

(Colossians) Psychological Invasion

by Brian Brodersen

Brian Brodersen's sermon warns against the infiltration of worldly philosophy and psychology into the church, emphasizing the need for biblical truth and discernment.

Duration: 54:31

Scripture: Colossians 2:6

Topics: "Deception", "Spiritual Authority"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of being cheated by a young Arabic entrepreneur in Israel. He uses this anecdote to illustrate a more serious issue of how believers can be deceived and miss out on what God has for them. The speaker discusses the dangers of philosophy and human reasoning, emphasizing the need for believers to be submitted to the authority of the Word of God. He also highlights the importance of focusing on Jesus Christ and His plan for our lives, rather than comparing ourselves to others or being self-centered.

Transcript

Good morning. Let's turn together to Colossians chapter 2. Colossians chapter 2, I'm going to read you verses 6 through 10. As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and you are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power. Let's pray.

Lord, we ask now as we consider these verses once again, we ask that you would help us to receive from you today. Lord, destroy any of our preconceived ideas. Break down our biases.

Help us, Lord, to be submitted entirely to the authority of the Word of God. Lord, help us not to be cheated by philosophy. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. A few years ago, on a trip to Israel, I had an experience that I was reminded of as I was considering this eighth verse. We were touring over in Israel, and as you go throughout the land, you'll come across quite a few young Arabic entrepreneurs out to establish themselves as businessmen, selling various items

to the tourists.

And we happened to be walking down the Mount of Olives one day, and this young guy came up to me, and he had a whole stack of belts with him. Nice belts. At least the one he showed me was nice.

A great leather belt, you know. I'd looked at that thing, and I thought, yeah, that's a really nice belt. And he said to me, I'll trade you for the belt you're wearing.

I was wearing a belt that I think I'd purchased it at Kmart. I wasn't all that thrilled about it, but you know, I think I probably paid 15 bucks for it or so. But yet he had this nice, thick leather belt, and I thought, oh man, what a deal.

This guy wants to trade me for my Kmart belt? Okay. So I gladly took him up on his offer, and I traded him. And you know, I'm walking down a pretty steep incline, and we make the exchange, and I'm just excited about the belt.

You know, thought I had a great deal, and didn't really pay a whole lot of attention to the transaction. We just did it, and I kept walking, and we went on, and it happened to be raining that day. You know, so the rain was falling, and still I wasn't paying attention.

I was just carrying the belt, and then finally we got to our bus, and as we took off, and we were going to another site, I pulled the belt out and wanted to show it to Cheryl. What a great deal I had. And as I pulled it out, I noticed that it was already falling apart.

And as I began to bend it, and twist it, and do different things with it, it started tearing and breaking, and I suddenly realized my leather belt was not leather. It was cardboard. And I had been cheated.

Majorly cheated. This guy showed me a leather belt, and handed me a cardboard one in exchange for my Kmart leather belt. And I don't know about you, but there's nothing worse to me than getting cheated.

It just gives you this feeling of defilement. You just feel like, man, I have been ripped off. You feel like an idiot.

We were taken advantage of. And looking at this 8th verse, where Paul says, beware lest anyone cheat you. You know, I thought of that incident.

And yet, of course, being cheated out of a \$15 belt isn't a real serious issue. But being cheated out of what God has for you is a very serious issue. And that's really what the Apostle is addressing here.

A much more serious issue. How it's possible that we as God's people could be cheated, ripped off, deceived, and subsequently miss out on the things that God has for us. And so in our last study, we talked about philosophy.

Philosophy, in this context, being human reasoning and understanding as opposed to the biblical revelation. And we also looked at length at psychology, which falls under the category of philosophy. And we talked a lot about how many people are being cheated.

Many Christian people are being cheated today out of a deeper, more intimate, more powerful relationship with the Lord. And really all that God has for them because of this philosophy that they have come under. And so today we're going to continue for just another session on this line.

Because it's a very serious issue. I think it's the most serious issue facing the Bible-believing church in America. It's very subtle.

These men who have embraced psychology and sought to integrate it have done a very good job at seemingly blending the two together. And for the person who isn't really diligent in their study of the Word and their understanding of Scripture, you can easily come under their influence feeling that what they're saying is absolutely right. But the closer you look at it, you find that there are many, many flaws in it.

The church, of course, is designed by God to be His witness to the world. The church should never have to draw from the world. The world should draw from the church, if anything.

But the church drawing from the world is really a contradiction of what it is to be. But that's what's happening today. Men have embraced philosophy.

They call it psychology and they're drawing from the world. They're drawing from worldly principles. And Paul says here, let no one cheat you through philosophy, vain deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world.

Now the thing that's pathetic is that even the world is beginning to question the validity of many of their theories. Now one theory that has held sway over the general populace for a long time and has been embraced totally by the church is the theory that most of our problems are due to our low self-esteem. I mean, you hear that all over the place.

And of course, some time ago here in the state of California, they had a task force, the self-esteem task force. And the belief is that if we can just instill self-esteem in these young people, they're going to become productive and they're going to become law-abiding and they're going to reach their potential as adults and as citizens. And so there's been a great emphasis on self-esteem in secular society, but of course there's been also as great an emphasis on it within the Christian community.

And today you can go into churches and you can hear series on self-esteem. Maybe six weeks a pastor will get up and talk about self-esteem and how you need to have it and how it's so vitally important and how a lack of self-esteem is really the cause of all of our social ills. It's really a cause of all of our spiritual anxieties and difficulties and so forth.

But now as time is going on, interestingly enough, the world from which these theories originally came is now beginning to question the validity of these theories. But the church is still holding tightly to them. Even though the world from which they came is now doubting the validity of them, the church is still holding tightly to them.

How tragic. I read several articles dealing with the subject of self-esteem. Recent articles all within the last two or three months of each other, and basically each one of them are saying the same thing.

And I've got one article here that's representative of them, and I'd like to read it to you today. The article is entitled, Violence is Darker Side of Self-Esteem. Enhancing self-esteem as an antidote to violent behavior is not only fruitless, it may even lead to aggression, a case Western Reserve University psychology professor says.

In an article that contradicts some widely held ideas about bad behavior, Roy F. Baumeister and two graduate students reviewed nearly 200 studies of assault and murder, rape, domestic violence, youth

gangs, and juvenile delinquency, as well as terrorism, oppression, and genocide. They conclude that people who engage in those behaviors rarely suffer from low self-esteem. Rarely suffer from low self-esteem.

Now, I'm not going to read the whole article to you. It basically is communicating that same thing over and over again, but let me pick up here a little further down. He says, correlations between high self-esteem and success and low self-esteem and social failure may actually be measuring people's realistic assessment of themselves and their accomplishments.

Among many students cited is one that found, or many studies, excuse me, among many studies cited is one that found juvenile delinquents were more likely to be, listen, self-assertive, socially assertive, defiant, defiant, and narcissistic than non-delinquents and were less likely to feel helpless, unloved, and suffer general anxiety than other juveniles. Similarly, gang members, in a separate study, tended to believe that their parents had accepted a humble life of poverty and failure, which they were determined not to follow. He goes on, he says, reviewing literature about genocide and discrimination, Baumeister notes that it is unlikely that whites subjected blacks because they felt inferior to them, nor is it likely that Nazis killed millions of Jews out of feelings of inadequacy.

What about Hitler and the master race? That is not low, that is not a low self-esteem slogan. Baumeister said, and it's the same thing if you look at Stalin or Idi Amin or Saddam Hussein. They all thought that they were God.

Does anyone really think that the cause of world peace would be served if we boosted Saddam Hussein's self-esteem? You see, the idea behind all of this is that people, you know, act aggressively and violently and all of this because of their low self-image. But these studies are proving that the exact opposite is the case, which of course is what the Bible says, what the Bible has always said. So this whole idea of self-esteem, the whole idea of self-love, which is very prominent in the church today, is now being considered or reconsidered by the world from which it came.

And each of the articles that I read concluded in a similar manner as this one does here. I advise people to become a better person rather than just saying the same, rather than just staying the same person and thinking better of yourself. So you see, that's kind of what it all comes down to.

You remain the same person, but you just think better of yourself. There was a study that was done some time ago, and I don't have the actual statistics on it, but you know, it was a worldwide study on the issue of self-esteem. And it was related to, it was also correlated with educational statistics and grade point averages and so on and so forth.

And the interesting thing was, when it all was concluded, the American populace, the young people of America, scored, I can't talk today, scored, scored the lowest in their grade point averages, but had the highest self-esteem of any nation in the world. So we got the stupidest kids in the world, and they're totally proud. I mean, this is, you know, this is what's happening in our country today.

And again, you know, the more frustrating aspect of it is the church's embracing of these theories, which are contrary to the Bible. Now think about this for a moment. The Bible never speaks of self-esteem.

It never even hints remotely that man's problems are due to low self-esteem. Yet, there are people in the church today whose diagnosis is that this is man's greatest problem. He suffers from low self-esteem.

You can, you can read that in Robert Shuler's books. You can read that from James Dobson. This is their diagnosis, but the Bible never mentions it at all.

The Bible never mentions a lack of self-love being a problem. The Bible never encourages or promotes self-love. The Bible, on the other hand, speaks directly contrary to those things.

When Paul wrote to Timothy warning him about the perilous times that would come in the last days, the first characteristic of society that he listed there is that men will be lovers of themselves. You see, the Bible says loving self is the root of personal and social problems. The Bible implies that we already love ourselves far too much.

One of our basic problems is a problem of pride, and that has to be dealt with. So, if this was the great need, surely the Bible would have hinted at it. Surely there would have been some place in the Scripture where we are told that we need to feel better about ourselves, but there's never a place in all the Bible that tells us that.

The Bible tells us the exact opposite. Some people trying to find this in Scripture have misinterpreted certain passages. One passage in particular that has been misinterpreted is the passage where Jesus stated what the great commandment is. The great commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and the second is to love your neighbor as yourself.

And people have taken and twisted that, and they've said that in order to really love God and your neighbor, you must first love yourself. That's what's being taught there. But that is not what's being taught there.

It's quite clear. No one for 2,000 years ever came up with that interpretation. It just came up recently.

Once the psychologist had come up with this self-love theory, Carl Rogers and men like that, and then the church embraced it. Now suddenly they're interpreting that verse to be teaching that we need to learn to love ourselves. The verse teaches that we do love ourselves already, and we need to love others in the same way.

We prefer ourselves. We put ourselves first. The Bible tells us to esteem others better than ourselves, you see.

So the problem is we have human theory that has permeated the church that is now being called into question by the world itself, but the church is still holding on to it. A sad thing. You see, again, the church is to set the pace not to follow the world or to be entirely different from the world.

But in a desire to be accepted by the world, men have embraced this form of philosophy as we mentioned before, this philosophy that goes under the banner of psychology. Now the merging of psychology with theology, or the integration of psychological theory and Christianity, is a very subtle thing, and it's not easily detected on the surface. But let me give you just a kind of a brief overview of what has happened.

Certain men, godless men, develop certain theories based upon their presuppositions, which are all contrary to scripture. Presupposition number one, man is essentially good. That right there is a contradiction of scripture.

Man is essentially evil, according to the Bible. So they come with this presupposition, man is essentially good. Generally speaking, there is also the presupposition that we live in a closed system.

There is no God. The founding fathers of psychology were all of them atheists. And so coming with these presuppositions, looking at man as the measure, man is the measure of all things, not God.

Man is the standard. They begin to develop certain theories, certain ideas. The ideas that have most affected the church are the ideas that came from two men, one named Eric Fromm, who was more the theorist, and one named Carl Rogers, who was the practitioner.

Carl Rogers put Fromm's theories into practice. And what Fromm and Rogers believed is that man, because he exists, because of his own humanness, is worthy of love. So man is unconditionally worthy of love.

And a man ought to love himself regardless of his behavior or performance. And we ought to love one another regardless of our, of their behavior, our behavior or performance. So taking these theories of Fromm, Rogers put them into practice.

And what he believed is that people did not love themselves and were incapable of contributing to society in a positive way because of a lack of self-love. And the lack of self-love was a result of not being loved by a significant person in their life. They referred to it as a significant other.

So the problem is this. Your parents did not love you unconditionally. They loved you based on your performance.

And if you performed, if you lived up to their traditional understanding of things and their point of view, then you were loved and accepted. And if you failed in that area, then you did not receive the kind of love that you actually needed. That's why you're a problem person.

That's why you're incapable of loving yourself. And that's why you can't really love other people. So we've got to remedy that.

We've got to repair this whole thing. So Rogers, not believing in God, not being a man who trusted in God, he saw that the therapist would become the significant other in the life of the client. Parents had failed, family members had failed, people that they looked up to had failed to love them unconditionally.

That's the failure. They put a standard. There was a performance basis for love placed upon them.

So the therapist develops a relationship with a client where the client begins to trust the therapist to the extent that the client begins to see the therapist as a significant other. The therapist replaces the parent or the spouse or the child or whoever the person really would look to for affirmation and unconditional love. Once the client senses that they are being loved unconditionally by the therapist, then they can in turn love themselves unconditionally.

Then, having loved themselves unconditionally, they can begin to be a productive member of society. They can start to love others unconditionally. Now think about that for a moment.

Loving unconditionally. Loving unconditionally means that regardless of what a person does, their behavior has nothing to do with it. They are worthy of love and acceptance based on their humanness alone because they exist, because they're human, they deserve love.

That mentality is permeating our society and our world. And that is why our world is falling apart. See, that is why a criminal is no longer a criminal.

We can't judge them based on their behavior. We must judge them based on their humanness alone, and they deserve our love and respect regardless of what they've done. See, that's where it all leads to.

Now, this Rogerian theory, it's what it's called after Carl Rogers. This Rogerian theory, as long as several other things, this is what was embraced by the Christian community. The Christian community took this philosophy, this worldly theory, and Christianized it.

In replace of the therapist, God becomes the significant other. God loves you unconditionally regardless of what you do, what you've done in the past, what you do presently, or what you'll do in the future. And because God loves you unconditionally, you can then learn to love yourself unconditionally, and then you can reach out and love others unconditionally.

And that, of course, is just exactly what the Bible teaches. But we have a major problem. The Bible does not teach that.

The Bible does not teach that God loves us unconditionally. I'm sorry. There are many conditions that are placed upon us in the scripture.

The Bible teaches that we're under the wrath of God apart from Christ, that we're going to be punished eternally unless we come to repentance. You see, there's a condition right there. We cannot experience the love of God without the condition of repentance.

I must repent if I'm going to experience God's love. I must turn from my sin. And when I become a Christian, does God love me unconditionally? Does my fellowship remain intact with him regardless of how I live? The answer is no.

My relationship with God, my fellowship with him is affected by my behavior. If I sin as a Christian, my fellowship with God can be broken, and confession must be exercised in order to be restored. You see, they've taken biblical terms and ideas like the grace of God and the love of God, and they've taken them to an extreme that the Bible doesn't allow.

They've taken them to Carl Rogers and Eric Fromm's extremes. So you see, there's many people in pulpits and many people in churches who are being taught God loves you unconditionally. There are many people going to counselors and they're being told God loves you unconditionally.

It doesn't matter how you perform. God doesn't love us on a performance base. And you see, it's so subtle because there is some truth to that, but they lack real definition.

And because it's kind of a vague generalization and taking a biblical truth and stretching it beyond what it actually says, this is where the problem comes in. So you have people who expect to be loved and it doesn't matter how they perform. They expect to be accepted.

And so responsibility subsequently is removed from the individual. Any real need to live right or perform is done away with. And the big thing is finally this, that I must love myself, accept myself, regardless of how I am, regardless of how other people see me, and know that God just loves me and accepts me.

And if people don't like it, that's just the way it is. That's their problem. They need to learn to love me unconditionally.

And you know, this creates all kinds of practical problems. You see, this is what's happened. And these well-meaning, but certainly misled men are at the forefront of this whole movement and they're promoting these things.

They're promoting self-love. They're promoting self-esteem. They're promoting these things that are really contrary to the scriptures.

But what they've done is they've merged Rogerian philosophy with the Bible, and the two really cannot mix with one another. But again, taking away from certain things the Bible says, just de-emphasizing certain aspects of the scripture and emphasizing these other aspects of Rogerian philosophy, they've blended it together in what is now called Christian psychology. But you see, anyone who comes under the influence of this ends up inevitably being cheated.

You're cheated. You're ripped off. You end up losing out on what God has to do in your life, in some cases, wants to do in other cases.

There are so many factors that are never brought into consideration by the people who have embraced psychology when it comes to dealing with people and truly helping them. And so the person never really gets the help. Now, I want to quote to you from Dr. Dobson.

I know he's a favorite of many, and I know every time I mention him, feathers are ruffled. But let me quote to you from Dobson. Listen closely to what he says.

This is his estimation of both the problem and the solution. He says, if I could write a prescription for the women of the world, it would provide each one of them with a healthy dose of self-esteem and personal worth, taken three times a day until the symptoms disappear. I have no doubt that this is their greatest need.

This is the greatest need for the women of the world, healthy dose of self-esteem. Listen to his description. He describes here those who are suffering from low self-esteem.

It is sitting alone in a house during the quiet afternoon, wondering why the phone doesn't ring, wondering why you have no real friends. It is longing for someone to talk to soul to soul, but knowing there is no such person worthy of your trust. It is wondering why other people have so much more talent and ability than you do.

It is feeling incredibly ugly and sexually unattractive. It is admitting that you've become a failure as a wife and a mother. It is disliking everything about yourself and wishing constantly wishing you could be someone else.

It is feeling unloved and unlovable and lonely and sad. It is lying in bed after the family is asleep pondering the vast emptiness inside and longing for unconditional love. It is intense self-pity.

It is reaching up in the darkness to remove a tear from the corner of your eye. It is depression. Now Dobson labeled it what it is in actuality right here.

It is intense self-pity. Now there are several things that are not taken into consideration in his description here. And someone asked the question and I think rightfully so, is that low self-esteem or a collection of self-centered thoughts? It is the latter.

It is a collection of self-centered thoughts. What is the remedy for a person in this condition? The remedy is take your eyes off yourself and get them on Jesus Christ. God has a plan for your life.

What are you doing sitting around sulking about your lack of abilities or talents or this or that comparing yourselves with others? All of these things are contradictions of everything that the scriptures teach. But Dr. Dobson in his compassion, he is overlooking what the Bible says. He is just looking at the condition of the person and saying this low self-esteem.

We have got to boost their self-esteem. No, these many of these thoughts that he is describing are sinful thoughts that need to be rebuked. But there is another factor that is generally speaking never taken into consideration and that is the demonic factor.

You will find among Christian psychologists that the demonic is something that they rarely will even acknowledge exist. Rarely acknowledge that it exists. There are a few that might.

In extreme cases, they might acknowledge some demonic activity. But generally speaking, because they've bought into worldly philosophy, which of course denies the spiritual realm, they don't see demons as really having any personal involvement in our lives. I was talking to a psychologist a few years back and we were discussing some different things and we were we were discussing various thought processes and thoughts that come into the mind and so forth and he was giving me his understanding of what they were.

And I responded. I said, I believe that they're demonic. He said, oh, no.

No, no, that's not demonic. I said, really? How do you know? Well, we just know it's not. Well, you see it's not because worldly philosophy doesn't allow for such a thing.

There is no spiritual realm according to the philosophers. We live in a closed system. And he had bought into it.

Now we have a combination in this description. I believe we have a combination of sinful thinking on the part of the person. Self-pity.

Intense self-pity as Dobson himself even said. But we also would of course have Satan influencing the mind and seeking to add insult to injury and add fuel to the fire. So trying to build a person's self-esteem is not going to bring a person out of this and we're finding over and over again that it's failing to do that.

But so many people buy into this. I can't tell you how many people have come to my office, sat down with me and told me their problem is low self-esteem. I just have low self-esteem.

Where did you get that idea? You certainly did not get that from the Bible. You see that's how influenced we've become. We become influenced even though we don't realize it.

Many of the things that we take for granted and assume are realities are not realities at all, but they're theories from godless men. Take for example the idea of the unconscious mind. Freud was the one who came up with the theory of the unconscious mind.

He said that we are driven by unconscious. And for Freud those thoughts were primarily sexual. Freud taught that every human being is driven by sexual urges that are latent within them.

So the idea of the unconscious comes from Sigmund Freud who in my opinion was a madman and perhaps even a demon-possessed man. Extremely vile individual. Extremely perverse.

But his theories, although many psychologists today will deny any connection to Freud, there was an article in Time Magazine just over a year ago or so that talked about Freud's ongoing influence even though people don't want to admit it. So much of his theorizing is what's affecting people in that profession today in their thinking process. So we've got the idea of the unconscious mind and we've all been subjected to that.

And so people are being told that they're being driven by unconscious thoughts and what they need to do is they need to get down somehow into the unconscious and they need to bring these thoughts to the surface and they need to deal with these issues. And then of course we have Freud's theories of the past that so many people are controlled by. Freud taught that in the first five years of life all of your behavior patterns are developed.

And what you are after five years old is what you will remain for the most part for the remainder of your life. I have heard James Dobson say the exact same thing. Where did he get that idea? He certainly didn't get it from the Bible.

The Bible says if anyone is in Christ, they are an entirely new creation. Old things have passed away. You see? But not only does the Bible contradict it, but even the world itself has rejected that.

Minreth and Mayer, they I guess were, I guess they're split up now, I heard that, but they were a partnership. Minreth and Mayer, two psychiatrists, Minreth and Mayer clinics, new life centers with Steve Otterburn. They teach, it's documented, they teach that 85 percent of our behavior as adults was established by the time we were five years old, drawing directly from Freud.

It's been proven test after test that that is not true. As a matter of fact, the researchers, what they say is that you can take and do case studies where, you know, at the age of five years old, you can look at a behavior and trying to project it out to the future and to what the person is going to be, you can't do it. It never works out.

So again, the world says these theories are wrong. Freud came up with them. The world says they're wrong, many in the world.

The church embraces them, says they're right, they're true. How sad. And you know, the world looks on and mocks.

An article in Newsweek, I think it was, talking about self-esteem all the way through and it got into the church embracing it and there was a little, there was a little little picture there, a little drawing of a preacher standing before the congregation saying that Cain's problem, killing his brother Abel, was low self-esteem. Now you see, the world is mocking the church, but the church is holding tenaciously to these things. But you see, these are theories, again, developed by godless men, being rejected to a large degree by the world that once embraced them and promoted them, but still being held on to tenaciously by the church.

What kind of a thing is that? You see, these theories are contrary to biblical revelation. And again, there are theories which are unprovable. You think of their place of origination, men who were against god, men who were involved in the occult, men who had direct demonic links, and the church is embracing these things.

And it is a sad day, and many Christians are being cheated. Many Christians are being told that they need psychology, they need psychological help, they need therapy, they need counseling. And, you know, here's something that you need to understand, because I know there are people who listen to me and to others who hold my position and they say, oh, you're so unkind, you're so unloving, and you're judging these people, and, you know, you shouldn't have that kind of an attitude toward them and so forth.

Let me tell you this, they are as adamant against people like me and others as we are against them. They make no bones about it. If you were to call Focus on the Family today, and you were to tell them that you had marital problems, just say for example, and you wanted a counselor, and you suggested to them that you might see your pastor, you know what they would ask you? First of all, they would ask you, does your pastor have a degree in counseling? If your pastor doesn't have a degree in counseling, they would recommend that you not see your pastor, because your pastor isn't qualified to deal with these issues, and they would recommend to you a psychologist in the area that can help you.

So, you see, it's not that these people at this point are just innocently going about this and don't know. At this stage of the game, they know what they're doing, and they are in opposition to anyone who says that Christ is sufficient and the scriptures are all that we need. They're as opposed to us as we are to them.

Now, people ask me, you know, what do you think about these men? Well, first of all, I believe they're Christians. I believe they're Christians. I believe that they're sincere also, for the most part.

Not all of them, but I think most of them are sincere. Sincere in their desire to help people. But I do believe this, they are psychologists before they're Christians.

They are psychological theorists before they're theologians. They know psychology much better than they know the scriptures. And they have allowed psychology to affect their understanding of the scriptures instead of the other way around.

That is what's happened to a large degree. I heard someone state in wanting to I think ease the blow of what he was saying. He said, I believe that they're godly men.

I won't go that far. Godly men is a title reserved for a few. And men who compromise the word of God, I would not call godly men.

They're Christian men who, it's okay, you don't have to applaud. They're Christian men who are well-meaning but misled. And the tragedy is that they are unteachable.

This is, I think, the biggest problem. Somebody asked me after service, you know, has anyone ever confronted them on these things? Of course people have. You know, I'm just a small voice.

I'm nobody. Nobody knows about me. You know me.

I'm your pastor. But, you know, they don't know me. They could care less my opinion and they certainly wouldn't listen to anything I had to say.

Men of much greater stature than I have challenged them face to face and they have been mocked. They've been rebuked. They've been criticized.

The tragedy is they are unteachable. And that's a sad thing. Do not be cheated.

Do not allow yourself to be cheated by these things. Oh, it can sound so good. And, of course, as one author said, low self-esteem is popular because it's much easier to accept the idea of having low self-esteem than confessing evil, ungodly, self-centered thoughts and then repenting through believing in what God has said in His word.

But, you see, don't embrace these things because if you do you will be cheated. You will miss out on much that God has for you and you can even be led back into sin. And you'd be amazed at how far this goes.

I was speaking with a lady some time ago. She came in to see me from another church. Didn't feel she could go to her own pastor.

So she just made an appointment to come in to see me. And as we sat down she told me right up front that she'd been in counseling for a few years with a psychologist, a Christian psychologist. And then she told me that she had been involved in two extramarital affairs and she was presently being inclined to get into another one.

And so she was coming to counsel with me just to see what I might have to say. And she told me what her psychologist had been telling her. And this is what she said.

She said, when I was a young girl my father did not give me the affirmation that I needed. And therefore I have this desire for affirmation from men. And that is the explanation of my adultery.

I'm being driven by this desire for affirmation. And so my counselor is taking me through a process and bringing me back and you know, I'm trying to reconcile things in my own mind with my father. And I know that, or at least this is what she was being told, and you know once I get to that place then I will be liberated from this this pattern of adultery that I'm involved in.

I looked at her and I said, do you believe that? And she said, no. And I said, good. You shouldn't because it's a lie.

And she went on to say to me, she said, you know, I've never felt like it was right or true. I said, well, what do you think? She said, I think I'm sinning. I said, you're right.

You're absolutely right. You are sinning. And it was great.

It was great because she herself, I didn't even need to convince her, she herself knew she was sinning. She knew that this was really a spiritual problem. It had nothing to do with this theory that her psychologist had foisted upon her.

And so you see, this is the kind of thing that will happen. There are groups now in the church. There are, of course, the 12-step programs and the programs for addicts.

There is a program for those who are addicted to sex. And they'll tell you right up front that getting victory over your addiction is a process. You can't expect victory overnight.

So in other words, be prepared to fornicate or commit adultery or to indulge in pornography or homosexual behavior or whatever you're doing. Be prepared to go on in that for some time until you can get a victory over this addiction. It's going to take time.

How pathetic? How contrary to biblical teaching can you get? It's so blatant and obvious. So many people buy into it. And these new life centers and these places like that, this is the kind of advice they will give to people that come in.

And I'm not exaggerating one iota. These are the facts. You see what happens? People are cheated.

People are cheated. They're living under the control of sin when they should be freed from sin. And of course, if you're living under the control of sin, you're living out of fellowship with God and you're under God's judgment.

You're not under God's grace and blessing and favor. And you cannot plead unconditional love. Oh, God loves me, even though I'm committing adultery right now.

Paul said, let no man deceive you with vain words because of these things the wrath of God comes upon people. Not the unconditional blessing of God. You see, it's all a very subtle deception.

That's the power of it. It's subtle. And satan, of course, is the master deceiver.

So let no one cheat you through philosophy or empty deceit. You see, it's empty in that it cannot bring fulfillment. And it's deceit.

It deceives you. People are looking for wholeness. And that's how they end up being led into these things.

They're looking for wholeness. Listen to what Paul said, for in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and you are complete in him. You want wholeness? You want to know what it is to be whole, to be sound, to be right, to be healed, to have victory, to go on.

You know, people say, oh, but you don't know what people have gone through, you know, abuse of children and molestation and all of these things. Yes, I know all of that exists. Some of it is fabricated, but yes, there is truth to much of it and people have experienced those things.

But you know what? Jesus Christ can heal you. He's the great physician. He's the one who created you.

He can give you deliverance from all of that. I mean, let's face it. Honestly, I've said it before and I'll say it again.

If God cannot help you, then these people certainly can't. God can help you. He can heal you.

Oh, and you know, one of the tragic things that's happened quite often is people have come to Christ from those kinds of backgrounds, been totally healed, been delivered, living in the joy of the Lord. It's all wonderful. It's all great.

Then they run into somebody who says, oh, no, no, no, no, you can't have that. You have repressed emotions. You have things that you're blocking out.

You know, maybe you say, oh, you know, yeah, I'm feeling pretty good, but I've been having headaches lately. Oh, something in your past, you need to delve in there. I mean, they truly have these theories, you

know, any form of anxiety is a result of a repressed emotion.

And so there's, you have this emotion that wants to come out and you have this standard that wants to keep it back and that results in anxiety, they say. So you see, if you have any form of anxiety, then there's something repressed there. You've got to get back and find that out.

And so people who have been free and liberated by Christ and enjoying a new life in Christ have gone back into that thing and become bound once again and in bondage. Oh, and what a tragedy for that. Beware lest anyone cheat you, lest anyone spoil you, take you captive.

Because you are complete in him, in Christ, you got it all. The fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily. He's God.

He's all we need. He's your creator. He's your sustainer.

He's your provider. He's your healer. Back in the old testament, the Israelites had all these names for God.

Jehovah our healer was one of the names they had for the Lord. Jehovah our healer. He is our healer.

Do not be cheated. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for the reality of wholeness in Christ Jesus.

Completeness. Lord, that we're complete in him who is the head of all principality and power. We need no mediator, human or angelic.

We need no theory apart from the bible. So, Lord, we thank you that we don't have any theories. We have facts delivered to us from your word.

And so help us, Lord, to hold fast to the word, to not be deceived. Help us to be gracious toward those that have been cheated, but help us to be steadfast in our commitment to your word that we might call them to put their trust in you. In Jesus name we pray.

Amen. Let's stand. One final thing I want to say.

The psychologists say that that the bible is insufficient because it doesn't have a theory of personality. And, you know, as I studied over that I thought that's interesting. They have several hundred theories of personality.

There's no one theory that's better than the other. But, you know, that's their claim. The bible has no theory of personality.

You know, my answer to that is you're absolutely right. The bible has no theory about anything. The bible has facts.

You want to deal with theories, you're going to be subjected to a million and one and who's to say which one is right. We want facts. The bible gives us facts.

It doesn't give us a theory of personality. It gives us a fact of personality. They say that you need to know what normal personality is so you can know what abnormal personality is.

Okay? Normal personality is Jesus Christ. Anything contrary to him is abnormal personality. By the power of the spirit, he will make you normal.

Let him do that. God bless you today. We're going to be having the baptism no service here tonight.

I pray that you can join us for that as we witness many going into that water, that watery grave to come up in the newness of life to live for the Lord. God bless.

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