

Armed With the Truth

Many false beliefs surround us in the world today, as Satan strives to deter us from our walk with God. Of course, a single lesson cannot address every core doctrine which is Biblically unsound, nor can it provide comprehensive information for you or your students. You might wish to obtain additional background information to help you in the presentation of this lesson. Our goal is to establish a method for determining the validity of any belief that purports to be a genuine path to the eternal God.

Four basic warning signs given in the introduction to the lesson identify elements which characterize organizations with false beliefs. The students should recognize that the presence of any of these characteristics indicates the movement is not of God.

Response 1 — Your review of the four key words mentioned in the question will likely bring out some of the following thoughts:

Study: Diligent effort must be made in order to gain knowledge and understanding of what we believe. An exposure to Scripture at church services and periodic Bible studies will not suffice. Becoming intimate with the contents of God's Word requires a determined effort in order to have a knowledge of the doctrines and behaviors that true believers uphold.

Approved: God can use only those who are of tried faith and integrity and who have a zeal to reach the lost. The zeal of a new convert is wonderful, but we are instructed to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

Workman: There is an urgent need for those who are willing, available, consecrated, and genuinely dedicated, to proclaim Christ to this generation. "The fields . . . are white already to harvest," (John 4:35) has never been a more significant declaration than it is today. The Lord is soon to appear, and those who have rejected the truth will be eternally lost. The only way they will be exposed to the truth is by coming into contact with those who not only have received it, but also are prepared to share it.

Objective

The students will arm themselves with the eternal truth of God's Word in order to identify false beliefs and to witness to those who are deceived.

Key Texts

Deuteronomy 4:35; Matthew 1:18,20; 3:16,17; 5:14-16; 7:15; 24:5,11,24; 28:19; Mark 13:22; Luke 1:30-32,35; John 8:32; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:23; 5:8,9; 6:23; Galatians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 Timothy 2:5; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 1:18,19; 1 John 1:7-9; 4:1; 5:7; Revelation 22:18,19

Other Scriptures Used in This Study

Isaiah 53:5; Malachi 3:6; Matthew 10:34; 15:8,9; 28:19,20; Luke 12:51; John 4:35; 10:1; 14:17,26; 16:13; Acts 17:26,29; Romans 3:24,25; Galatians 3:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:3; Hebrews 13:8; James 3:15; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Peter 3:18

Suggested Verse for Memorization

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. — 1 Thessalonians 5:21

Ashamed: Our Lord's command was to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19,20). We are to be ready always to give an answer for the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15), and it is important to faithfully follow these commands. Imagine how ashamed we would be if, when we stood before the Lord, we had only empty hands and unfulfilled promises to present to Him.

May God help us all to hold His banner of truth high and to proclaim that He, and only He, is the way, the truth, and the life.

Response 2 — A clear understanding must be established in the minds of the students that Jesus is the only path to eternal life. Most people feel a need to come into a relationship with an eternal God. The confusion lies in the way to establish and then maintain that relationship. Acts 4:12 clearly states that we must be saved and that Jesus is the only One who brings this experience into our lives.

Ask your students if they know of any groups which deify man. What prompts a man to make the claim that he is the Messiah? Those who make this claim are deluding themselves as well as others. Their ego, and love of attention to the

point of adoration, clouds their minds from reality. Sun Myung Moon of the Unification Church is one who makes such a claim. Moon and his followers claim that he is the Lord of the Second Advent and have publicly stated that “God is now throwing Christianity away and is now establishing a new religion, and this religion is the Unification Church” (*Time Magazine*, September 30, 1974). As a result, this man is known as “Father Moon” and is to his followers the Messiah of this age.

Moon is not the first and, if the Lord tarries, he will not be the last to make such a claim. In Matthew 24:5,11, and 24, Jesus warns of false prophets who will come. Verses 5 and 11 contain the warning that there will be *many* such impostors. Notice that all three verses alert of “deception,” and in verse 24 Jesus warns us that these “signs and wonders” are done to deceive, if possible, the very elect—the Christians.

Response 3 — In Moses’ history lesson to Israel, he refutes any notion of polytheism. Deuteronomy 4:35 says, “. . . the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him.” In the New Testament, 1 Timothy 2:5 says, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” These verses, and others, point to a doctrinal stance acknowledging one God. There are no other gods!

One of the fastest growing religious organizations in the world today, the Mormon church, teaches, “God is an organized being just as we are who are now in the flesh. He is a progressive being, and possesses the capacity of eternal increase. Perhaps once a child and mortal like ourselves.” (*Gospel Doctrine*, p.64; AF, p. 529, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:123).

You may wish to bring out that many sincere people who are looking for a strong sense of community and family are drawn to this movement, even from the ranks of mainstream Christianity. Once drawn in, it is rare to see a person reject these beliefs, since Mormon followers are smothered with attention, kept constantly occupied, and are strictly monitored.

End with further discussion of Scripture.

Response 4 — The best argument to refute the contention that sin does not exist is humankind’s universal need. In compassion toward His creation, God provided the only possible remedy for the sin in our lives. Romans 3:23 declares that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Ask your students to use the next two verses to detail God’s remedy for our sins. Make the point that if the need was not universal and if a remedy was not essential, why

would God go to such lengths to provide it? Discuss Romans 6:23.

Scriptures from our text in 1 John indicate that the Apostle John wants us to *know* God and then to continue in a relationship with Him. He continually writes of how our sin is the barrier and that it is only through the Atonement that we come into proper relationship with our Creator.

As an example of one organization which repudiates sin, the Christian Science movement has developed a doctrine presenting the belief that matter and evil are unreal and that humankind is incapable of sin, sickness, and death. They classify these things as the *effects of error*. Since they believe that sin does not exist, their theology denies the atonement, stating, “The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon ‘the accursed tree’ than when it was flowing in His veins as He went daily about His Father’s business” (*Science and Health*, 25:6-8).

Encourage your students to share their statements built on the last three Scriptures listed in the question. All speak of the Blood atonement of Christ on the cross. Wrap up this question by referring to Isaiah 53:5, where the prophet foretells of the suffering Savior, whose sacrifice not only became the remedy for our sins, but also made possible the healing of our bodies.

Response 5 — Revelation 22 indicates that eternal consequences will result if one tampers with the inspired Word of God. Ask for examples of groups that ostracize Scripture. These should include Islam (their holy book is “The Koran”), the Jehovah Witnesses, (who have created their own version of the Bible entitled, “The New World Translation of Holy Scriptures”) and the Mormons (who have their “Book of Mormon.”)

Discuss the three doctrinal points given, and encourage your students to use the Scriptures given to establish why each belief is false. Point out that the Bible (the contents of which can be linked back to ancient manuscripts) refutes these teachings. Those who promote them have altered the Bible and use their modified versions to make a case for their false teachings. There are eternal penalties for those who substitute their vain imaginings for the words of the eternal God.

Response 6 — As you consider the list of prevalent teachings, two things become immediately apparent. First of all, their approach seems to be in harmony with the prevailing message of the society in which we live. The people of our day are weary of violence, famine, and poverty and

are anxious for these issues to be forever resolved. Secondly, these teachings lay the groundwork for a mentality which will allow a one-world government and one-world church to be established.

Following are some verses which may supplement your discussion on some of the points.

- The oneness of mankind. Acts 17:26,29
- The oneness of religion. John 10:1; 14:26
- The independent investigation of truth. Matthew 15:8,9; John 14:17; 16:13
- Religion as a source of unity. Luke 12:51
- The evolutionary nature of religion. Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8
- Harmony between religion, science, and nature.
- Peaceful consultation as a means for resolving differences. 1 Thessalonians 5:3
- An international auxiliary language.
- Universal education.
- The elimination of all forms of prejudice.
- Equality of men and women. Galatians 3:28
- The abolition of extremes of wealth and poverty.
- Universal peace. Matthew 10:34

It would be good to remind your students of the dangers of falling prey to the “good” or “smooth” catch phrases of all new-age religions—things such as “universal peace” which sound like a nice idea but, as a saying, are

merely signs of an unfulfilled desire in the last days. We are reminded in 1 Thessalonians 5:3 that, in the last days, many will be lulled to sleep by those who preach peace and safety and will be caught off guard when the Lord appears.

Response 7 — To open your discussion of this question, refer your students to Matthew 5:16, which instructs us, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in Heaven.” Where does light shine any more brightly than in the darkness? A testimony lived out in daily life, though surrounded by wickedness on every hand, can have a tremendous impact on those who observe. When we live a holy life, free of hindrances, the Spirit will naturally shine through us. When we pray to have the mind of Christ, He will give us discernment and wisdom in dealing with our contemporaries. When we are alert to the opportunities for outreach all around us, God will give us openings to speak a word for Him. (See James 3:15.) Our responsibility is to be yielded and obedient, and then God will provide the occasions where we can positively touch lives.

Conclude the examination of this teaching with a discussion of the danger of believers being deceived, and develop a strategy to guard against this possibility.