

Consequences of Ideas Lesson 1

Why do you believe what you believe?

I. Introduction

- a. Ideas have consequences. In fact, it might be said that without ideas there would be no human behavior at all because behavior is caused by ideas which **physiologically** provide motive and energy to act.
- b. The ideas that man entertains are the **sources** of all creativity and invention and they are also the impetus behind all brutality and destruction. Ideas have very real consequences indeed.
- c. The Bible clearly warns of the power and **impact** of thoughts and ideas on the personal life of the believer. *Prov 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. KJV*
- d. The important ideas that have shaped the modern world need to be understood; understood from whence they have come and understood from the perspective of where they will logically **lead**.
- e. For example, consider where the ideas formulated in **Darwin's** observations of wildlife on the Galapagos Islands have taken us.
- f. Gradually his ideas have germinated into a **system** of belief that has revolutionized almost every aspect of Western thought including those of philosophers, scientists, psychologists, economists, law and politics.
- g. Likewise, the thoughts of **Karl Marx** shaped economic theory and political practice in Communist countries. The results of his ideas translate into the deaths of over 20 million people over the last 100 years. Ideas have consequences.
- h. As Bible believing Christians living in what appears to be the last days, it is imperative for us to be able to **recognize** the currents of thought that are driving forces behind the shaping of a new world order.
- i. Those currents of thought are in evidence today. It is the goal of this series to **identify** some of these ideas that are reshaping our culture.
- j. Further, we will examine the **sources** of these ideas and trace their development over time to uncover how they are leaving their mark on the collective psyche of Americans, both Christian and non-Christian alike.
- k. Finally, we will compare what the Bible has to say about these philosophical ideas which are taking root and **birthing** policies, laws, political movements and economic theory, etc. in our country and the world.

II. How Ideas Take Root

- a. The first question to ask is how do we acquire beliefs? Psychosocial research has established that beliefs are acquired and validated in basically **four ways**.
 1. They may be acquired and validated by personal **experience**. I.E. I learned to count and the fact that I have ten fingers is validated every time I look at my hands.
 2. We believe something because the **culture** and its agents encourage us to do so. (Schools, churches, etc)
 3. We also develop a core belief system built on basic religious, political, philosophical **persuasions** that we rely upon to give meaning to our experiences. What we already believe shapes our interpretation of experience.
 4. Finally, beliefs may be purely figments of ones' **imagination**. It is as though life is "make believe", first you make it up and then you believe it. Demosthenes: "Nothing is easier than self-deceit, for what each man wishes, that he also believes to be true."
- b. The problem is not that there is no **objective** truth (although that notion is strenuously debated by certain philosophers); it is that the Truth is not always readily known.

III. The Problems of Ideas

- a. While innumerable ideas have been entertained by man since the creation, not all ideas have weight or gain traction. Those that do have weight or gain traction have an **impact** upon the society in which they emerge.
- b. The reason these ideas catch on is that they become analogous with the notion of "**TRUTH**". The more an idea is repeated, the more it resonates within a culture. The more it resonates the more it is accepted as truth.
- c. However, very often, as the course of human history has shown, the ideas of philosophers, scientists, politicians and others who espouse an idea as "truth" are later proven to be factually **wrong**.
- d. The problem is that human beings are easily **convinced** by "true believers" that their ideas are true or correct. Man has "itching ears" he is always looking for some new thing to titillate the mind. *2 Tim 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. KJV*
- e. However, the problem is not limited to people believing things that are not true but that people very often do not believe things that **are true**. How is it that humans fall prey so easily to false ideas? *John 3:12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? KJV*

IV. The Spiritual Dimension of Ideas

- a. Almost off the radar screen in terms of our understanding of how ideas take root is the consideration of the **role** of the spiritual realm. The Bible clearly establishes the link between demons and human thought. *1 Kings 22:21-22 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I*

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will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. KJV

- b. This spiritual connection lays bare the fact that we are engaged in unrelenting cosmic warfare. Very few bother to think critically about new “truths;” where the idea comes from and whether it really is the truth. *2 Tim 3:7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. KJV*
- c. False notions of truth may be formulated in the **spiritual** realm where principalities and powers have their domain. These are then propagated through men to influence the affairs and systems of earthly inhabitants. *Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. KJV*
- d. Using the great **earthly thinkers** of every age, demonic delusion serves the purpose of undermining the faith of unsuspecting Christians and keeping unregenerate men blinded to the truth of the Gospel. *1 Cor 1:19 I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. KJV*
- e. While scholars and scientists are persuaded of their findings, and may persuade others, believers must exercise discernment and not forget that the devil is identified by Jesus as the **father** of all lies and deception. *John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. KJV*
- f. Since demons were able to **influence** thought and behavior in Jesus’ day, then it is logical to assume that such activity is still possible today. *Mark 8:33 Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. KJV*

V. The Decline of the American Idea

- a. We can see the effect of this demonic delusion **colliding** with the very ideas that undergird the foundation of the United States as a nation. Our culture is in decline. *Ps 11:2-3 For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? KJV*
- b. This decline **did not** just start in the last year or two. Upon scrutiny, we can actually identify the roots of the present-day thoughts even as early as the 1700’s and even before that in some cases.
- c. The areas under assault cover the gamut of disciplines and run deep into the **foundations** of the nation. Consider part of the evidence:
 - 1. God is **banished** from our political discourse, law and schools.
 - 2. In the place of God, the **State** is emerging as the provider of all things.
 - 3. Our capitalist economic system is collapsing and in ascendance in its place is a **socialist** system.
 - 4. Our political parties and processes are so **corrupt** that a person with no money, no job history and no experience of any kind can win election and within one term in office, retire as a millionaire.
 - 5. Through **bogus** science, the environment has also replaced God as the sustainer of life on earth.
 - 6. Values and norms of behavior have turned upside down and what was once good and virtuous is now called a hate mongering **evil**.
 - 7. Since 1973, nearly **40 Million** babies have been aborted in the United States which tells the story of the lack of value of human life in our society.
 - 8. If the politicians have their way, we will also see a rise in euthanasia and assisted suicide as government run health care is doled out to those whose life is deemed to have **merit**.
- d. Clearly, some massive paradigm shift is taking place in our midst and when it is complete the stage will be set for the end of the United States as we have known it. Believers should not be caught **sleeping**. *1 Thess 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. KJV*

VI. Application

- a. As a Christian, what is your response if you believe that the culture, laws, politics, economics and virtually every other social structure that you know is being co-opted by Satan?