

May 8, 2022

Viewpoint from the Valley Grove Church Of Christ

The Devil's Inoculation

By Dee Bowman

I was watching a ball game the other night. Between innings a commercial came on in which a man was asked by his wife, "Do I look fat in this dress?" He replied, "Yes, you do." The answer had a catastrophic effect. She bawled — and I don't mean she cried — she balled, everywhere they went. Then they reversed the idea, having him answer when she asked if she looked fat in the dress, "Honey, you look fantastic."

The "wise" conclusion he reached contained a line that graphically depicts how far we have descended in our moral judgments. The tag line on the commercial said, and I quote it verbatim, "***A man knows that peace is more important than the truth.***"

How sad. How utterly sad!

The world sneaks up on you. It never invites you into the slime pits of sin, it merely gives you little shots of carnality so that you are soon inoculated against spiritual things and give little notice to them. And it all happens almost without your knowing it. It would be interesting to know just how many people were

actually horrified by the tag line on that commercial. Far too few, I suspect.

And I know what you're thinking — "*it can't happen to me, I won't be influenced by such thinking.*" That's another tool of the devil. "Therefore let him that thinketh he stands, take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). He knows how to make slight deviations from the truth attractive, or in this case, so unnoticeable that after a time you come to tolerate them almost without thinking. He builds up a kind of carnal immunity.

Television and the internet are wonderful when they are used with discretion. But when they become the main entity in our lives they can have a devastating effect. We need some moderation, people. How long since you actually turned the television off because you were turned off by the television? We can't afford to let these media conveniences dominate our thinking or we are apt to be led away — almost without knowing it.

Truth is not elastic. You can't just move it around to fit whatever you want it to fit. You have to manage your thinking in a strict adherence to what is right and make your decisions accordingly.

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“Buy the truth and sell it not” (Pro. 23:23). There is no simpler way to put it. Truth has high value. It’s worth the keeping. In fact, without it there can be no real peace. The peace that really matters comes from using truth to make wise choices, no matter how difficult, not choosing as the commercial says “peace is more important than truth.” That is not so!

Paul speaks of the devil’s deceit, bound in “all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

That, my friends, is an apt description of the television commercial we just described. And do you know what’s really sad? It works. Far too often, it works.

Sadly, there are dozens of other commercials like the one we just described. And our fragmented thinking, produced by our taking in only little sketches of worldliness and carnality at a time, can cause us to eventually find truth to be little more than a mere suggestion, certainly not any sort of restriction.

What bothers me most is how this kind of “smallism thinking” is

affecting our young people. If we are not careful, we will allow them to believe that what they see on television and what they see on Facebook, and what they text (sometimes without the least bit of moral restraint) is normal, just the way life is, and that we needn’t worry about it. And it may be the way life is today— but we don’t have to let them be vaccinated with small shots of it so that they either ignore it, or just look the other way.

Misplaced Trust

By Zack Fisk

The days of the prophets were dark days indeed, being completely surrounded in sin and lawlessness. Behind them, the people of Judah had left their first love and true God. Currently, they were knee deep in sins and idolatry with no sign of changing, nor any sign of remorse. Ahead of them, destruction and captivity awaited them. This is the context of Jeremiah’s message when he said, “*Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, are these*” (Jer. 7:4). The people of Judah never considered captivity or destruction as reasonable possibilities, because they believed as long as the temple of God stood, Jerusalem would stand. Because of this faulty mindset, Jeremiah warned against false prophets by saying “*They have healed also the hurt of*

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the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). Jeremiah called the people to turn back to God and place their trust in Him, not in the temple or in some other physical object.

Although Jeremiah's voice seems far removed from us today, the lessons that he taught are as timely as ever. The world ranks "strong" and "weak" churches today based on the number of people that attend. Another big factor that controls the world's view of strength is the size of the contribution offered. Many churches draw in new families by advertising the size of their "youth group" to create a family-friendly atmosphere. While each one of these elements is not wrong in and of themselves, they do not necessarily represent congregational strength. John wrote to the Church at Sardis that they had a reputation among men for being alive, but they were actually dead (Rev. 3:1). Jesus did not address the contribution, the attendance, the so-called "youth group," or any other physical attraction. He attacked their teaching, their failure to repent, their incomplete devotion towards God, and their failure to be watchful for Christ's coming (Rev. 3:2-3). God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4) and wants to see them added to the church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18), but He does not want people placing their confidence in a number, a size, a preacher, a song service, or a large number of young people. More than anything else, God wants His

followers to focus on hearing His word, and keeping His commandments (Matt. 7:21-25; James 1:21-25). Jesus connected obedience with love when He said "*If ye love me, keep my commandments*" (Jn. 14:15), and again "*Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you*" (Jn. 15:14). While we cannot earn our salvation by keeping a checklist of commands to get our ticket to heaven punched, obedience demonstrates a living and saving faith (1 Thess. 1:3; James 2:14-26). God does not desire a large number of lukewarm followers who have placed their trust in carnal symbols of strength and success (Rev. 3:14-19), but hearts that are truly convicted to serving Him faithfully.

Jeremiah's preaching urged the people to turn back to God and trust in His laws (Jer. 18:8). Their false security in the temple and in Jerusalem pulled their hearts away from God, and we must not follow their example. Our hope and trust must not be in what we see around us, but in God's Word and the promises He has given for those who will follow Him.



If you once forfeit the confidence of your fellow citizens, you can never regain their respect and esteem. It is true that you may fool all of the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all of the time; but you can't fool all of the people all of the time."

— Abraham Lincoln

Death Of Life In Words

“A careless word may kindle strife,
A cruel word may wreck a life;

A bitter word may hate instill,
A brutal word may smite and kill;

A gracious word may smooth the
way, A joyous word may
light the day;

A timely word may lessen stress,
A loving word may heal and bless.”

—*Selected*

The preacher's five-year-old daughter noticed that her father always paused and bowed his head for a moment before starting his sermon. One day, she asked him why.

“Well, honey,” he began, proud that his daughter was so observant of his lessons, “I’m asking the Lord to help me preach a good sermon.”

The little girl paused a second, and then said, “How come He doesn’t ever do it?!”

Visitors — We pray that you benefit spiritually from our worship together and hope to see you again.

May Birthdays: The 16th Stephen Collins; The 26th Lowell Blue.

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Valley Grove Church Of Christ
2110 East Stateline Road
P. O. Box 461
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Sunday

Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.

Worship 10:30 A.M.

Worship 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

Phone: 662-342-1132

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