

Truth Matters! 3

Are We Discerning Postmodern Progress In Our Churches?

We're told that we, the church, have come to the place where we correctly discern the ills of Postmodernity (a worldview paradigm emphasizing subjective experience, to mention only one of its many traits) and that we have responded in such a way that has removed its gross errors/consequential threats.* Really! The two examples that follow would lead us to conclude some-what differently. Many other examples could sincerely be cited. While we have heard this "drop-your-guard" counsel in a variety of forms, the Word speaks to the contrary.

1. ZONDERVAN'S *COUNTERPOINTS* book series includes the following titles:

S/ET	<i>Four Views On Hell</i>	PM	<i>Two Views On Women in Ministry</i>
PM	<i>Five Views On Apologetics</i>	ET	<i>Four Views On the Book of Revelation</i>
ET	<i>Three Views On the Rapture</i>	C	<i>Three Views On Creation and Evolution</i>
S	<i>Five Views On Sanctification</i>	ET	<i>Three Views On the Millennium and Beyond</i>
S	<i>Five Views On Law and Gospel</i>	S	<i>Four Views On Salvation in a Pluralistic</i>
S	<i>Four Views On Eternal Security</i>		<i>World</i> (Other works are in progress)

(S=Salvation ; PM=Practical Ministry ; ET=End Times ; C=Creation)

My daughter recently had an experience while attending Moody Bible Institute that reinforces my concern (as evidenced by the book titles above) that the truth of God's Word is being undermined though man's interpretive speculations about it. Her class on the Book of Romans included an assignment in which student groups were to exegete and study commentaries on particular paragraphs of the book. She said that when it came to the student presentations, practically every group said they did not know what to believe regarding the correct understanding of the text due to the MANY interpretations that were given by the Bible scholars. Even her group concluded in doubt as to the true meaning because of the many viewpoints they encountered while researching the passage. WOW! Instead of growing in further confidence in the Word of God, she and other students experienced a lesson fostering the dangerous conclusion that the Bible is not able to speak with clarity because there are so many opinions that one cannot be sure what to believe! While this was not stated *directly*—in fact, Moody Bible teaches to the contrary—nevertheless, some of the students did express concern about the ability of God's Word to speak clearly and authoritatively.

A short-sighted skeptical philosopher told us years ago that the Bible is a bad source of knowledge because theologians disagree about everything. Even though overstated, his point is accurate. **WE**, God's people, have made the Word of God relative through our misguided speculation on it! GOD FORBID! The *CounterPoint* series above does the same—it further promotes an unstated attitude toward a relative perspective concerning God's Word because, “theologians disagree about everything.” While, yes, these views do exist (and only some with good reason), this does not mean that we are to conclude the Word cannot speak clearly today!

BUT, GOOD NEWS FOR THOSE WHO WOULD DISCERN THIS MAJOR DECEPTION TODAY: The Word of God does speak truthfully concerning all of the issues above! If one were to simply allow the Word to speak for itself, many opinions would fall by the wayside. The Bible does indeed speak clearly concerning the issues it addresses!! (Once again, this is not to say that there are not difficult issues in the Word of God that need further consideration. Yes, there are challenging portions of Scripture, but we've taken these difficulties far beyond what the text would allow.) Many Bible teachers today promote a different perspective—a view that leads one to the *opinion* that the Word of God is not a clear source of Truth. The “Has God said?” appeals continue in many forms—even from sources or voices within the *church*.

The following is a true story of a student's response to his Mormon instructor in a “Bible as Literature” class at a college in Sacramento. When given an opportunity to respond to what he saw to be an error on the part of the professor, the student quoted Colossians 2:9: “For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” To that the instructor said, “But what does that mean?” The student responded by re quoting the verse. The professor responded by immediately rebutting the student's point by repeating the same question a second time: “Yes, but what does that mean?!” The student not only responded by once again repeating the verse, but went on to quote, *applicationaly*, without speculative commentary (there is a major difference between these two), the very next verse—“and we are complete in Him!” **WE NEED THIS TYPE OF TRUST IN THE WORD OF GOD TODAY!!** “God said it, I believe it, that settles it” is a dangerous perspective! “God said it, that settles it!” is what we need to be modeling today. **Our opinions do not matter.** Whether *we believe it or not* does not matter.** Truth Matters and God's Word – as it is – is what is stated to be Truth, not the additional commentaries that are often included in the presentation of His Word. This approach not only models confidence to fellow believers who need to see this important example but goes on to testify to the unbeliever the confidence God's people have in His Word—a missing ingredient in many Christian testimonies today.

A second startling appeal to this end is given below. He who has an ear, let him hear.

2. A large group of pastors attended a conference in the Pacific Northwest decades long ago. A group of us had gathered around a table for dinner. We began talking about end-time concerns. About five minutes into our conversation, the parable of the ten virgins of Matthew 25 and the absolutely crucial application *to be in a state of readiness* (“Watch!”) was highlighted by one at the table. One of the pastors who was a part of the conversation injected, “Do you know what? It's a non-issue!” That's what he said. The matter under discussion was another one of

those matters that really didn't matter. This is exactly what he said. This is sincerely what took place.

A few months prior to this experience I had asked some trusted partners to hold me accountable in the area of being even more bold in stating and defending biblical Truth. I felt that I had already been quite bold with the group at the dinner table, so I decided to stop contending when the pastor said what he did concerning the issue of readiness not being an important matter. I did go on to personally conclude, though, that this pastor was actually contributing to disobedience to the Word. You see, time and time again God calls His people to be ready, discerning, watching—we are to be in a state of preparedness for His Son's glorious return. His Word has specific counsel toward preparedness. This is anything but a "non-issue"! But there's a second error.

God sees things quite differently than this pastor does because He (God) deemed it important enough to include in His Word—time and time again—the importance of ready expectancy. If God includes something in His Word—even repeating it for emphasis' sake—it's an important matter, not a "non-issue." It is better to obey God than men. Psalm 118:8,9 has wonderful Counsel toward an attitude that is so important for us today.

There are many attacks on the Word of God these days, yet, His Truth continues to matter and be so pertinent for today. Christians claim to be people of the Book. I hope we continue to discern the many mediums that are bringing satanic counsel to doubt what God has clearly revealed. Continue to enjoy the Counsel of the One who is Himself Truth, and One who has communicated His Truths to us. If we neglect the Biblical Truths our precious Father has graciously given for the purpose of equipping us to better discern the many false teachings that are being propagated today, will we not potentially be contributing to our very own deception through the making of a conscious decision to cast aside one crucial means He has provided to help us avoid becoming deceived?

* There are good, corrective fruits also tied to the Postmodern mindset. We are simply addressing one of its bad fruits.

** Truth stands on its own, distinct from our decision to accept it. To apply truth personally (a separate act to be distinguished from truth itself) is a necessary step that most certainly matters for appropriation purposes. In other words, the existence of truth will not do someone any good if that person chooses not to embrace it. For example, eternal life is a true reality and truly available because it has been secured through Jesus Christ (truth), BUT, one must accept the gift before enjoying that truth personally (truth believed/accepted). To discern this distinction between truth and our believing/accepting it is crucial and clears up potential misunderstanding of the statement, "Whether *we believe it or not* does not matter."