

THE 49-DAY JOURNEY

A Higher Perspective To Living A Biblically Based Life



SESSION 3 - The Danger of False Views



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The Danger of False Views

In this third session, let us consider the lies and half-truths about God's redemptive plan that can take us captive. If we buy into the world's perverted views of Christianity, we are wrapping up the good news of Jesus Christ and hiding it under our bed. Of course, that action is just what Satan would desire us to do. True Christianity has no place for naturalism, legalism, mysticism, pluralism or any other false views of life and the world.

FAST FACTS

In our 2020 survey, we uncovered several statistical facts providing insight into this week's study.

- How many American adults under the age of 40 believe in religious pluralism? In our survey, we asked "Muhammad, Buddha and Jesus are all valid ways to God. Do you agree or disagree?" And we asked "*I believe that the only path to a true relationship with God is through Jesus Christ. Do you agree or disagree?*" If one strongly disagrees with the first statement and strongly agrees with the second statement, they are definitely not religious pluralists. Of those who are not born-again, only 3% are strongly against religious pluralism. Of those who claim to be born-again, only 18% hold strong beliefs against religious pluralism. Conversely, about nine out of ten of these young adult Americans are either pluralists or are not sure what they believe.



SESSION 3 THEME

One of the ways Satan attempts to deceive me is by taking me captive to the philosophies of men and in the current age particularly pluralism and naturalism.



- We also asked this question, “*All real scientists believe that science is the only source of real truth. Do you agree or disagree?*” First note that this is not really a valid question because it is an objective fact that there are real scientists who do not believe the statement (see *Understanding a Post-Christian America* page for details). However only one in ten of American adults under 40 strongly disagreed with the statement and only two in ten of born-again Protestants took the same position. Clearly, the outright lies of the so-called scientists have cowed our population into accepting untruths as true.

Based on extensive survey and interview results, Christian Smith, author of *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*, claims liberal Protestant theology has become the de facto belief system for most emerging adults whether their backgrounds are Catholic, Jewish, black Protestant or evangelical Protestant. He states, “Many emerging adults would be quite comfortable with the kind of liberal faith described by Niebuhr as being about ‘a God without wrath [who] brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.’”

PRIOR TO THIS WEEK'S SESSION

- Participate in the experience by reading a chapter a day in your *Periscope* book. This week the assignment is Chapters 15 through 21.
- Read/Listen to the daily email messages you will receive from Periscope this week.
- Read this week's Facilitator's Guide Session 3 in preparation for leading the session. Mark the time you want to start each major part of the outline. Within each activity, mark the questions that you want to be sure and have your group discuss.

LEADING THE SMALL GROUP SESSION

Begin with whatever fellowship time (if any) you normally include in your small group time. Begin the session by asking one member of the group to lead in a prayer specifically asking for God's presence and leadership during this time. Once again, ask them to specifically pray that Satan and his lies will be kept from confusing God's message.



Press **Play** on this Thought Tickler Video – *Cultural Captivity*. Once it starts press **Pause** when you reach the questions at the beginning.

Warm Up Questions

- What do you think is the most common set of religious views in America today? And why? After letting the group discuss this for a few minutes, share with them some of the statistics presented above and Christian Smith's quote.

WARNING: Press **Pause** when the Discussion Questions appear at the end of the video. Rewind if necessary.

Group Discussion Questions

1. What do you consider to be the most common form of cultural captivity today among American Christians?
2. What types of cultural captivity do you struggle with? If you are culturally captive, how can you recognize the problem?

Close the Video Window

BODY OF SESSION

30 - 55 minutes



Play the teaser video for Session 3. It is entitled *Picking a Custom Faith*. Press **Pause** for the Questions It lasts 3 minutes.

Group Discussion Questions

1. Do Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Mormons and Christians teach basically the same path to heaven or nirvana? If not, do those differences prevent them from being a viable approach to reconciliation with God?
2. How much pain and suffering would you be willing to undergo to provide another way among many other ways to obtain eternal life?

3. Have someone read Matthew 7:13-14 aloud to the group. “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” (Matt 7:13-14) How does this verse relate to the thought that many ways lead to heaven? Why would the gate be small and the road narrow that leads to life?

Close the Video Window



Press this **Play Button** to start the Teaching Video for Session 3
It is called *The Danger of False Views*.

WARNING: Be prepared to Press Pause when the First Set of Discussion Questions appear after the 5 minute mark. Rewind if necessary.

Group Discussion Questions - Part 1

1. Read Phil 3:17-24. *Be imitators of me, brothers and sisters, and watch carefully those who are living this way, just as you have us as an example. For many live, about whom I have often told you, and now, with tears, I tell you that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, they exult in their shame, and they think about earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven—and we also eagerly await a savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform these humble bodies of ours into the likeness of his glorious body by means of that power by which he is able to subject all things to himself.* Paul points out two examples we can look to: those whose god is their belly and those who act as citizens of heaven. In practical terms, how can you tell the difference between these two examples?
2. Have someone read 1 Timothy 6:3-5 to the group. *“If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness*

is a means of gain.” (ESV) What are some “different doctrines” you hear proposed in your sphere of relationships today? What (if anything) are these different doctrines missing that is provided by the doctrines of the New Testament?

Press Play on the Video to continue. Be prepared to Press Pause when Second Set of Discussion Questions appear after the 9 minute mark.

Group Discussion Questions - Part 2

3. Have someone read 1 Timothy 6:20-21, *“Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.”* Share the following information: Daniel Dennet, a prominent sociologist, wrote *Breaking the Spell*, an attempt to show that all religions were man created and the only rationale belief is atheism. He wrote, “Only about a quarter of the population of the United States understands that evolution is about as well established as the fact that water is H₂O. This embarrassing statistic requires some explanation . . . If they claim to have gotten it from scientists, they have been duped, since there are no reputable scientists who claim this. Not a one. There are plenty of frauds and charlatans, . . . (who) have all been carefully and patiently rebutted by conscientious scientists . . . penetrate their smoke screens of propaganda and expose both their shoddy arguments and their apparently deliberate misrepresentations and evasions.” What contradictions and false knowledge are contained in his statement supporting a naturalist worldview? (Note that over 800 scientists have signed a statement stating, *“We are skeptical of claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life. Careful examination of the evidence for Darwinian theory should be encouraged.”*)
4. How do people try to combine naturalism and Christianity in their thinking? Regardless of the amount of time the universe and the world have been in existence, it is impossible to believe that we are the result of strictly random variations over millions of years *and* that we are created in the image of God. Why are these two views mutually exclusive?

Press Play on the Video to continue to the questions at the end. Discuss the Group Questions NOTE: There are 2 sets of questions. Rewind if necessary.

Group Discussion Questions • Part 3 - Conclusion

5. Peter, under threat of death from the Jewish leadership, told them, “*And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*” (Acts 4:12 ESV) Can Peter’s statement be made to accommodate pluralism, i.e. it may not be right for me, but I can’t say that it is wrong for you? Why did Jesus sacrificial death make His claim to be a way to redemption the only way to redemption?
6. Read Colossians 2:18-19. Mysticism sounds very exotic, but it is actually very common today. Mysticism is basically where we or someone we are following has had visions, dreams or encounters with spiritual beings who impart truth that is counter to the truth of the gospel. What are some mystical ideas that are popular in our culture today? Is it possible to integrate these ideas into my Christian view of God and the world?
7. Legalism can be an insidious form of false thinking. Paul talks about some types of legalism in Colossians 2:16-17. Have someone read this passage aloud to the group. What types of legalism do you deal with today? What is the difference between legalism and walking in Christ?

CLOSING THOUGHTS 10 - 15 minutes

The song “This Little Light of Mine” says, “This little light of mine I’m going to let it shine . . . I won’t hide it in the church pew, I won’t hide it in my head.” Pluralism is an excuse for not taking responsibility for letting your light shine. How can you let your light shine brighter and clearer this week?

Let’s pray that God will help us quit hiding behind cafeteria religions and pluralism. Pray that we will demonstrate the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ in our words and in our actions at church, at home, at work, at school, at the gym, and everywhere we interact with people. Have someone lead in a closing prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER – Have someone lead in a closing prayer.

FOLLOW UP TO SMALL GROUP SESSION

Pray for any prayer requests or concerns brought up in your group.

Think about the session. What went well? What seemed to fall flat?

NEXT WEEK - THE DANGER OF FALSE LIVING

Next week, your group is going to be talking about some of the behaviors accepted by our society. **Once again**, Satan wants to take us captive by **deceiving us** about these behaviors.

Pray that God will make His Truth clear to each member of the group.

