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Sermon Notes

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Overcoming Spiritual Intimidation, Week 1

Colossians 2:8-23

Facing the Bully

Again and again, the wicked of the world have used INTIMIDATION to dominate without fighting a battle

- Mafia kingpin: sent some of his henchmen and offered the owner of a neighborhood restaurant \$100,000 to buy his business; it was worth five times that amount; the owner of the restaurant laughed and said “No way.” A week later the Mafia leader himself came and quietly offered the owner \$50,000 for his business; the man sold right away. Why? INTIMIDATION
- Adolf Hitler rebuilds the German war machine after WWI in direct defiance of treaty of Versailles; he occupies the Rhineland in 1936, again defying the French and British; when meeting with the Austrian prime minister **Schuschnigg** in the process of annexing Austria, he screams at him and browbeats him mercilessly for two hours, saying nothing he can do will stop him from adding Austria to the German Reich; next he takes on Czechoslovakia and intimidates Neville Chamberlin into abandoning the Czechs to preserve peace in Europe. Following Hitler’s lead, the entire German Nazi party made jackbooted intimidation the hallmark of their approach to every human problem
- Communists under Josef Stalin took the same approach: there was always the threat of an arrest without trial; of Secret Police interrogations; of a summary execution or deportment to the Gulags in Siberia
- The greatest bully of all is Satan... he intimidates the church into weakness and apathy in evangelism; and seeks to infiltrate her with false doctrine through intimidation as well

Satan’s Three Great Attacks on the Church:

1) Worldliness 2) Persecution 3) False Doctrine

The Seriousness of the Attack on Doctrine

Learning to spot the counterfeiter by knowing BOTH the real thing AND the common counterfeits

Illus. Secret Service in Washington trains individuals to spot counterfeits by thoroughly training them in how the real bills are made; the feel of the cloth, the smell of the ink, every curved line on the engraving plates, the size, the thickness, the sound... every single aspect studied in detail

Yes, that's true... but only as far as it goes!

They ALSO study the common and uncommon counterfeits, studying the techniques of the criminals so they can know those aspects to look for as well

A good missionary, a good pastor, a good parent, a good Christian MUST do the same thing as well...

Falsehood is BEST refuted by TRUTH... so clearly proclaim the overwhelming truths of the Christian faith that darkness flees before the light

But we must also learn the ways that Satan has sought to deceive the church in the past... and Colossians 2 is a manual on false teaching

The Colossian heresy was a mixture of human philosophy, Jewish legalism, spiritual mysticism with the worship of angels and seeking of visions, and asceticism (with a harsh treatment of the body)

The heresy created two classes of Christians: those who were the ascended ones, enlightened by special knowledge, living out an ascended kind of life characterized by special spiritual insight gained through philosophy, Jewish legalism with their special spiritual days and the dietary regulations (and circumcision, of course), worship of angels and harsh treatment of the body. If you did these things, you were part of the lofty spiritual club, an insider, an initiate...

If you didn't, you were inferior

And so common Christians merely trusting in Christ and seeking to walk in Him were made to feel inferior... they were INTIMIDATED

Paul writes to free them from the bondage of spiritual intimidation

And to warn them against adding ANYTHING to Christ

Four enemies, four intimidating bullies faced the Colossian church, and they still face us today:

Philosophy Legalism Asceticism Mysticism

We will describe first how complete we are in Christ, then face these bullies one at a time; one this week, three next week

I. Complete in Christ

A. Review: The Supremacy of Christ

1. The Colossian heresy stated that Christ was a created being, an emanation of the pure, spiritual God...AND that physical things were evil... AND that salvation came from special wisdom about this
2. Colossians 1 clearly established the Supremacy of Christ in ALL THINGS

Colossians 1:15-20 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

B. Christ is Complete, We Are Complete in Him

1. Paul repeats this teaching, then links our completeness to Christ's completeness

Colossians 2:8-10 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. ⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

2. If you have Christ, you have everything you need for life and godliness
3. Christ is FULLY GOD... in Christ all the FULLNESS of the Deity lives in bodily form
4. This is a clear statement of the doctrine of the incarnation
5. This will also be the doctrinal foundation for refuting the strict asceticism the Colossian heretics were teaching
 - a. They said the body was evil, like all physical matter
 - b. Paul says "In Christ all the fullness of the deity dwells in bodily form"
6. Paul then says OUR FULLNESS is in Christ!! It has been GIVEN us... the verb is passive... we didn't MAKE OURSELVES FULL... God filled us, made us complete and perfect in Christ

- a. In Christ we are full
- b. In Christ we are perfect
- c. In Christ we are as righteous as we can be
- d. In Christ we are accepted by God the Father
- e. In Christ we have a full inheritance in the New Heaven and the New Earth
- f. In Christ we CANNOT be more secure, more beloved, more blessed, more anything than we are

C. Christ Head Over Every Power and Authority

Vs. 10 Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

1. Colossian heresy: physical world is evil... so where did it come from ? Spirit beings called “emanations” from the creator God... apparently Christ was merely ONE of these spirit beings, one of these EMANTIONS, and that God the Creator had NO CONTROL over them
2. That is why the evil physical world was build, against the will of the purely good, purely spiritual God
3. Paul rejects this!!
4. Christ CREATED ALL spiritual beings, as we saw in Colossians 1

1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him

5. Here again Paul establishes that same truth
6. Christ RULES over Satan and His evil Kingdom, and can destroy it any time he chooses

D. Gospel Truths Flow from This: How Full Are We in Christ?

Colossians 2:11-15 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having

disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

1. We are FULLY CIRCUMCISED (Spiritually)
 - a. Jewish legalism will rear its ugly head in a moment
 - b. The beginning of it was always circumcision
 - c. Physical circumcision was a religious ceremony ushering someone into a life of submission to the Old Covenant
 - d. It was also a symbol of a yoke of bondage to a whole lifestyle of legalism
 - e. BUT the TRUE circumcision happens through faith in Christ
 - i) Not the removal of skin from the body
 - ii) BUT the removal of the sin nature from the soul
 - iii) The OLD MAN we were in Adam is cut off from us forever
 - f. The New Covenant symbol was baptism... but Paul is not saying that baptism now replaces circumcision

Vs. 12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

- i) He would not replace one external ceremony for another
 - ii) NO... both baptism and circumcision point to an internal spiritual reality that only happens in Christ... spiritually through union with Christ by faith in Christ
 - g. So, we are FULLY CIRCUMCISED in Christ
2. We are FULLY ALIVE

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ.

- a. As in Ephesians, Paul portrays our union with Christ in miraculous terms
- b. Every Christian is a MIRACLE of God's grace... we are dead in sin, and are now alive in Christ... that is a miracle, a resurrection
- c. Some say "Christianity is a crutch for the weak"... actually it's infinitely more than that... it is a resurrection for the dead

- d. Again, this is why it is absolutely reasonable to believe in the absolute sovereignty of God in salvation: only GOD is able to raise spiritually dead people and make them alive
- e. Dead means unable to respond to any stimulation... prick a corpse with a pin, and they won't twitch; threaten to punch a corpse in the nose and it won't flinch; scream in their ear, and they won't wince or respond
- f. Where then is free will? If God doesn't raise someone from the dead spiritually, they will never believe
- g. BUT we were RAISED from the dead, and made FULLY ALIVE in Christ
- h. You can't be any more spiritually alive than you are right now

3. We are FULLY FORGIVEN

Colossians 2:13-14 He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

- a. Oh how rich is this meditation! We are completely and totally forgiven!!
- b. God was keeping a perfect record of every single transgression of His Law
- c. Every angry moment, every careless word, every lustful thought, every selfish action
- d. We were daily storing up wrath against ourselves:

Romans 2:5-6 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ God "will give to each person according to what he has done."

- e. But now in Christ we are totally, completely, fully forgiven
- f. The record of our sins has been removed... our sins have been hurled into the depths of the sea; God will remember them no more!!
- g. Oh the happy blessedness of this situation

Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. ² Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.

- h. Do you really believe this, dear brothers and sisters? Do you really believe that Christ's blood is infinitely ample to cover your sins and make you stand blameless and free in God's presence?

i. Satan is such a bully here, such an accuser! He teams with our weak and faulty conscience and accuses us day after day

j. But we are FULLY forgiven

vs. 13 “He forgave us ALL our sins...”

k. Partial forgiveness is USELESS... what good would it be to have 90% of our sins forgiven?

l. But God has made us COMPLETE in Christ, fully forgiven

4. We are FULLY FREE from the Law

Colossians 2:13-14 He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

a. We’ll discuss the Jewish legalists in a moment

b. But their desire was to slip a yoke of bondage back over the necks of the Colossian Christians

c. Christ’s triumph at the cross FULLY FREED US forever from the legal requirements of the Law of Moses

d. Not a single commandment of the Law will be able successfully to accuse us and send us to hell

e. We are FREED from the Law... it does not stand over us

f. Greek = “cancelled” is “wiped away” “erased” “removed”... the record of our transgressions of the Law

g. The “written code” = lit. “dogma” public decree... the Law with its requirements made a public proclamation of our wickedness... Christ removed this by nailing it to the cross

h. Law was our enemy, with its righteous requirements and our perfect record of transgressions

i. Now we are no longer under the Law

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Romans 7:6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

How are we free from the Law? We live a higher kind of life... the life of the Spirit, by which we amply fulfill all the spiritual requirements of the Law

Galatians 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

Romans 8:1-4 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Illus. A true, Spirit-filled Christian does not need to be commanded not to hijack an airplane... we have no used whatsoever for that Law because we are living infinitely higher than that! Neither do we need to be told not to gun down fellow students as at the Virginia Tech massacre... when we are fully saved, glorified in the New Heaven & the New Earth, there will be no laws at all because we will be perfected in love

If the airport security really knew this doctrine and could perfectly tell the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian, we would not need to take off our shoes or walk through metal detectors or take out our laptops... we will NEVER hi-jack an airplane, therefore the laws concerning it are below us... but we submit to them because we know they cannot tell us from a non-Christian

1 John 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

This is just an illustration of how someday we will be free from EVERY law

1 Timothy 1:9-10 We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers-- and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine

5. We are FULLY TRIUMPHANT over Satan

Colossians 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

- a. Christ is not a spiritual emanation from the spiritual Creator God
- b. He is infinitely ABOVE every power and authority, every demon and every angel

- c. And Satan's evil Kingdom, his evil realm stood opposed to our souls as did the Law
- d. Christ CRUSHED Satan's head at the Cross, and has been progressively crushing his evil kingdom ever since
- e. Roman conquerors led their enemies down the streets of Rome, making a public spectacle of their weakness... the Germanic tribe chieftains who had made their borders so unstable and so bloody were eventually captured and put in chains or in cages to be mocked and ridiculed
- f. Christ did that to Satan... making a public spectacle of Satan's weakness, destroying him by dying on the cross and rising from the dead

1 John 3:8 The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Hebrews 2:14-15 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-- that is, the devil-- ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

- 6. Christ won the victory over the powers and authorities and GAVE US the victory
 - a. This was symbolized by the miraculous power Christ gave his missionary disciples over the devils

Luke 10:17-20 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." ¹⁸ He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

- b. So also a promise made to us all

Romans 16:20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Romans 8:37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

So, this is our FULLNESS in Christ

- Fully Circumcised Spiritually
- Fully Alive
- Fully Forgiven

- Fully Free from the Law
- Fully Triumphant over Satan

II. Satan's Intimidating Voice: "You Are Incomplete!"

A. Satan the Bully: Intimidates Us

1. These special "religious people" come along and show us up
2. Arrogantly they disdain our "simple faith" our "inadequate religion"
3. Arrogantly they look down on our freedom and fullness in Christ and attack it
4. Soon we can be intimidated into abandoning our secure position in Christ

B. Satan Hates our Rich Fullness in Christ

C. He Tries to Show Us Incomplete

1. Satan's goal is to make us feel inadequate in Christ
2. Then we will need to ADD something to Christ
 - a. Add philosophy... human wisdom and insights
 - b. Add legalism... human religious works
 - c. Add mysticism... human religious experiences
 - d. Add asceticism... human religious self-denial
3. Add them all... and you LOSE Christ, lose assurance, lose joy, lose power

III. The Intimidation of Philosophy

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

A. Philosophy Defined

1. Literally "love of wisdom"
2. Generally, human effort to craft meaning from the universe
 - a. Ultimate questions of being
 - b. Who am I?
 - c. Why am I here?
 - d. What is the meaning of life?

- e. What will happen to me when I die?
- f. What is right, what is wrong, and why should I do the right and avoid the wrong?

Traditionally all of this is organized into three main headings:

- What is ultimate reality? (metaphysics)
 - How do we know? (epistemology)
 - Why does it matter? (ethics)
3. Now: there's nothing wrong with a "love of wisdom" per se... we should seek to answer ALL of life's deepest questions
- a. Paul refutes not ALL philosophy, but a **certain KIND of philosophy**:

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

- 4. Some Christians will be called upon to be Christian philosophers... crafting a Christian worldview in philosophical language to defend our faith

C.S. Lewis once said, "Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered." C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1949), 50.

BUT Bad theology has been a threat to the minds of Christians from the first century:

B. Philosophy's Long, Sordid History

1. If philosophy is simply a human being using his mind to craft a sense of ultimately reality, then every human being who has ever lived is a philosopher
2. BUT throughout history there have been those who specialized in the academic pursuit called "philosophy"
 - a. The Greeks were the first to make a record of these kinds of ideas
 - b. Thales, contemporary of Jeremiah, was the first of these historically recorded academic Greek philosophers
 - c. After him came a deluge of schools of human thought in Greece and around the world: Plato, Aristotle, Socrates... the Stoics, the Epicureans, etc.
3. As human history has progressed, philosophy has become darker and darker

Romans 1:21-23 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

a. 17th century British philosopher David Hume

“I am first affrighted and confounded with that forlorn solitude, in which I am placed in my philosophy.”

b. Rene Descartes... not even sure whether or not he really existed until he came up with “I think, therefore I am.”

c. 19th century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche

i) Posited a German superman who had no need of God, but was somewhat God himself

ii) First to proclaim that God is dead

iii) BUT he couldn't live out his empty philosophy... spent the last eleven years of his life insane, then committed suicide

d. 20th century French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre

i) Atheist... hated humanity; one of his characters, in his play called “Nausea” uttered the famous line “Hell is other people”

ii) Said also “Every existing thing is born without reason, goes on living out of weakness, and dies by accident.”

“We were a heap of existences, uncomfortable, embarrassed at ourselves, we hadn't the slightest reason to be there, none of us, each one confused, vaguely alarmed, felt superfluous in relation to the others... And I myself, I too was superfluous... I dream vaguely of killing myself to wipe out at least one of these superfluous existences. But even my death would have been superfluous.” [*The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, p. 61-62; quoted by MacArthur in his commentary on Colossians, p. 97]

C. Philosophy's Great Danger

1. Paul warns”

Vs. 8 See to it that no one takes you captive by hollow and deceptive philosophy

a. Strong warning using strong language

b. “See to it” implies constant vigilance as a watchman on a city wall during time of war

- c. “take captive” is wartime language, like a band of marauding raiders who sweep through a defenseless village and ride off with human booty, captives who will serve them as slaves
 - d. CLEARLY PAUL SEES THIS AS A GREAT DANGER
2. “Hollow and deceptive” philosophy starts with man, man’s knowledge, man’s perspectives, man’s issues
 3. Philosophy will eventually contradict God’s wisdom
 - a. When the rationalists and deists couldn’t accept the biblical doctrine of the Trinity, they rejected it and gave birth to Unitarianism
 - b. After a long battle, Unitarianism took over the only Protestant seminary in the New World, from which pastors were being trained and prepared for the gospel ministry: Harvard
 4. Many philosophies have directly confronted the church, and SADLY have exerted GREAT influence over it

Tertullian, Second Century Christian, wrote *Against Heresies*: asked a timeless question: “What has Jerusalem to do with Athens, the Church with the Academy, the Christian with the heretic? . . . I have no use for a Stoic or a Platonic . . . Christianity. After Jesus Christ we have no need of speculation, after the Gospel no need of research.”

He was deeply concerned about the influence of Greek philosophy (represented by Athens) over Christian theology (represented by Jerusalem)

- a. Plato: suspicion of the body, physical existence
- b. Aristotle’s philosophies: transubstantiation
- c. Immanuel Kant and the Enlightenment: taught a man-centered world view skeptical of revelation and of the possibility of arriving at true knowledge; he devastated many of the medieval proofs for the existence of God... he left much of the church wondering whether we can really be certain of anything at all
- d. Existentialism: Soren Kirkegaard; speaking of a blind leap of faith—believing in God despite all the contrary evidence
- e. Aryanism (Nazi Germany)... appealed to the pride of German Christians and to their nationalism and it crept into the German church
- f. Evolution: some have tried to marry Darwinism and the Bible, and when the two contradict, they have rejected the Bible or reinterpreted it

- g. Psychology: developed first by Sigmund Freud, has made tremendous inroads into pastoral ministry, both in preaching and in counseling
 - h. Relativism and Inclusivism: America is a tolerance-loving nation; we celebrate diversity and fight against people with absolute truth claims... these philosophies have also crept into the church
 - i. Post-Modernism: “anything goes” in theology; pick and choose what seems true to you
5. To humble our arrogant pride God has ordained a limit to human philosophy... and has ordained a foolish gospel, Christ shedding his blood on a wooden cross, saving people who simply believe that

1 Corinthians 1:20-21 Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

6. Paul warns the Colossians of the philosophy they were facing
- a. Paul warns

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

- i) “See to it” means “Be vigilant” “Be watchful”
 - ii) “Take captive” is a military term, a sense of being BOOTY or plunder in a battle
 - iii) “Hollow and deceptive” philosophy = apart from God’s revelation, man’s thoughts about ultimate reality are empty, vain, worthless
 - iv) “human tradition”... one idea after another after another... passed on from one philosopher to another
 - v) “Basic principles of this world” = rudimentary concepts, perhaps even scientifically observed facts... but Christ goes far beyond this
- b. It began with the premise that matter is evil... the physical world is intrinsically evil...this is directly in contradiction to the Genesis creation account in which God declared all things good, and the Incarnation of Christ, in which the perfectly good Son of God took on a physical human body

c. Paul rejects this whole thing

D. Philosophy Defeated in Christ

1 Corinthians 1:22-25 Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

1. Christ is God's wisdom... Christ's fullness defeats the Colossian heresy and its empty philosophy
2. So also in your mission fields... look for the false ideas Satan plants to take people captive... Communism making a comeback in Eastern Europe, atheism, materialism, existentialism, relativism, postmodernism, hedonism
3. Defeat these concepts with the gospel!!

IV. Next Week

- The Intimidation of Legalism
- The Intimidation of Mysticism
- The Intimidation of Asceticism

V. Application

A. Praise God for your Fullness in Christ!!

Colossians 2:9-10 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been given fullness in Christ

- Fully Circumcised Spiritually
- Fully Alive
- Fully Forgiven
- Fully Free from the Law
- Fully Triumphant over Satan

B. Note the Danger to Yourself... and Take Steps for Defense

1. Human philosophy can creep in at any time... so guard your mind by constantly taking every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ... learn to test everything by the Word of God... don't think that, just because you are a Christian that you are immune to the pull of human philosophies that are in opposition to Christ
2. Identify what specific philosophies are a threat to you personally

- a. Perhaps it is relativism... perhaps post-modernism: both tend to be mushy about absolute truth claims and value cooperation and tolerance above all things
 - b. Perhaps it is secular psychology... maybe you have read even some “Christian psychology” and it has affected the way you think
3. Learn to take every thought captive to obedience to Christ: test everything by the WORD of GOD
- C. Note the Danger to the Church ... and Take Steps for Defense
1. Pray for your church leaders here at FBC
 2. Be aware of what’s being taught at Duke or UNC or other schools and learn how to refute those empty philosophies
 3. Pray for college students to be protected from empty and vain philosophy
 4. Guard your children against these false ideas of reality