

Study No 1. WHY ARE WE SO EASILY DECEIVED TODAY?

It was coming to the end of the earthly ministry of our Lord when the disciples came to Him as He sat on the Mount of Olives, asking Him “what would be the sign of His coming [back to the earth at the end time]. In what was the beginning of the “Olivet Discourse”, covering chapters 24 and 25, Jesus began by preparing His disciples to understand the need to discern the truth as opposed to **deception**. In Matthew 24:4, He says, “Take heed that no man **deceive** you.” In verse 5, He says “many shall be **deceived**.” And in verse 24, Jesus says, “. . . there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; in so much that, if it were possible, they shall **deceive** the very elect.” The word “**deceive**” is the Greek “*planaeo*” (plan-ah’-o) which is translated “**seduce**” in Mark 13:22. It means to cause to roam from truth, and to go astray.

It is relatively easy to understand why those who do not believe the Bible, those who have never accepted Jesus as Savior, will be deceived and led astray. Yet, so many are disturbed today because even believers seem confused. They are asking, “**WHY ARE WE SO EASILY DECEIVED TODAY?**”

There are five things I want you to consider. The first is that . . .

1. WE HAVE “DUMBED DOWN” OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

John 8:32: “You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.”

Why are Americans so ignorant of truth or act as though truth just doesn’t matter? It is popular to believe there are no absolutes and . . .

We are told today that we cannot know anything for certain. We have . . .

A. REMOVED ALL ABSOLUTES.

There is no such thing as absolute truth today. And yet, we must have some unchangeables: GOD’S WORD AND GOD’S SON.

Today, we have made morals relative. We have . . .

B. ACCEPTED SITUATION ETHICS

Anything is acceptable under certain circumstances.

These are different times, whatever people want today, is right. “Everyone does that which is right in his own eyes.” We have

C. EMBRACED CULTURALISM INSTEAD OF ETHICS.

Whatever people want – whatever their cultural way, it is accepted. We’ve moved to cultural pluralism. Whatever is accepted in the community is accepted as right.

Somehow, we have come to see truth as relative . . . relative to what “I” want it to be . . .

D. MADE TRUTH, WHAT WE WANT IT TO BE.

Say what I want to – do what I want to. If I want it to be “true”, then it is “true” to me.

This is why so many say so many things that are contrary to the facts – they just put their “spin” on it and it is “truth” to them because they want it to be “true.”

Now we will look at No. 2.

2. WE HAVE “DE-JUSTIFIED” OUR JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

Romans 6:23 “The wages of sin is death”. There are consequences to sin and crime doesn’t pay, or does it?

Ever wonder why it takes so long to carry out a sentence? To bring criminals to justice? It is because we have

A. EMPHASIZED THE CRIMINAL’S RIGHTS AND HAVE AVOIDED SWIFT PUNISHMENT.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set to do evil.” Justice delayed is justice denied.

Isaiah 5:20 tells us of those who call evil good, and good evil. Today we have

B. CHANGED THE MEANING OF CRIMINALITY

That which used to be wrong is not any more, what used to be the right thing is now, the wrong.

Kill a seal, spotted owl, or whale and you go to jail. Kill a baby and you are showing concern for a woman.

Chain yourself to a tree and you are an environmentalist. Chain yourself to an abortion clinic and you are an obstructionist.

There has always been a division between law making and law interpreting but now we have . . .

C. CREATED LAWS BY JUDICIAL DECREES.

Judges, by rendering judgments have caused the law to be changed. In 1962, the Supreme Court’s verdict was not that prayer could not be done in the public schools; it stated the Board of Education could not dictate WHAT could be prayed.

There has never been one word about separation of church and state in the Constitution, Bill of Rights, or any law in this country. Yet, court after court, deny Christian's rights based on a sentence written by Thomas Jefferson, after he had served as President, to the association of Baptist Churches in New England, assuring them the Government could not butt into their business because there was a "wall of separation" keeping the government out of church business.

Now, we will look at No. 3 . . .

3. WE HAVE "DE-MORALIZED" OUR VALUE SYSTEM.

Years ago, when I was studying for my Masters Degree in Education, we were introduced to the topic called "Values Clarification." What that has come to mean is, changing what has always been morally wrong to now being morally acceptable. And there is "Behavior Modification."

Romans 1:25a tells it like it is, saying we have "changed the truth . . . into a lie." We now say one thing and say "this is truth," when it isn't.

When man doesn't like what God says, he changes it to suit himself.

A. CHANGED SIN TO BE CALLED SOCIAL BEHAVIOR.

Bill Gothard says, "A man's morals dictate his theology, his world view." Somehow, we feel if we can change the wording it eliminated the sin. Think with me for example . . .

1. It isn't sodomy anymore, it's an alternate lifestyle.
2. It isn't being a drunkard, it's being an alcoholic.
3. A political figure can carry on an adulterous relationship and get charged with sexual harassment, and it doesn't matter, but a six-year-old boy kisses a six-year-old girl and he is suspended.
4. Give a friend at school something for a headache without parental approval and you will be suspended from school. Yet that same friend can be given condoms or be taken for an abortion and the law says you cannot tell the parents. It is called "sex education."

Ever hear the old saying, "It's no skin off my nose?" That, simply put means

A. BEHAVIOR IN OTHERS IS ACCEPTED IF IT DOES NOT AFFECT YOU.

During an election campaign a few years ago, a politician was exposed for having an adulterous relationship. He was forced to withdraw from his race for office. Today, you can do that and still be the party's nominee. It doesn't matter!

1. Some years ago a popular southern congressman was exposed for an adulterous relationship with a prostitute. He was forced to resign in shame. Today, a Congressman from Massachusetts is exposed for allowing a homosexual prostitution ring being operated out of his home by his sodomite lover and you know what? He gets re-elected. It doesn't matter!
2. Pro athletes can use vulgar language, be involved in immorality, cheat on their wives, get caught using illegal drugs. Know what happens? They get a contract for more money. It doesn't matter any more!

We are always looking for a way to get away with something if we can. Wrong is not wrong if you do not get caught for we have made

B. BEHAVIOR IN OTHERS ACCEPTED IF IT IS WHAT YOU WOULD WANT TO DO.

The highest political figure in our land was asked if he had it to do all over again in using marijuana, would he inhale? His answer typifies America today. He said, "Yes, if I could get away with it!"

1. A few years ago two of the most popular movie actresses had babies out of wedlock and it literally destroyed their careers. Today, the tabloids are filled with photos of the latest singers and movie personalities having their "love children" and they too are rewarded with gold and platinum recordings and multi-million dollar contracts. It doesn't matter anymore!
2. Today's rap songs and many rap artists tell about the illegal and immoral activity they would do if they could do it and get away with it.

Let's now look at No. 4 and see that . . .

4. WE HAVE REMOVED THE PAST FROM OUR LEARNING SYSTEM.

Psalms 106:7 tells us that Israel "Remembered not . . ." and in verse 15, "They soon forgot God's works and did not want His counsel . . ." This is a mistake and it will cost us.

What can we learn from the past?

A. LESSONS FROM THE PAST ARE IMPORTANT.

For example, you see a man walk into a doorway and is knocked in the head and dragged away to an ambulance. You watch in wonder, and see another individual walk into that doorway, and the same thing happens. You see four or five people walk into that doorway and they get the same treatment. Would you want to walk into that doorway?

1. You may have heard the story of the old farmer coming into the courtroom all bandaged and with a crutch. Obviously an insurance case. When asked to testify

he told the court how terrible he was and that the doctors were not even sure he would make it. The judge was surprised and said, "My report says that when Trooper Lee asked how you were at the accident, you answered, "Fine." The old man answered, "It was like this: A big truck struck me and my mule, knocking us every which way. When I came to, all I could see was Trooper Lee's car with the flashing lights. He came down into the ditch, looked at my mule, pulled out his revolver and shot the mule. Then he came over to me, with his gun still smoking and asked, 'How are you?' And I said 'Just fine!' "

Hedonism today is becoming more demanding; we just do not want to wait.

B. WE ARE THE "NOW" GENERATION.

We want what we want and when we want it. Instant gratification. Patience is a lost virtue.

Wise men from the past tell us the meaning of stupidity: "Doing the same thing in the same way but expecting different results."

C. FAILING TO LEARN FROM THE PAST WE ARE DOOMED TO REPEAT FAILURES.

Psalms 106:15 says, "God gave them what they wanted, but sent leanness into their souls." It turned out not to be what was best.

Finally, to consider No. 5, turn with me to I Corinthians 2:4-14 where we will see that . . .

5. WE HAVE REMOVED THE SPIRIT FROM OUR MATURING PROCESS.

There are some things we can know as believers, other people cannot know. Unsaved people do not understand but God has made the revelation to believers. I Corinthians 2:10 tells us "God has revealed . . . unto us by His Spirit."

The person who is NOT born again or the Christian who is NOT mature cannot possibly know the truth for . . .

A. WHEN WE DO NOT KNOW THE TRUTH WE CAN BE DECEIVED (I Cor. 2:14)

Truth is established by two, three witnesses: Deuteronomy 19:25 and II Corinthians 13:1. We believers can have three witnesses.

There is only one way truth can be known as truth and that is because . . .

B. TRUTH IS A FUNCTION OF OUR HUMAN SPIRIT (I Cor. 2:12)

Our spirit is given to us at conception but it is like a transistor radio. It worked fine until it fell and it didn't work after that. That is, not until the connection to the battery was reconnected. We are like that, the connection to the power has

been broken, but Jesus reconnected it when we were saved and now we can receive divine transmissions.

God has made a wonderful provision for believers to avoid deception . . .

C. OUR HUMAN SPIRIT IS GIVEN TO US FROM GOD. (I Cor. 2:12)

It is revived, reconnected, comes alive when we receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Three things are necessary:

1. Accept Jesus as Lord
2. Possess the fullness of the Holy Spirit
3. Understand the Word of God spiritually