

Eternity Daily Bible Study

The Importance Of Love

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Number: 25

Verses: **Philippians 1:9-11, Ephesians 4:13-15**

Topic: **Love Is Not Easily Deceived**

Date: **25th August 2011**

Philippians 1:9-11 *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and in all perception; (10) that you may distinguish between things that differ, that you may be sincere and without offense until the day of Jesus Christ, (11) being filled with the fruits of righteousness through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

Ephesians 4:13-15 *And this until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (14) so that we no longer may be infants, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, in the dishonesty of men, in cunning craftiness, to the wiles of deceit. (15) But that you, speaking the truth in love, may in all things grow up to Him who is the Head, even Christ;*

Love and truth walk hand-in-hand and cannot be separated. Jesus was the incarnation of both grace and truth (John 1:14-18). Christians are to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) and love is to be discerning, wise and perceptive (Philippians 1:9-11).

However there is a rather prevalent view in some pietistic Christian circles that the more simple, trusting, naive and gullible someone is the more faith they possess and the more spiritual that they are! This is religious folly at its worst and is at complete odds with the biblical teaching on wisdom as a cardinal spiritual virtue. Side-by-side with this is the idea that Christians should be "completely non-judgmental" and not form opinions about others, or about their honesty, truthfulness or trustworthiness.

In direct contrast to this view, Proverbs says that gullibility is a gross moral failure because it rejects wisdom's influence upon the life of the believer and fails to make the effort to seek out wisdom and understanding and is in fact a disastrous form of folly. (Proverbs 1:22,23,32, 7:7, 14:15-18).

In the N.T. Paul takes the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians to explain that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom, knowledge, revelation and truth who imparts the things of God to us "so that we might know" all that God has for us (1 Cor 1:9-16). Thus simple, naive and gullible people can only end up in that state by actively refusing to be taught of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26, 1 John 2:20,27)! This refusal to learn from God is sin!

Gullibility and faith are total and complete opposites. The phrase "gullible Christians" should be an oxymoron (a contradiction in terms). Indeed being "completely non-judgmental" is spiritual suicide and leads people to be 'tossed around by every wind of doctrine' and taken captive by the wiles of deceit (Ephesians 4 above).

In fact both Ephesians (above) and Hebrews tells us that gullibility is for the immature, for babes in Christ, and that mature Christians are able to clearly tell the difference between good and evil:

Hebrews 5:13-14 *For everyone partaking of milk is unskillful in the Word of Righteousness, for he is an infant. (14) But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, even those who because of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

There is a great deal of evil and deception out there and it is only increasing in these latter days:

1 Timothy 4:1 *But the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and teachings of demons...*

In Mathew 24 and Mark 13 (parallel passages) Jesus warns the disciples over and over again about being deceived and tells them not to believe certain people, especially about the End Times:

Matthew 24:4-5 *And Jesus answered and said to them, Take heed that no man deceive you. (5) For many will come in My name, saying, I am Christ, and will deceive many.*

Matthew 24:11-13 *And many false prophets will rise and deceive many. (12) And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many will become cold. (13) But he who endures to the end, the same shall be kept safe.*

Matthew 24:23-26 *Then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ! Or, There! Do not believe it. (24) For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders; so much so that, if it were possible, they would deceive even the elect. (25) Behold, I have told you beforehand. (26) Therefore if they shall say to you, Behold, He is in the desert! Do not go out. Behold, He is in the secret rooms! Do not believe it.*

Apparently the End Times will be full of cults, false teachers, false prophets and false apostles and especially of a strong Satanic delusion that will take over the world (except for those believers who love the truth):

2 Thessalonians 2:8-14 *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming, (9) whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, (10) and with all deceit of unrighteousness in those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, so that they might be saved. (11) And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, (12) so that all those who do not believe the truth, but delight in unrighteousness, might be condemned. (13) But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brothers beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, (14) to which He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

This deception is a sort of idolatrous spiritual technology that is perceived as miraculous:

Revelation 13:13-14 *And it does great wonders, so that it makes fire come down from the heaven onto the earth in the sight of men. (14) And it deceives those dwelling on the earth, because of the miracles which were given to it to do before the beast, saying to those dwelling on the earth that they should make an image to the beast who had the wound by a sword and lived.*

And a Babylonian mixture of sorcery, witchcraft and economic persuasion:

Revelation 18:23 *And the light of a lamp will never more shine at all in you. And the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride will never more be heard at all in you. For your merchants were the great ones of the earth; for by your sorceries all nations were deceived.*

Indeed the Devil and his followers are intent on deceiving as many people as possible:

Revelation 12:9 *And the great dragon was cast out, the old serpent called Devil, and Satan, who deceives the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

However when we deliberately choose to obey love and walk in the commandments of Jesus Christ we will be freed from such powerful deceptions:

2 John 1:6-8 *And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, as you heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it. (7) For many deceivers have entered into the world, who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the anti-christ. (8) Look to yourselves, so that we may not lose those things which we worked out, but that we may receive a full reward.*

The last verse above informs us that there is a cost for falling prey to spiritual deception, we "lose the things which we worked out" and do not receive a full reward. Just as a con-man can take your money, and the reward of your labor is gone for good, so spiritual con-artistry can remove the reward of your works for God and that is also "gone for good"!

Gullibility is a moral failure and if you fail to ask for, or to exercise, God-given wisdom (James 1:5-8, 3:18) then you will end up paying a terrible price! It is the foolish and silly virgins that are locked out of the reward of the wedding feast! (Matthew 25:1-13)

Some additional verses (to those above) for further study on Deception:

Deception by Others: Mark 13:5,6; Luke 21:8; Romans 16:18, 2 Corinthians 11:13, Ephesians 5:5,6; Colossians 2:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 Timothy 2:14; 2 Timothy 3:13; Titus 1;10,11; 2 Peter 2:12-16; 1 John 3:7; Revelation 19:20, 20:3,8,10

Self-Deception / Deception by Lusts: Matthew 13:22, Mark 4:19, 1 Corinthians 3:18, 6:9, 15:33; Galatians 6:3,7-8; Titus 3:3, Hebrews 3;13, James 1:22,26; 1 John 1:8;

Blessings,

John Edmiston
Chairman/ CEO
Cybermissions

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