

# DO NOT LEAN ON . . .

This week's lesson is based on one of your requests. Your company stresses "being true to your authentic self."

Here's what your text stated: "Coming to your own beliefs based on your own study... could be biblical or other religious sources. Not exactly sure how they develop it, but for me, it sure seemed like they were trying to say that's the way we were made... to determine our own true self. Acceptance is their biggest push." (This included diversity training, but especially among LGBTQ+ and pronoun usage).

I actually love the first statement. I wish more would commit themselves to truth. Find out what you believe. Why do you believe what you believe? For 2,000 years, the church has been complimentary of the Jews in Berea for examining the Scriptures daily in order to confirm or reject Paul's teaching about Jesus. However, there's more to say. There's more than meets the eye.

After much consideration this week, here's my response: Be humble. Be wise.

## **Be Humble:**

I'm making a truth statement today: Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through Him. Agnostics stop short of the truth. Atheists are in denial. All other gods are false. We are not the Creator. We do not hold authority. We are limited and not to be trusted. I say this because I've weighed the evidence, and I am persuaded by our unique Bible, which points to Jehovah. Its principles are true and wise. But this creates a problem: not all roads are equal. Jesus gave two options. A broad and narrow road. Most are on the broad one that leads to destruction.

Our culture cannot stand this message because it's too dogmatic. However, the real reason is that this road leads to their destruction, and they don't like that message. People don't like being told they're wrong or are guilty of evil.

This brings us to Proverbs 3:1-8. This passage because it gets right to the heart of what we're discussing. IF the Bible is true (and I believe it is), then it changes the game. It points out who to lean on. God has given us the ability to know and understand the truth He has revealed.

**Our obstacle isn't so much the ability to know truth, but rather the humility to accept it.** God has delivered the truth in a way that can be understood, but that doesn't assure we'll embrace it.

And the truth is hard to swallow. In this case, your company is trying to support homosexual lifestyles. They want you to accept it. Coincidentally, when Romans 1 teaches against such practices, it comes on the heels of rejecting God and worshipping false idols. They thought they were wise, but were fools.

We're familiar with Jeremiah 10:23, "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps." I returned and reread the first 10 chapters of Jeremiah to appreciate the setting of this passage. Wow, what a people. They'd watched Israel go into captivity for their idolatry, but it wouldn't save them from following their example. Because of this, God said they were worse. They wanted to be like other nations around them. They were ignorant of the truth because didn't want to know. They ignored it.

I was pulled into the weeds this week and had to back up. There are endless examples of what I'm talking about because we're ultimately dealing with the kind of person you are. There are two kinds of people in the world: those who think they can save themselves and those who know only Jehovah can. Those who are prideful and those who are humble. Those who accept God and things who reject Him. Later in the Jeremiah (9:23-24), Judah was told, "Thus says the Lord: 'Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.'" In Paul's day, he said he would only boast in the Lord. See 1 Corinthians 1:26-31.

But, there's a caveat to it all: are you actually seeking truth? Or are you looking for someone to confirm what you want to be true? Are you a Berean or Athenian? Do we remember what Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2-5? Yes, some people seek out teachers who will tell them what they want to hear. You want to be your own God? You can find those teachers. You want to justify loose living? You can find those teachers. You want to be rich and powerful? You can find those teachers. Jesus was dealing with people who would accept each other's testimony, but not His.

### **Be Wise:**

Satan is sneaky. He really worked Eve over. You cringe at his craftiness in the garden. Listen to what he says. Listen to how he says it. The first question was meant to misrepresent God in a bad light. The second statement was misleading and rested on ambiguity. She would not die immediately, but she experienced an immediate separation from God and would die physically as well.

She was deceived. We've got to be careful to not fall into Satan's traps.

We are to be wise. James taught in James 3 that wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. But they are first pure. We need to pay attention to what's being said. We must pay attention to how it's applied (context). We've all been guilty of drinking the cool-aid, but we seek to change. For example, they're using this motto to justify those who live a homosexual lifestyle or those who have a Christian faith. As long as we're true to ourselves and respect one another - that's what matters.

Brethren, listen carefully and take note of the context. Let me translate this: you do you, and don't judge me. And I could pick on both religious and non-religious folks. Some live ungodly lifestyles because it's what makes them happy. Some claim to be Christian, not because they

actually belong to Him, but because it's their American tradition. You know - Christians used to not only teach against homosexuality but divorce as well. It's interesting how many "Christians" have justified divorce these days. Yet, the Lord put adultery and sexual immorality side by side in Matthew 15:19. Sexual immorality is associated with homosexuality in Jude 7. Paul specifically condemned both adultery and homosexuality. Why is this the case? We need to pay attention to what's being said and WHY it's being stated.

So let's acknowledge what's happened in our culture.

- We're spreading a self-centered message. You do you!
- The gospel message is God centered. He came to save you from the self-made mess.
- It teaches us to look for the interests of others and not ourselves.

Let's remember God's instruction and example:

- Do not conform, but be transformed. Romans 12
- We need to be born again. We crucified our old selves. John 3 & Romans 6.
- Jesus' moment of being true to His authentic self?
  - Serving God
  - Serving Us
  - What do you see on the cross? Philippians 2?