

Lies Our Culture Tells Us

David Flatt

Since the Garden of Eden, Satan has been telling lies to the human family. He has a proven track record of success. He disguises himself and uses deception (2 Cor. 11:14). He wraps his lies in truth. What he promises seems good, but only brings pain, decay, and death.

Today, Satan continues to deceive the world. He is actively and effectively spreading lies in our culture. We believe the lies. We live in pursuit of what the lies promise. Unwittingly, we teach lies to our children. And so it goes.

In this article, we will briefly evaluate five lies our culture tells us. There are more. Can you add to the list?

1. “You can be anything you want.” Lies are often presented innocently and well-intentioned. This lie was told to us when we were children. It is believed by the masses because it attempts to build self-esteem. But, it is nothing more than a lie.

Not even God can be anything He wants. God cannot be Satan. Good cannot be evil. Evil cannot be good. Not even a little evil can be good or a little good be evil. A man cannot be a woman. A woman cannot be a man. Man cannot be immortal. We are bound by truth.

This lie stems from a deeper, selfish desire: to be our own god. This lie teaches us that we are our own lord and master. To become our own god, we must first remove the truth of God and His boundaries. Paul warned about the danger of this kind of thinking. We assert ourselves on God’s throne and suppress His truth at our peril (Rom. 1:18-32).

2. “Live your truth.” All of Satan’s lies are an assault on truth. Our culture has tried to redefine truth. Truth is no longer considered an objective, unchanging standard. Today, truth is relative and formed by majority consensus.

Lies beget lies. One lie needs another lie to stay alive. To become whatever we want to be requires truth to be redefined. For example, a man declares he is a woman. He may attempt to change his physical and chemical makeup, wear skirts, and demand everyone acknowledge him as her, it, or they. In his mind, he is living his truth. He tries to get his physical appearance to match how he feels in his heart.

Or, a husband might leave his wife and children and begin a new relationship with another woman. He tells his wife and children that he is not happy. He has to be true to himself and find happiness in a new relationship. His wife is devastated. His children are confused. But, he is just trying to live his truth.

This lie promises happiness and fulfillment; yet, brings pain and confusion. Truth was declared when God raised Jesus from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus affirmed God’s word, Jesus’ rule, and our only hope for salvation (Rom. 1:1-4, 16-17).

3. “You are enough.” Some of the lies our culture tells are aimed at building self-esteem. This lie convinces us to look within ourselves to be our salvation. No matter how broken and shattered we are, we are enough to put ourselves back together. This lie seeks to persuade us to earn our salvation. It hinders us from receiving the grace of God.

In the Gospels, Jesus frequently met people who were broken and shattered. Never once did He tell anyone that “you’re enough.” Instead, He offered Himself as forgiveness, healing, and renewal. Had we been enough, Jesus would have never needed to come to earth. Believing this lie will prevent us from receiving the One who can make us whole.

4. “You can save the world.” Civic participation is the fuel of democracy. When society has a problem, it requires its citizens to respond. Many problems exist in our nation and abroad. We are constantly called on to act in one way or another.

There are two problems with this lie. First, this lie makes us the savior. It strokes our ego. Our perspective, our wisdom, and our solutions are best. Anyone who does not support us becomes our enemy. Second, this lie distracts us from what is most important. There are always social, political, and economic problems in the world. There is no end to the problems of society.

At the risk of sounding cold and pessimistic, we cannot save the world. We are not expected to save the world. We already have a Savior. The Savior is not democracy, capitalism, a political party, or even the United States. The world’s Savior is Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah. He is more than human. He is God. His salvation is received through faith. Believers are to become like Him and lead the world to Him. So long as we believe that “we can save the world,” we will miss the true salvation that we most need.

5. “Follow your heart.” Our culture has been telling this lie for many years. This lie confuses truth with emotion. If something feels right, it is. If something feels good, it must be. Many desires swirl in our hearts. These desires must be properly used and directed; otherwise, our actions will only create more brokenness.

Jeremiah wrote, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (Jer. 17:9). We alone are not capable of discerning our hearts. If we follow our hearts, we will sin. James warned, “But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death” (Jas. 1:14-15).

Our hearts need to be searched, shaped, and directed by God. After Jeremiah expressed frustration with the deception of the heart, he wrote, “I the LORD search the heart and test the mind...” (Jer. 17:9). By allowing God to change our hearts through faith in the Gospel, we will find salvation and become a blessing to others.

Conclusion

As Christians, we must be alert to the lies our culture tells. Lies are frequently believed without thought. If they *seem* good, we will accept them without question. We need to use critical thinking to evaluate the principles of our society. Critical thinking involves taking a statement and judging its merits by the Scriptures.

Critical thinking is a Biblical principle. Paul wrote, “And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” (Phil. 1:9-11). Christians are to be thinkers. Don’t let someone else do your thinking! Don’t believe the lies our culture tells us!