

Sermon 4: The Danger of False Living

The foundational message in this sermon is how the false views discussed last week result in false living. If we are not thinking biblically, we will not live in accordance with biblical standards. Christians who are culturally captive will be following the dictates of the culture rather than biblical principles for godly behavior.

Our culture bombards us with ideas on what behavior is acceptable, what should be celebrated, what should be tolerated. Most of those ideas are counter to the truth presented to us in the New Testament. This sermon should challenge some of those non-biblical behaviors and encourage your congregation to live godly lives in contrast to the cultural norms.

Fast Facts

In the book, *Cultural Captives*, several statistical facts provide insight into this week's sermon. These statistics represent the average result from three national surveys covering what emerging adult Americans believe about various behaviors.

- What do emerging adults believe regarding sex outside of marriage; specifically pornography, casual sex, sex before marriage, and divorce? Few of those who are not born-again (less than 5%) ascribed to a biblical standard. Of those who claim to be born-again, only 15% ascribed to the standards for sexual purity clearly taught in the Bible.
- When asked about their beliefs on abortion, homosexual activity, homosexual marriage and suicide, only about 4% of those not born-again took a biblical position. Those claiming to be born-again were less conformed to the culture as a whole (almost 45% of them agreeing with a biblical position).

Christian Smith, in his follow up on book to *Souls in Transition*, entitled *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood*, pointed out five areas of concern they discovered from their research. The five areas were: 1) moral aimlessness, 2) materialistic consumerism, 3) intoxicated living, 4) deep troubles from sexually liberated behavior, and 5) lack of interest in civic and political life. In *Cultural Captives*, we affirmed these characteristics and added three more: 6) cheating, 7) pluralism and 8) lack of meaningful spiritual activity. As Smith put it, “*Might it be true that the farthest boundary of sight that youth today can envision as real and being worth pursuit is entirely imminent, purely material, and completely mundane?*”

Sermon Video:

None provided



The false views of the world not only affect what we believe but also how we behave. If we are not using a biblical standard to evaluate the ideas and trends around us, we are likely to accept false ideas and live a life contrary to the Bible.



Suggested Sermon Ideas

The Danger of False Living

Appetites, Attitude, and Apathy

IV. Introduction

A. Paul struggled with living the Christian life

1. Our purpose in this Periscope series is not to beat you up.
2. Living the Christian life isn't easy especially in a culture that seduces us to live according to its standards rather than God's standards.
3. It is comforting to know that Paul also struggled with living the Christian life.

“For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. . . . For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.” Romans 7:15, 19-20

B. Paul reminds us who we are and what we should be seeking

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.” Colossians 3:1-2

1. We have been raised with Christ.
2. We should be seeking the things above (have an eternal perspective).
3. We should set our minds on the things above (biblical mindset).
4. Today we will look at this passage in Colossians 3 in more detail but let's first remind ourselves of why this is so important.

V. Summary of Probe-Barna Survey

A. What do Christians accept: ultimate purpose in life?

1. When those surveyed were asked to pick the statement that most closely described their ultimate purpose in life, more than half (54%) said it was to “serve God and live out His will for my life.”
2. As you might expect a much higher percentage (70%) of those with a biblical worldview picked this compared with those (47%) without a biblical worldview.
3. Other respondents picked statements such as: “be a good person” and “live life to the fullest” and “marry, have family, raise loving, productive children.”
4. A significant percentage of Christians define their purpose in life more in worldly terms than biblical terms.
5. Many years ago, Christian Smith looking at Christian teenagers coined a term to describe how they view the Bible, the Christian life, and themselves (Soul Searching).
6. He called it “moralistic therapeutic deism.”

B. Illustration – an example from another study

1. Years ago Christian Smith introduced a term to describe the worldview of Christian teenagers (*Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, 2005).
2. These teenagers are now young adults (similar to the ones interviewed in the Probe-Barna survey).
3. The term is “moralistic therapeutic deism.” Here are some key elements of their worldview:

1. A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

C. How do Christians make decisions regarding moral and ethical choices?

1. Seven out of ten born-again young adults say they take the Bible as their source of truth.
2. Born-again adults with a biblical worldview were much more likely (95%) to identify the Bible as a source of truth than born-again Christians without a biblical worldview (59%).
3. Active church-goers are much more likely (83%) to identify the Bible as a source of truth than non-active church-goers (49%).

D. What do Christians do: behavior

1. One of the most disturbing findings in the Probe-Barna survey was that born-again young adults are not living biblically, but also that a significant percentage of them don't care.
2. We can appreciate that living the Christian life can be difficult, but it is doubtful that born-again Christians are going to be successful if they aren't even trying to follow a biblical standard.
3. We need to be asking believers: How your philosophy of life and subsequent behavior is working for you? Perhaps you are missing something?
4. Problems with anger or the tongue: Nearly half of born-again adults admit they are challenged by impatience (47%) and anger (47%).
5. Nearly as many struggle with judging others (45%), cursing (45%), and anxiety (40%).
6. Approximately one third of these adults grapple with losing their temper (36%), gossiping (35%), lust (32%), and succumb to negativity (30%).
7. Problems with sexual sin: premarital sex, pornography, homosexuality
8. This included sex outside of marriage (18%), pornography (16%), adultery (11%), and homosexuality or same-sex attraction (6%).

VI. Example: Sexual Ethics

A. Biblical perspective

1. The Bible teaches that sexual purity is a precious treasure that should be valued and even protected.
2. Sexual purity is also becoming a rare commodity in a world that no longer follows biblical principles, especially in the area of human sexuality.
3. We glorify God in our sexuality when we use self control and stay pure.
4. The Bible uses the word “fornication” or the words “sexual immorality” when speaking about sex outside of marriage.
5. The Greek word is “porneia” and is used forty-four times in the New Testament and includes such things as premarital sex, extramarital sex, and homosexuality. It could even include viewing sexually suggestive material including pornography.

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.” 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

B. Paul’s two principles

1. First, believers are to abstain from sexual immorality.
2. The word “abstain” means to keep away as far as possible.
3. Abstinence before marriage is the only way to avoid the physical, emotional, and spiritual problems associated with premarital sex.
4. Second, Paul teaches that you should control your own body.
5. We should exercise self-control.
6. Paul commands us to live in “sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.”

VII. How Should We Respond?

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.” Colossians 3:1-2

A. Colossians 3:1-2

1. Set your mind on things above
2. Develop a biblical mindset (eternal perspective)
3. Do not be captive to the culture (Colossians 2:8)
4. A. W. Tozer: “Pilgrims have not yet found that place they can call home”

“Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.” Colossians 3:5-7

B. Colossians 3:5-7

1. Consider our bodies dead to the lusts of the flesh.
2. This would include sexual immorality (fornication), impurity (uncleanness), passion (inordinate affection),
3. Not only are we to put aside (mortify) our appetites, but Paul also commands us to put aside inordinate passions.

“But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.” Colossians 3:8

C. Colossians 3:8

1. Anger and wrath are bad.
2. Malice can even be worse because its premeditated.
3. Slander and abusive speech are expressions of the heart and a product of the tongue.
4. Lying (Colossians 3:9) is also a problem in our society.

D. Application

1. These are problems for Christians today
2. The survey showed that nearly a majority of born-again young adults struggle with these behaviors.
3. If this describes you, begin to deal with the sin in your life.
4. If this describes other people you know, pray for them, hold them accountable.