

Living as Children of Light in Truth

By Daniel Spadaro



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INTRODUCTION

“Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore, do not be partners with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases God.” (Ephesians 5:6-10, NIV) These verses in Ephesians declare that as believers in Jesus Christ we are to live as children of light. One of the fruits of living in light is that we hold fast to the truth, and reject deception. Deception is infiltrating the church today, and many Christians are being deceived. What are truth and deception? What are some specific examples of deception in the church, and what are we called to do about it? This article will attempt to address these questions and hopefully encourage believers to hold fast in the truth while identifying and rejecting deception.

DEFINING TRUTH AND DECEPTION

Merriam-Webster defines deception as “the act of causing someone to accept as true or valid what is false or invalid. Something that deceives: Trick.”¹ Biblical truth, as defined in Scripture, refers to Jesus and the Word. Jesus identified Himself as truth in John 14:6, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” He also stated that He came into this world to testify to the truth in John 8:37. Scripture itself is proclaimed as truth in passages such as Psalm 33:4, Psalm 119:160, John 17:17, and 2 Timothy 3:16-17. We also learn from Hebrews 13:8 that Christ (Truth) does not change, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

As believers, we are to hold fast to the truth and avoid being tricked into believing the deception. John MacArthur states this well in his book, *The Truth War: Fighting for Certainty in an Age of Deception*: “...truth itself does not change just because our point of view does. As we mature in our ability to perceive truth, truth itself remains fixed. Our duty is to conform all our thoughts to the truth; we are not entitled to redefine ‘truth’ to fit it to our own personal viewpoints, preferences, or desires. We must not ignore or discard selected truths just because we might find them hard to receive or difficult to believe. Above all, we can’t get apathetic or lazy about the truth when the price of

understanding or defending the truth turns out to be demanding or costly.”²

Are Christians conforming their thoughts to the truth, or allowing truth to be redefined according to personal desires? Are Christians allowing deception to enter individually and collectively as the church? If so, how many are being deceived?

DECEPTION IN THE CHURCH

Biblical truth is under attack. Unfortunately, many in the church today are living in darkness rather than light by embracing worldly deceptions. A 2018 Pew Research Center study found 61% of Americans who self-identify as Christian believe in at least one of four New Age beliefs. Thirty-seven percent believe spiritual energy can be located in physical things, 40% believe in psychics, 29% believe in reincarnation, and 26% believe in astrology.³ It appears that many are not heeding Jesus’ words in Matthew 24:4, “Watch out that no one deceives you.”

In 1 Timothy 4:1 Paul tells us that “in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.” We are warned in 2 Timothy 4:3 that “the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.” Therefore, we should expect to be confronted by deception. Although we are to reject deception, we need to be able to identify it when it appears. Many examples exist of Biblical truth being twisted or replaced. It is beyond the purpose of this paper to go into the philosophical thinking behind these lies, and for this I refer readers to lessons 9 and 10 of “Does God Exist? Building the Scientific Case” by Stephen Meyer (available through RightNow Media as a benefit of CPFI membership).⁴ What follows are some examples of deception in the church today.

Donald Perkins exposes several deceptions in the church in his message “Deception in the Church.”⁵

- **Chrislam:** Originating in the 1980’s, the essential concept of Chrislam is that Christianity and Islam are compatible, that a person can be both at the same time. It focuses on

the similarities, and downplays the differences between the two religions. Dr. Perkins gives an example of a church in Sweden that removed all signs of the cross and installed a Muslim prayer space for Muslim worship.

- Response: Christianity and Islam are diametrically opposed on the most important issue, the identity of Christ. Christianity believes Jesus is God Incarnate (1 John 2:2). In Islam, Jesus is simply a prophet (Quran 19:30). It is not unusual to hear it said that Muslims and Christians serve the same God. They say that Allah is simply another name for God. If this is true, then the God of Islam and Christianity should be identical. Don Stewart states: “The concept of God in Christianity and Islam is not the same. It is not possible that Muslims and Christians worship the same God. The two religions have a different source of authority, a different view of Jesus Christ, and a different view of salvation.”⁶ One glaring difference between these views of God is the concept of the Trinity. The Bible teaches that God exists as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In direct contrast, the Quran denies this (Quran 4:171, 5:116). Dr. Albert Mohler states: “Christians believe in only one God, and he is the Father who sent the Son to save us from our sins. Allah has no son, and, thus, Christians cannot know God as Allah. In this light, Muslims and Christians do not only use different names for God; in reality, these different names refer to different gods.”⁷

- **Genderless God:** On January 27, 2018, the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D.C. voted to stop using “gendered pronouns” for God in future revisions of its Book of Common Prayer.⁸

- Response: “God is never described with sexual characteristics in the Scriptures, but He does consistently describe Himself in the masculine gender. While God contains all the qualities of both male and female genders, He has chosen to present Himself with an emphasis on masculine qualities of fatherhood, protection, direction, strength, etc. Metaphors used to describe Him in the Bible include: King, Father, Judge, Husband, Master, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...There are those who would like to blur this emphasis in some of the newer Bible translations, but it is very dangerous to tamper with the way God has chosen to reveal Himself...He is Father, not Mother, and even in the incarnation chose to come to us as a man, Jesus.”⁹

- **“Christian” Yoga:** Many Christians participate in yoga for exercise or relaxation, some as part of church-sponsored programs. Books combining Christianity and yoga have been written, such as “The Yoga of Jesus: Understanding the Hidden Teachings of the Gospels,”¹⁰ and “Yoga for Christians: A Christ-Centered Approach to Physical and

Spiritual Health through Yoga.”¹¹ Is yoga just an exercise or is it a Hindu religion?

- Response: Yoga is a Hindu religious practice. Sannyasin Arumgaswami, managing editor of *Hinduism Today*, said, “Hinduism is the soul of yoga 'based as it is on Hindu Scripture and developed by Hindu sages. Yoga opens up new and more refined states of mind, and to understand them one needs to believe in and understand the Hindu way of looking at God. ...A Christian trying to adapt these practices will likely disrupt their own Christian beliefs'.”¹² Dr. Albert Mohler, Jr., President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary agrees: “Yoga begins and ends with an understanding of the body that is, to say the very least, at odds with the Christian understanding. Christians are not called to empty the mind or to see the human body as a means of connecting to and coming to know the divine. Believers are called to meditate upon the Word of God – an external Word that comes to us by divine revelation – not to meditate by means of incomprehensible syllables...Most seem unaware that yoga cannot be neatly separated into physical and spiritual dimensions. The physical is the spiritual in yoga, and the exercises and disciplines of yoga are meant to connect with the divine.”¹³

- **Color Runs:** Color runs are very popular, particularly with the millennial generation. According to the Color Run website, they are untimed 5K events where runners are showered with colored powder at stations along the run that celebrates healthiness, happiness, and individuality.¹⁴ A quick internet search of “color runs and church” revealed many church-sponsored color run events. This seems harmless until we learn its origin.

- Response: The color run originates from an ancient Hindu ritualistic festival called the Holi Festival. It is a celebration of the death of an evil demon daughter, Holika, who died by fire, and her evil demon king father. When the fire cooled down, people applied ash to their foreheads. Eventually, colored powder replaced the ash. The problem is that churches participate in this activity without knowing it is an important Hindu ritual.¹⁵ Elizabeth Prata offers her opinion that “churches would not adopt the Hindu celebration...adopting a Hindu practice to have that fun is allowing the world to enter the Church...and if they do, they should let their people know its origins so their people can make informed decisions as to whether or not to participate.”¹⁵ Deuteronomy 12:4 in *The Message* translation states, “Stay clear of those places—don’t let what went on there contaminate the worship of God, your God.” Dr. Perkins quotes a Hindu Yogi as saying that color runs and yoga are bringing more Americans into Hinduism than ever before.⁵

- **Christalignment:** “Christalignment is a New Age practice that uses a form of tarot cards, called destiny cards, to obtain a spiritual reading.”¹⁶ They boast of “expert seers” who provide “destiny readings,” dream interpretations, and “energy impartation” to provide guidance in making life decisions. Bethel church in Redding, CA has incorporated this practice, which is significant since this church has been known to influence other churches around the country.
 - Response: Christalignment and destiny cards are an occult practice that is condemned in Deuteronomy 18:10-11. “Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.”
- **The Emerging/Emergent Church:** “The emerging (or emergent) church movement takes its name from the idea that as culture changes, a new church should emerge in response... it is a response by various church leaders to the current era of post-modernism...The emerging/emergent church movement falls into line with basic post-modernist thinking—it is about experience over reason, subjectivity over objectivity, spirituality over religion, images over words, outward over inward, feelings over truth.”¹⁷
 - Response: This postmodern approach to theology can lead to false teachings, such as the Bible not being the inspired, inerrant Word of God because truth is not absolute, Scripture being compromised (e.g., there are many ways to heaven; there is no hell) in the name of ecumenism; and if experience trumps reason, it makes a saving faith in Jesus meaningless.

These examples and others have as a common thread an attack on Jesus Christ and/or Holy Scripture...Biblical truth. When truth is altered, all aspects of human life are affected, including healthcare issues. When clergy gather to bless a clinic that performs late-term abortions, while defending their actions as Biblical and “holy,”¹⁸ healthcare decisions will be affected, putting Christian pharmacists in a very difficult position. What then are we to do?

WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

What are we to do in the face of these and many other strong deceptions confronting us on a daily basis? What does it look like to live as children of light with respect to truth? To begin with, we need to know the truth. God tells us in Hosea 4:6, “my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge...” If you want to be able to identify what is counterfeit, you must be able to identify what is genuine. For Christians, Scripture is genuine, it is absolute truth. As an analogy, bank tellers are not trained to study counterfeit money – they are trained to study real, authentic money. They examine it, study it, and know it so well that they will easily recognize the fake when they see it. We need to examine, study, and know the Scriptures so well that we will

immediately recognize false teaching when we see it. Jesus tells us in Matthew 22:29 “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.” Therefore, we must be students of the Word. Next, we need to hold fast to the truth as Paul teaches us in 2 Timothy 3:13-15. “...continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of...” Do not compromise truth for any reason. Finally, we need to remain on guard for false teachers and teachings. John warns us of this in 1 John 4:1 “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

CONCLUSION

Paul instructs us in 2 Timothy 4:3 that “the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.” The examples of deception in the church given in this paper demonstrate that this is occurring within Christianity today. This is not only a potential problem within churches, but within any Christian organization, including CPFI. As a Christian organization, we need to continue to be students of the Word, hold fast in the truth, and remain on guard for false teachings. In doing this, we will be children of light, providing the very thing a very dark world desperately needs.

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What is Truth? By Virgil Van Dusen and W. Steven Pray

INTRODUCTION

Pontius Pilate asked the question, “What is truth?”¹ In this era of “fake news” many people ask the same question. People want to know the truth and people want to be told the truth. In courts of law, people are compelled by an oath to “tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.” Yet it appears that all too often truth is elusive and uncertain.

As believers, we know the truth as Jesus revealed the truth. Jesus said, “I am... the truth.”² He is the embodiment of all truth. Although people want to know the truth about what it takes to enter heaven, they are often unwilling to face the truth because it requires admission of their guilt. Jesus told the truth about love and repentance, but Jesus also spoke truth about sin and judgment.³ He addressed Satan as the father of lies.⁴ Lies are the opposite of truth.

Lying was prohibited by God as far back as the book of Exodus.⁵ The bearing of false testimony was strictly prohibited by God. Bearing false testimony also carries with it the basic idea of fabrication, which, simply put, means to make something up. Exaggeration fits right in with God’s prohibition because any effort to stretch the truth is, in and of itself, a fabrication. Exercising creativity in regard to the truth is also unacceptable to God.

When one thinks of lies or lying, this would normally be considered a lie of *commission*. This is an affirmative act in which someone is telling something that is simply not true. In some cases the lie might be obvious; in other situations a deeper

investigation of the claim is needed.

However, just as dangerous is the lie of *omission*. In this lie, someone omits an important detail from a statement. These are pernicious lies because they are harder to spot and take less effort from the person who is lying. Yet in God’s eyes, it is still a lie if we remain silent instead of doing the right thing and sharing the truth.

HONESTY IN PHARMACY PRACTICE

Pharmacists have been considered some of the most trusted professionals for years. Gallup has conducted annual polls expressing the public’s view of the honesty and ethics of professionals. This poll has consistently revealed that pharmacists are perceived as very honest.⁶ Honesty has been an endearing attribute of pharmacists. Our veracity, or duty to be truthful without lies or deception as identified in past pharmacy ethical codes, calls on pharmacists to continue to live a life that would serve the public in a professional and caring manner.

While most pharmacists would probably agree that we are a trustworthy and honest avocation, our profession does face challenges in this area. While we provide professional services, we also provide products. Those products that we sell (and lend our reputations to) will be considered by the public as quality products. Suppose a pharmacist sells a nonprescription product, the label of which claims to treat or cure a specific condition. That act conveys to the patient the pharmacist’s inferred approval of those claims. Just as important is the patient’s expectation that the product will be safe for use as indicated on