

Sermon or Lesson: Colossians 2:18-19 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Engaging In False Doctrines Yields Substantial Adverse Consequences

READ: Colossians 2:18-19, with vv.4,8,16-17 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - There are people in our churches who use "fine-sounding arguments" to effectively persuade undiscerning believers into believing and adopting false doctrines, that are deceptive, contrary to Scriptures, and destructive to their spiritual well-being. (v.4)
 - - To help believers thwart the adopting of false doctrines, God has provided us with the written Scriptures, and with internal spiritual regeneration to newness of life, through Christ. (vv.7,13; cf. vv.9-12)
 - - Philosophies about the things of God that are based on humanistic sources are not acceptable to God, particularly because they are not properly based on "Christ" - the key to understanding God because Christ is God Himself revealed in physical bodily form. (vv.8,9)
 - - True believers are to steadfastly focus on improving their internal relational uprightness with God, and no longer focus on merely conforming to outer religious practices. (v.16)
 - - The regulations of the Law being referred to in verse 16 were designed to reflect the coming superior reality of "Christ in you", which true believers now possess. (vv.2:17; 1:27)
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v.18 - READ

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, describe, and expound on the meaning and the ramifications of each phrase in the first sentence of verse 18. Furthermore, describe the differences and distinctions between false humility and genuine humility. And, what "prize"?]

SECTION POINT: Believers are to resist the promoting of false humility, and the worship of angels.

"Do not let anyone who delights in false humility"

- - Previously in Colossians, warnings were given about being "deceived by fine-sounding arguments" (v.4), being "taken captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy" (v.8), and being "judged" because of religious practices (v.16).
- - Now in verse 18, warning is given about being "disqualified" by engaging in "false humility" or engaging in "the worship of angels".
- - Some people delight in themselves being humble, essentially striving to make themselves "humble of mind". (Strong's #5012)
- - The problem with this humility is that it is manufactured and artificial, rather than being genuine and natural.
- - Genuine humility naturally flows from the heart of a humble person, and therefore it is never manufactured, or deliberately practiced, or a source of delight about oneself.

- - Delight about one's own humility thereupon corrupts the humility, rendering it false, and instead it is actually a form of spiritual pride - "Look how spiritual I am because I have made myself so humble".
- - Genuine humility does not promote itself, draw attention to itself, exalt itself, or bring delight to its host.
- - People who practice false humility are deceiving themselves and other people into thinking that delighting about and striving for one's own humility produces superior piety and advanced spiritual maturity before God, when in reality this practice actually substantially degrades one's spiritual maturity before God, as declared and described in verses 18-19.
- - Genuine humility is not a practice or a pursuit, but instead it is a profound belief - "In and of myself, I am nothing and worthless spiritually (Romans 3:10-12), and any spiritual maturity that I have is by the grace or undeserved favor from God and through the powerful working of the fullness in Christ that He has given me (Colossians 2:10)".

"and the worship of angels"

- - "The worship of angels" is clearly forbidden and included in the first commandment of the Ten Commandments, which states that we humans are not to worship anything other than God, as listed and described in Exodus 20:3-5.
- - Apparently, some people become convinced that worshipping angels achieves benefits for them.
- - They think that if they worship angels, then the angels will take action in accordance to the request of or on behalf of the human worshipper.
- - Most likely then, their worship of angels involves exalting, praying to, and invoking angels, perhaps even including hearing voices in their mind that they erroneously attribute to being from holy angels but which are in fact from masquerading evil angels.
- - Among the many flaws of this doctrine, there is a failure to acknowledge that holy angels do not self-determine and self-initiate taking actions because they are soldiers in the army of God, and as such they precisely follow the orders that they are given by God, and thereby they never interfere in the affairs of humans unless God has given them an order to do so. (Psalms 91:9-12)
- - An appropriate conclusion then is that people who worship angels are naive, and/or undiscerning, and/or deceived, and/or foolish, and/or uninformed, and/or defiant to the things of God. (Colossians 2:18-19)

"disqualify you for the prize."

- - "Delighting in false humility" and "worshipping of angels" are two religious practices that "disqualify you for the prize", being "deceived, or tricked, or defrauded into giving up that which is valuable" in the faith. (from Strong's #2603 - 'defraud' (AHD))
- - These two practices in verse 18 may appear to the person to be appropriate and acceptable to God, but in fact God not only opposes these practices but God furthermore consequently strips the person of qualification to receive blessings and benefits that normally would have been given to the person.
- - So, the engaging in these religious practices was intended by the person to bring blessings, but the engaging in these religious practices actually produces the opposite results of disqualifying the person from receiving blessings from God.

- - Believers are warned here "not to let anyone... disqualify you" by convincing you to adopt and follow either of these two religious practices, thereby knocking you out of the will of God, wherein eternal rewards are earned.

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, and elaborate on the two phrases in the second sentence of verse 18. Use wisdom to anticipate and theorize the thinking and behaviors of "such a person".]

SECTION POINT: Promoters of these false doctrines "delight" in exalting themselves.

"Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen,"

- - People who engage in religious practices like "false humility and the worship of angels" think and claim that they have found a way to exceed or go beyond that which everyone else is limited to.
- - Some of them think and claim that they have a special connection to the 'unseen world' - that they can see things in the invisible realm but everyone else cannot see into.
- - Some of them falsify or fabricate what they claim they have seen.
- - Some of them do indeed see a paranormal event but then they assume the paranormal event occurred by the power of God without testing to ensure that it was not a masquerading manifestation of the power of the Kingdom of Darkness. (cf. 1 John 4:1)
- - Some of them inappropriately elevate and magnify normal occurrences of life into being a paranormal occurrence, such as elevating normal nighttime sleep dreams into being a direct vision from God.
- - These people "delight" and enjoy telling their stories and accounts of the supposedly divine paranormal events that they have experienced, even to the extent of improperly "pushing or intruding" their conversations into describing these experiences in detail. (Strong's #1687)
- - By implication, during the describing of their supposed privileged paranormal experiences and the promoting of their corresponding doctrines, these people are thoroughly enjoying being the center of attention, acquiring esteem, and building a reputation of being wise, knowledgeable, spiritually mature, and spiritually privileged.

"and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions."

- - All of the aspects of engaging in these religious practices like "false humility and the worship of angels" combine to "puff up" or "inflate" the host persons in "scornful and condescending pride". (Strong's #5448)
 - - Their ecstatic or mystical or paranormal or privileged experiences exert a huge "hollow and deceptive" impact upon them spiritually, essentially and fundamentally rendering them "unspiritual" in their thinking and behaviors. (vv.8,18)
 - - The inflating of their unspiritual mind is established without credible and substantiated cause and reason - in other words, no basis in reality, no basis in complete truth, and no basis in properly-interpreted Scriptures or sound doctrine. (Strong's #1500)
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v.19 - READ

[Lesson Question: Discuss, contemplate, analyze, and then correlate the contents of verse 19 with verse 18.]

SECTION POINT: Promoters of these false doctrines have comprehensively lost spiritual well-being.

- - These people who engage in and intrusively promote their supposed privileged paranormal religious experiences with corresponding false doctrines have "lost connection with the Head", no longer "holding onto" Christ, in whom "the reality is found". (Strong's #2902; v.2:17)
- - When we believers are properly holding onto Christ, we stay properly in the faith, and not wandering off into unspiritual thinking and pride-filled behaviors. (v.2:18)
- - Christ possesses and exerts supremacy over "the whole body" - all groups and assemblies of true believers - "the church". (v.1:18)
- - Christ "supports" and "supplies" believers individually and corporately, providing everything necessary for their spiritual well-being. (Strong's #2023)
- - Christ "holds [them] together by their ligaments and sinews" or joints, keeping them intact, bonded together, and functioning as a whole.
- - Christ is the source of spiritual nourishment, nurture, and growth for true believers and the church.
- - "In" and through "Christ is found the reality" of spiritual well-being for true believers and the church. (v.2:17)
- - To lose holding onto Christ is to lose holding onto spiritual reality, spiritual propriety, spiritual well-being, spiritual growth, spiritual connection to the church, and qualification for spiritual blessings. (vv.2:17,18,19)
- - These people that are described in verse 18 have lost all of these aspects of a healthy spiritual life and healthy relationship with God.

BIG IDEA: Believers are warned to resist falling into false humility and the worship of angels, which will result in them losing spiritual well-being and becoming disqualified to receive blessings from God.

APPLICATIONS:

- - Do you delight in yourself being humble?
- - Do you manufacture humility, so that you can present yourself and display yourself as being a humble person?
- - Do you in any manner worship angels, praying to them, calling to them, or exalting them for something that you think they did?
- - Do you hear voices in your mind that you attribute to coming from holy angels?
- - Do you think that you can see things in the invisible realm?
- - Do you think that you get visions or dreams directly from God?
- - Do you elevate and magnify normal occurrences of life into being a paranormal occurrence or revelation from God?
- - Do you promote false humility, the worship of angels, or any other divergent religious doctrine or practice or experience?

- - If your answer is "Yes" to any of these questions, then do you realize that you have lost hold of Christ, which thereupon includes that you have lost hold of spiritual reality, spiritual propriety, spiritual well-being, spiritual growth, and spiritual connection to the church?
 - - Do you furthermore comprehend that God disqualifies you from earning blessings if you possess false humility, if you worship angels, or if you promote any other divergent religious doctrine or practice or experience?

 - - Christ is the Head, so reconnect with Him.
 - - Focus on and pursue Christ.
 - - And get rid of any of these things that disqualify you.
 - - Christ is your present and your future.
 - - Stop finding religious doctrines, philosophies, and practices that are outside of Christ.
 - - In James 4:8-10, the Word of God says, "Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up" - or re-qualify you to receive blessings from Him.
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[Additional Lesson Question to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- If a person in our church gets into false humility or angel worship, what does this passage indicate about the congregation's relationship with him/her and what its response should be?
 - - - - The person is no longer connected to the Head and thereby no longer connected to this church.
 - - - - The person needs to be treated as a threat to the church's connectedness to the Head and to the church's spiritual growth and unity.
 - - - - By implication, the person's teachings / stories / details / experiences should be adequately investigated, and then totally dismissed and prevented from spreading.
 - - - - The person's doctrine / experiences / teachings need to be actively opposed and admonished / confronted / silenced.
 - - Does this church exercise this response with these safeguards?]
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