ii. How to grow wiser in caution.
 1. Stay in the word. The regular habit of Bible reading will keep you familiar with the truth.
 2. Stay in church. We are easier prey when we are alone. It is harder to deceive a Christian if they are living in community with other believers.
 3. Value fact over feelings. Christians are often led astray when they prioritize feelings over fact. To avoid hurting people’s feelings, they avoid speaking the truth. Then they compromise on the truth. First, “I don’t want talk about their sin because it will drive them away; it will upset them; it will hurt their feelings.” Then, “Since my opinion hurts their feelings, maybe my opinion is wrong.”
 4. Be aware of the most dangerous false teachings. The Top Ten False Teachings in America Today:
 - 1) Critical race theory.
 - i. The lie: All white people are oppressors (either consciously or unconsciously) and must repent and make reparations, and all black people are victims of racial oppression.
 - ii. The truth: People should not be judged as a group, but as individuals.
 - iii. Ezekiel 18:30 “Therefore, house of Israel, I will judge each one of you according to his ways.”
 - 2) Socialism.
 - i. The lie: The government has the right to take one man’s money and give it to another man.

- ii. The truth: If it is wrong for an individual to take a man's property, then it is also wrong for the government.
 - iii. Exodus 20:15 (KJV) "Thou shalt not steal."
- 3) Religious intolerance.
- i. The lie: Religious liberty is the freedom to exercise your faith in private only.
 - ii. The truth: Religious liberty in private only is not religious freedom at all.
 - iii. Acts 5:29 (NLT) But Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than any human authority!"
- 4) Abortion.
- i. The lie: It is not murder to kill an unborn child.
 - ii. The truth: Murder is the killing of an innocent human being, regardless of size, level of development, environment, or degree of dependency.
 - iii. Exodus 20:13 (KJV) "Thou shalt not kill."
- 5) Evolution.
- i. The lie: Human beings evolved from lower life forms over millions of years.
 - ii. The truth: God created man from the dust of the ground, and woman from the rib of man, on the sixth day of creation.
 - iii. Exodus 20:11 "For the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them in six days"
- 6) Transgenderism.
- i. The lie: Gender is fluid, a spectrum, and is not tied to sex.
 - ii. The truth: There are only two genders, male and female, coinciding with a person's sex.
 - iii. Genesis 1:27-28 "So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female."
- 7) Homosexuality.
- i. The lie: Same-sex marriage is morally good.
 - ii. The truth: Homosexuality is evil, and marriage is the union of one man and one woman for a lifetime.
 - iii. Leviticus 18:22 "You are not to sleep with a man as with a woman; it is detestable."
- 8) Universalism.
- i. The lie: Everyone goes to heaven if you are a good person, regardless of their religion.
 - ii. The truth: The only way to eternal life is through faith in Jesus Christ.

- iii. 1 John 5:12 “The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”
- 9) Pre-marital sex.
- i. The lie: It is morally good to have sex before marriage.
 - ii. The truth: God’s will for sex is never before marriage, never outside of marriage, and never with the same sex.
 - iii. Hebrews 13:4 “Marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.”
- 10) Social justice.
- i. The lie: Everyone deserves the same economic outcome.
 - ii. The truth: People deserve to be paid according to the value of their work.
 - iii. Jeremiah 32:19 “Your eyes are on all the ways of the children of men in order to reward each person according to his ways and as the result of his actions.”

IV. CONCLUSION

1. One of the most heart-breaking experiences is when someone you love gets caught up into false teaching. I’ve seen people who were at one time active in church get pulled into all kinds of false teachings. False teaching robs you of abundant life, and sometimes even eternal life.
2. So do not be deceived.
3. **Colossians 2:8** “Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elements of the world, rather than Christ.”