

The Philosophy of the World

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[0:00] The Philosophy of the World. Colossians 2, 8-10. Beware lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. This message is about the clash of cultures that's going on. It's reflected in our choices. It's about philosophies, which are principles of knowledge. Worldly philosophies are not based on Christ. In contrast, the world is against God. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. 1 John 2, verse 15. By the world, we refer to the fallen social system that is governed by Satan, who is the God of this world. 2 Corinthians 4, verse 4. The world is the system of social, economic, materialistic, and religious philosophies.

The world is that which appeals to the flesh and works on principles that are opposed to God. Worldliness means the ways of the world, sensual fleshly desires that bring dishonour to God. The world's hollow and empty and vain ways are used by Satan as his charms. Ungodly systems and philosophies trap and snare people. He would rather try to conform you to the world than to God. He wants to spoil you, to rob, imprison you, take you captive, take you prisoner. And as Christians, we have a clash with the world view of the world. We're not told to follow after the world. We're not told to follow after the world and its ways. Ephesians 5, 11 says, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. The Bible tells you to set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3, 2. We are new creatures in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5, 17.

We are called to be called to be different in our thinking, in our attitudes, in our lives. Join me now as we look at the Word of God and see some of the areas that we need to be aware of, how we can be taken captive to worldly philosophies. The first area is our mind, our thinking. How do you think? Do you think like a Christian? The world's thinking and belief systems are influencing us, corrupting our thinking. Our world values tolerance above truth.

Don't rock the boat. Don't speak about that which the world would count as acceptable. Whether it's right or wrong, that doesn't matter anymore. So they say.

[2:50] This world and its philosophies, they promote self-esteem. Believe in yourself. You can be whatever you want to be. Believe in yourself above faith in Christ, above faith in a Saviour that can save your soul.

The philosophies of the world. The philosophies of the world are actively out to saturate your mind, to embed these thoughts in your mind, these godless ways and thinking in your mind.

And yet we know Proverbs 14, verse 12, it says, There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. That which a man thinks is right, thinks is right in his heart, the end thereof are the ways of death.

Now, in our world today, if you say you're intolerant, oh, you're terrible. If you say you're tolerant, it means you condone whatever someone may believe.

But the opposite of that is intolerance, and somehow that sounds so unchristian and unloving. And yet, God was pretty intolerant. God was very intolerant of sin, wasn't he, in the word of God through history, as we see his dealings with mankind.

[4:07] And there is a time for intolerance. There's a time for standing for the truth and for purity and righteousness, for biblical truth about morality.

Whilst it may not be popular, where is the love of the word? The love of the word, the discernment that was called for, for our minds to be held captive to the word of God.

Realise the emptiness today of worldly philosophies. They're empty, they're vain, vain deceit. The question is not what is important to the world, to the crowd, but what is important to God?

What does he count as important of a value, of importance to your life? Are you being transformed by the renewing of your mind to be more like the Saviour?

Or are you being conformed, conformed to this world? There's a total contrast there, a total clash there. And friends, by reading and studying, memorising, taking in your heart the word, listening to it, going to studies, learning, hearing the preaching, Christians can learn to think God's way and seek to prove the perfect will of God in every area of our lives.

[5:21] As we tune in to God's wavelength, to God's word, 2 Corinthians 10 verse 5, it talks about casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Paul urges the Corinthians to bring into captivity every thought, every thought, every thought that passes through those grey cells.

Let there be things and thoughts and understandings that would be honouring to the Saviour. That's a good kind of captivity.

We've seen the bad kind of captivity. The one who, he says, Paul says, beware lest any man spoil you, take you captive. Instead, he says here, Paul says, bring into captivity every thought to obedience of Christ.

That's a good kind of captivity. Let Christ captivate your mind, your heart, your love. Philippians 4 verse 8 goes on about the thinking that we are to engage in as believers today.

[6:27] Think on these things, Paul writes, finally brethren, in Philippians 4 verse 8, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.

So, true things, honest, things that are honourable, just things, things that are right, things that are pure, things that are lovely, things that are of good report, things that are excellent, things that are, if there be any virtue, any grace, any praise, think on these things.

He says, let your thoughts dwell. Let your thoughts dwell on these things, these good things. Fill your mind, your thoughts with that which is godly and good. By the word of God we receive these spiritual discernments that can help us to exercise ourselves.

As it says in Hebrews 5 verse 14, of those, they have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. God wants you to be strong in your mind and your thinking as he strengthens your mind through the word of God.

God wants you to be strong in your mind. The believer can gain that wisdom that is beyond earthly wisdom and knowledge and be led by the spirit to discern that which is of the spirit and that which is of the flesh.

[8:15] So, friends, there's a battleground, there's a philosophy that wants you to be held captive to it and it starts in your mind. One of the places is your mind.

Another place is music. Music is another place where the worldly philosophies can take their attack. They make their attack. We were told in 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 22, Abstain from all appearance of evil. Now, music is a big communicator.

It's a big communicator of values, especially to the younger generation. It's all about us when you go shopping, you can't help but hear it. And Satan fully knows that music is a powerful medium to influence people.

It's got a powerful effect. It takes a powerful grip on people. And, friends, I'd like to put the point that society today is being mesmerised by music.

[9:15] It's being mesmerised by it. It's intrinsic in the programming of television, of movies, of shopping centres. And churches too can not be immune to what some would call Christian rock, rap, country songs that mimic the sound of the music they play in the bars and nightclubs.

Friends, this is what we need to be alert to. Worldly philosophies. It might just seem, well, you're just maybe going a bit extreme here. A bit over the top, picking on my music.

That's something sacred to me. You know, my favourite music. But we've all got to take a stop and take a look. What is it that we're listening to? Is it secular? Is it the secular messages and the secular programming?

Is it the worldly philosophies? You know, it can apply to old music as well as new. We're not having a go at just necessarily new, modern, secular music.

But that which has got a message that is counter to the Word of God. It's like someone said, if it looks like a rat, smells like a rat, or sounds like a rat, it is a rat.

[10:27] And so, look out for your music. Take stock and we all can take account of that. So think worldly philosophies. We think of our mind as a battleground.

We think of our music. A third area, you could say, is our modesty. Modesty. Immodesty is sin. And it promotes sin. Immodesty.

And what do I mean by immodesty? It means when people are not clothed, they're not covering themselves appropriately. And the eye gate is a direct route to the mind and the soul.

The power of sensory perception is well understood and it's utilized by the devil. And we know David, the man after God's own heart, in the Word of God, a great man of God.

He committed adultery by, first of all, lusting with his eyes. There was an immodest thing that caught his attention and attracted him and held him captive and was his downfall.

[11:29] And Proverbs gives many warnings to us as Christians today to be alert to the allurements of the strange woman, attracting by her clothing and her body.

In Proverbs 5, 3 to 6, and Proverbs 7, verse 10. And, okay, people might be saying, oh, you're really getting close to the bone this morning, talking about how I dress now.

You know, wow, this is getting really personal. And it is a personal thing. Dress is a personal thing. And as it says, as someone has put it, everyone has a standard.

There was a story about a Christian school and the public school was having a go at them about their dress standard and saying, oh, you're being a bit extreme with these dress standards about how you're making these young people dress in certain ways and avoid certain dress and promote certain dress codes.

And the Christian principal said, well, everyone has a standard. Everyone has a standard. And the secular school principal was arguing the point. And the Christian principal said, well, would you let your young women go to school topless?

[12:42] And he said, of course not. Of course we wouldn't do such a thing. That wouldn't be allowed. Everyone has a standard. Everyone has a standard. And yet some do not set their standards very high.

They do not set their standards very high. And Christians can be guilty of it too. They set their standards by the standards of the world, by what's popular, by what's accepted, by the world around about us.

And friends, wouldn't it be rather better that we set our standards by that which would be highly pleasing to God, that which would bring Him honour and glory, that which would be appropriate by God's standards for our life, according to the Word of God.

And isn't that something that we want to strive for, to gain God's approval for? The world we live in, friends, it's a fact. It's an immodest world. It's an immodest world. It dominates much of what is watched on TV, with little control.

Really, the commercials, even if you're watching something that's not half decent, the commercials, the porn industry, it thrives because of the sin of immodesty. And many of our world's evils and crimes can be traced to immodesty.

[13:48] If people would just pursue modest dress and behaviour, our world would be a better place. And as God's people, as His children, don't we want to encourage our homes, our loved ones, our families, to pay attention to these things, to honour the Lord in these everyday practical ways, so that we might pay attention to the books that we have in our homes, what magazines we have, the TV, the movies that we may watch, even the toys that our children may play with.

There's questionable toys, even today, that are sending a message. We know, of course, the trashy music, full of sensual talk and action and immodesty.

It's training the next generation. And what would have been abhorrent some decades ago is now just people turning a blind eye to it.

There's no... Nobody gets... thinks anything of it anymore. And yet... Shouldn't we care? Shouldn't we care?

Our purpose by dressing modestly and simply and attractively is to let Christ's beauty radiate through us, especially the young women, not to promote a seductive or a look-at-me kind of message, but to be a testimony for Christ.

[15:15] And the Bible clearly commands Christian women to dress modestly, 1 Timothy 2 verse 9, to not wear lots of jewellery or make-up, to grow their hair, to have an appearance that is attractive for the Saviour and to dress modestly in obedience to His commands, not to man-made rules, but in honouring the Saviour in holiness and getting back to the Bible.

So, friends, draw the line. We all need to draw the line. And your line might be different in the sand from mine, but set a standard for yourself that you can say that is aspiring.

Aspiring to His standard. That is aspiring to something that I can know that I'm honouring the Saviour. I'm honouring Him as much as I know how. To want to please Him, to want to not draw attention to myself, but to live a life that will introduce others to the Saviour.

So, modesty and dress, it matters. It matters. It shows that you respect the body that God has given you. And it helps point others to the Saviour rather than to yourself and your body.

And our young people should dress differently from the world. Not like the trappy girls in the world with mini skirts, tight jeans, and cut-off tops. A Christian godly young woman will want to adorn herself in modest apparel.

[16:45] In 1 Timothy 2 verse 9. And Titus 2 verse 5. To be discreet, chaste. So, in other words, pure and appropriate. That the Word of God be not blasphemed.

That's Titus 2 verse 5. Friends, it's a reality. Young people, older people today, your clothes say something about you. They reflect the spiritual condition of your heart.

And that's not to say, like the Pharisees putting on a whole lot of performance or a whole lot of show to say that you're a Christian. And we're not talking about that.

But we're talking about honouring the Lord in not being immodest. And to have that which is acceptable and honouring to the Lord, not to the fashions of the world. That's not what matters to us.

It's what matters is what's acceptable to the Lord. And it's what Bible values of modesty would tell us. And friends, the worldly movie makers, the movie makers of our world today are promoting a society with scarce thought for principles of decency and modesty.

[17:49] They promote that which is provocative and indecent. Proverbs 7 verse 10 talks about the attire of a harlot. It says that there is a dress code for harlots.

And so, shouldn't it matter what you wear? Do you want to look that way? Or do you want to be honouring to the Lord? As obedient children, let us not fashion ourselves according to the formal lusts in ignorance.

1 Peter 1 verse 14. 1 Corinthians 7 verse 31 says, The fashion of this world passeth away. There is a certain standard. And that's not to say I'm going to hound people and hound you, but I just want to exhort you and point you to the Scriptures and point you to the high example of our Saviour and of the low example of that example in Proverbs that there's got to be a line drawn and the world and its fashions and lusts are going to pass away.

Wouldn't it be better to be pleasing to the Saviour? That you will have a heart that is in tune with Him. And as a church, don't we want to have the truth that we can declare it and stand for it and be a shining light as it says in Philippians 2 verse 15, that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom you shine as lights in the world.

Don't you want to shine? Don't you want to shine in this darkened place, this darkened world? We must. The church should be, as it says in 1 Timothy 3 verse 15, the pillar and ground of truth.

[19:24] And so we should have a declaration for purity, a stand for right and truth and what is honouring and pleasing and acceptable to our Saviour in contrast to this crooked world.

And so we see our mind, watch out, beware. Our music, take stop. Our modesty, think about it. Our use of time itself, what we devote ourselves to.

If Christians read their Bibles and cared as much for prayer and study and learning and growing as a Christian, as they do, their favourite footy team, think what a different church it would be.

Think what it would be if we had that devotion. You know, we've all got devotions and things we love and things we have a hobby or an attraction to, but wouldn't it be good if you're attracted more and more to the Saviour, to His truth, to His life?

If Christians spent as much time in their prayer closet as they do in idle pursuits, think of how on fire the church would be, how much the Lord could do in and through His saints if they were in tune with heaven.

[20:35] All things have their place, but God must have the first place, the foremost place, and our minds should be stayed upon Him. In contrast, the movie makers of our world, they fill the screens with ungodly characters, promoting immoral behaviour, immodest speech and dress, even the adverts filled with sinful messages.

Are we entertaining our minds at the expense of our spiritual health? Our brother read earlier in the Scripture in Ephesians about the course of this world. What is the course of this world?

What is the direction of this world? It's hellward. It's downward. It's hellward. It's a helter-skelter, downward-downward course, the course of this world.

And we see it all about us, even in, for example, we've seen things like high heels for toddlers. I mean, you've got to be kidding.

I mean, high heels for toddlers and padded tops for girls, little young tiny girls, you know. And then they're bringing in whiskey-flavoured potato chips down at the shops.

[21:44] What is going on? What is going on? The God of this world is having a field day. And, you know, what are they saying when they're selling whiskey-flavoured potato chips to young children?

What are they doing? They know what they're doing. They know exactly what they're doing. And, friends, look out. Beware about the philosophies of this world.

Psalms 101, 3, it says, I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. And the world dishes up a diet of lust, pride, immorality, sensuality, violence, murder, divorce, atheism, and it has addictive power. It's going to trap you. It's going to snare you. It's going to drag you down. Proverbs 13, in contrast, verse 20 says, He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Don't hang around the fools of this world. Psalm 1, verse 1, We're told a person will be blessed if he does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor sit in the seat of the scornful, nor stand in the way of sinners.

[22:53] We don't walk the same way. We don't sit in the same seat. We don't think the same way. We don't follow the same philosophy. We don't tread the same path as the world. We're going on a different course.

Amen? We're not going on that downward course. We're going on the upward way. The upward, a high calling. The upward way. Higher and higher as the perfect day.

The path of the just. Friends, the serious Christian will not follow the fashions of this sinful world, but will rather keep himself unspotted from the world. So, to close, friends, be alert.

It's real. It's happening. It's now. It's every day. It's everywhere about us. It's everywhere we look.

And it's an intentional effort on the part of the enemy of your soul.

An intentional war is being waged against Christianity, against Christ, against truth, against the Bible, against holiness and godliness of life.

[23:51] And watch out for these influences, for this seduction, for these traps, for these snares. The choice is clear. Draw the line. Draw the line. Draw it as the Word would.

Draw it. Draw it in obedience to the Word. Draw it not because of your own preferences or sentiments or feelings or your own values or your own upbringing or your own kind of culture.

Draw the line because of the Word. Draw the line. It says, precept upon precept, line upon line. He says, draw the line according to the Word, according to the plumb line, as it says in Amos, that it's a plumb line.

It's a, a plumb line is not going to move. I mean, maybe the wind will blow it around a little bit, but it's straight up and down, isn't it? It's not going to change.

God's Word hasn't changed. His choices for your life haven't changed. And the world's culture is contrary encounter. It's clashing with God's culture. And we need to beware of the philosophy of the world and instead, as our text urges us, to be complete in Christ.

[24:59] That's the contrast. I know I've dwelt much on the philosophy of the world and the negatives this morning, but the context of the verse that we've read to start with is in contrast to that emptiness, that vain deceit, the tradition of men, the rudiments of the world, Paul urges you.

He urges me. He says, follow Christ. Follow Christ. You're complete in Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is the one you need. He is the one.

We need to find that completeness, that fullness, that wholeness that only he can give to a life. And without him you're empty, you're lost, you're doomed.

Friends, trust him today, trust him now, trust him with your soul, with your eternal life, with your destiny, with your everyday. And you are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

He's the one deserving of your bowed heart. He is the one deserving of your intense love and adoration and your absolute surrender.

[26:01] He is the one who is the head of all principality and power. Friends, if you don't know him yet, I urge you, I implore you that to know him who is the head, the supreme ruler, the supreme absolute one who is deserving of your love, of your loyalty, and without him, friends, you're in great peril, you're in great danger, I urge you to trust him now.