



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Colossians 2:8-15

Read Colossians 2:8-15 (and pray)

1. *Have you ever been in great danger, yet totally unaware of the danger?*
2. Look at v. 8. *What does “philosophy” mean? Why are these philosophies so dangerous?*
3. *Below is a table of “philosophies” that we contend with today. Fill out each section:*

Philosophy	What is this worldview and why is it attractive?	In what way is this worldview not according to Christ?	How do you see this worldview creeping into the church?
<i>Materialism</i>	The belief that this world is all there is.  It says only today matters No future consequences Therefore no real right or wrong.	In the incarnation, the spiritual broke into the material world. This shows us we are more than matter. The cross shows there is a real right and wrong, and real consequences. The resurrection also shows there is a judgment.	Christian’s lose sight of the spiritual in the material. E.g. sex is treated as only a physical act or we pour our time, money and energy into property and possessions instead of into people.
<i>Relativism</i>			
<i>Hedonism</i>			
<i>Individualism</i>			

4. *Verses 9-15 show us what is “according to Christ” and how He is better than the “philosophies”:*
  - a) *Look at v.9-10. How is the Christian revelation of God different to other religions and to agnosticism?*
  - b) *Compare 2:11-12 with 3:1-4. How are these verses similar? What happened to Jesus has happened to you, how does this help us? How do other religions try to deal with our character flaws?*
  - c) *Look at v.13-15. Do you find these verses comforting? Why or why not? What would you say to a Christian who doubted all their sins were forgiven?*

5. *Because of the cross, Satan can no longer make true accusations about us (Revelation 12:10). Satan’s only weapon is deceit. He seeks to lure us away from the safety of the cross with deceitful ideas. How can you protect* a) yourself b) your family and c) each other from Satanic lies?

## Leaders Notes

1. To start with we want to introduce the main idea and help everyone get comfortable talking. Have a few people share experiences that bring up the idea of hidden danger. A threat that flies under the radar. A useful illustration is that of the Trojan Horse.
2. The word for philosophy in the original literally means *love of wisdom*. It could be used to describe philosophical traditions, teachings and also other religions.

These philosophies are dangerous for all sorts of reasons:

- Often their advocates are very nice, well meaning people. Yet we are to let “no one” take us captive.
  - Their nature is “empty deceit”. They deliver a little but promise a lot. They are most effective at deceit when they offer us things that we can’t have as Christians. E.g. illicit sex, self-indulgence with our money, distorted priorities and values with our time
  - They come from “human tradition”. They can often a long impressive history (remember in the time of Colossians, Christianity was the new kid on the block)
  - They are demonic (“elemental spirits”). In the New Testament a pattern emerges that man-made things are demonic (e.g. Mark 8:33). So often the demonic looks pragmatic. It also deceives us because we don’t expect spiritual battles to be part of regular mundane every day life (e.g. how I speak to my wife, whether I make time to pray etc).
  - Finally they can trap us by appearing to be compatible with Christ, when they are completely contradictory to Christ.
3. Relativism is the idea that there is no absolute truth. Hedonism is the idea that life is all about our pleasure. Individualism over emphasizes the individual at the expense of the group. These are some of the most common worldviews we have, that we assume and never think much about. Therefore they are the most likely to take us captive. You may want to cross them out and do other ones if they that is more relevant for your group (e.g. utilitarianism, Islam, Buddhism, mysticism, liberalism).

Also it’s worth noting that the most effective lies are half-truths. For example individualism is a by-product of the reformation (it came about because the reformation emphasized the individuals justification before God). Yet wrong worldviews will often take a truth out of proportion in relation to other Biblical truths.

Finally, many of these views will see themselves as a maturing or evolution of Christianity. Yet the Christian life never moves on from Christ but only deeper into Him (2:7).

4. a) The Christian revelation of God doesn’t speculate about God. It says God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. God can be known because he came to us. Furthermore God came even closer by putting the Spirit of Christ in us. In other words, you can’t get any closer to God than that? You may have heard of the famous parable of the blind men and the elephant. There are many problems to this idea, one of the main ones being that it says God is incompetent at revealing himself to us. Religion and agnosticism can only guess about God.  
  
b) These verses are tricky. Circumcision and Baptism are used here as metaphors for dead and

buried. The concept is clearly metaphorical when you consider phrases such as “made without hands” and “powerful working of God.” The physical realities that happened to Christ have had a spiritual impact on us. Colossians 3:1-4 further explains these things in a way that is a bit easier for us to grasp. The main point is that the old us has died and a new us is created in the risen Christ. The power of sin is broken, and new life is in us. It is this promise that enables us to say no to sin and yes to Jesus. Religion says just try harder, use these rules to restrain yourself. That is like telling a vacuum to suck up more when it is not plugged in. We must be plugged into God’s promises to say no to sin.

c) These verses are very comforting. They are meant to give us full assurance (2:2). Especially comforting is the little word “all” (the same idea is taught in Psalm 130). Every sin is dealt with for the Christian. Also the word for cancelled literally means obliterated! Our sin debt is no more. How? Christ took the punishment. At that time criminal charges were nailed to crosses. “Nailed to the cross” is saying that all our trespasses paid for by Jesus at the cross.

So often the problem is that we look too much at ourselves. Some of us have especially sensitive consciences and overly introverted bent. The answer? As Robert Mc Cheyne once said “for every look you take at yourself, take 10 looks at Christ.” It is not surprising that Satan would use our sensitive consciences to rob us of our assurance. It is helpful for Christians to not only look more at Christ, but also to expose the lies of Satan that dwell in their doubts.

5. The passage started with a warning (2:8), and in this question we want to help people get practical with that warning. Prayer is always a good starting point. Praying about this danger is something we need to regularly do. We also have to expose other false worldviews for what they are. Also we must keep beholding the sufficiency and supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that we are filled with joy and kept from discouragement and discontentment.

How we do this looks different in each setting. E.g. It won’t work to hide our kids away from the world. We need to help think Christianly about the world. There might be some shows that are out of the question for them to watch, but there might be others that you watch with them and then you occasionally talk about the worldview behind it. Some people in your group may have not thought much about the worldview challenges their kids will face, especially at university or tafe, and in the last few years of high school. Sharing ideas here would be good.

We have to keep remembering that we face a propaganda war every day. The very act of meeting at growth group each week reminds us of the spiritual warzone we are in. It might be good to talk about how we need relationships where we can be vulnerable, and where we let others point out our blind spots without getting offended. You may also want to think of ways you can encourage each other during the week. E.g. SMS or email helpful verses to each other.

Maybe there is some way your group could actively work together to combat the influence these false worldviews have on your hearts. For example you could read Phillip Jensen’s book prodigal world or perhaps you could make time to discuss some real world scenarios that expose the secular values we have adopted. E.g. Materialism Question = should you take a much better paying job, if it meant you had to work an extra 20 hours a week? Individualism Question = can you make it as a Christian if you are irregular at church?

Be warned. You may hit some sacred cows with questions like this, but it is important that we challenge the false narrative other worldviews are ensnaring us with.