

# *Significant Lessons From The Seemingly Insignificant*

Dec. 5, 2018 Lesson #43: New Age Spirituality: Practices & Disciplines

Col. 2:18a Let no one cheat [beguile] you of your reward,...

Amplified: Let no one defraud you by acting as an umpire *and* declaring you unworthy and disqualifying you for the prize,

Beguile: To declare unworthy of a prize > Athletic term: The umpire disqualifies the contestant because he has not obeyed the rules. Note: The contestant does not cease to be a citizen of the land, but he forfeits the honor of winning the prize.

Col. 2:18b-19a taking delight in false humility and Worship Of Angels, [God is remote; worship angels to reach Him> Bible forbids worship of angels] Intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, [man-made religion] and not holding fast to the Head, [Those who teach about God without being connected to Him by faith speaks falsely about Him.]

The word translated "Intruding," a technical term used by the mystical religions, meant "to set foot in the inner shrine, to be fully initiated into the mysteries of the religion." As Christians, we do not have to go through an initiation ceremony to get into the presence of God. [Heb. 4:16] Paul's concern was: 1. Eastern mysticism: the belief a person can have an immediate experience with the spiritual world, completely apart from the Word of God or the Holy Spirit.

2. The false teachers in Colosse had visions and made contact with angels. In bypassing the Word of God and the Spirit of God, they opened themselves to all kinds of demonic activity.

The New Spirituality Movement must be addressed! It is beginning to influence the Church.

Jude 1:4 "For certain men have crept in unawares... stealthily [gaining entrance secretly by a side door]. How often do we hear: If it looks so "good" [brings forth such "good fruit"], how can it be deception? Do we expect deception to be obvious? Why would the Bible describe it as "more subtle and crafty, stealthily" gaining entrance as by a side door?

Barnes Commentary states:"...False teachers would not at first make an open avowal of their doctrines, but would, in fact, while their teachings seemed to be in accordance with truth, secretly maintain opinions which would sap the very foundations of religion. The Greek words used in the preceding verses means properly to lead in along with others. Nothing could better express the usual way in which error is introduced. It is by the side, or along with, other doctrines which are true. Those who preach error rarely do it openly."

**THEREFORE, WE SHOULD EXPECT DECEPTION TO LOOK "GOOD"!**

According to the Bible, the easiest method of deception is for error to ride on the back of truth We hear truth being preached. We assume everything, therefore, being preached is truth, everything being done is Biblical, so we let down our guard...and error and deception can then enter "secretly by the side door." Deception: 99% truth & 1% falsehood

The Bible alone is to be our rule of faith and practice. Sola scriptura was a driving principle of the Protestant Reformation. We must remember the sufficiency of the 66 books breathed out by God for teaching, correction and training in righteousness. We do not need to reinvent the wheel, water down adjust or twist the Word of God. Ps. 119:89 It is firmly fixed in the heavens. Ps. 138:2 ...for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.  
Make sure the sheep are fed NOTHING but the bread of God.

In the book *Spiritual Friend* (1980), Edwards said the contemplative prayer movement is "THE WESTERN BRIDGE TO FAR EASTERN SPIRITUALITY" (p. 18).

This "spiritual movement's goal" is for an individual to achieve Christ-likeness through the practice of certain disciplines. It has provided a platform and a channel through which contemplative prayer and other disciplines are entering the church.

John MacArthur: *The Truth War*: "Rarely are their assaults on the truth open & head-on attacks they prefer to work underground drilling little holes in the foundations of truth itself. Submicroscopic pathogens invade the body hours or days before you are aware of it."

#### A. Contemplative Prayer: Purpose & Goals

1. Focuses on shifting and balancing a person's internal world rather than outward communication with God.
2. Adjust one's interior mental state with the awareness of God as opposed to reaching out to God Himself with dialog in prayer.
3. Enter an altered state of consciousness to find one's true self, thus finding God.  
Belief > man is basically good.

#### Methods to Achieve Purpose:

1. Contemplative prayer is carried out in a "centering prayer."
  - Sit comfortably with your eyes closed, relax and quiet yourself. Be in love and faith to God.
  - Choose a sacred word that best supports your sincere intention to be in the Lord's presence and open to His divine action within you.
  - Let that word be gently present as your symbol of your sincere intentions.
  - Whenever you become aware of anything [thoughts, feelings, images, etc.] simply return to your sacred word which is your anchor.

Consider: Step 1 is to quiet yourself. Of over 31,000 verse in the Bible, not a single one tells us to quiet ourselves. Stillness of mind has no correlation to connection with God in Scripture. You cannot love God with all your mind if your mind is empty.

- We are to meditate on God's Word and the person of Jesus Christ in terms of self-reflection.

Quote: "Reading the Bible without meditating on it is like eat without swallowing."

The only verse remotely close to a command to quiet ourselves has been hijacked by New Spirituality. Ps. 46:10 Be still and know that I am God.

- ❖ Still = to let go, to relent, or to cease striving

❖ This command was given in reference to the sovereignty of Yahweh over natural disasters and war.

❖ God is speaking these words to the nations, among whom He will eventually be exalted.

Consider: Step 2: Choose a "sacred" word. There are no sacred words. Sacredness is the property the Triune God and anything He imparts anointing to [Ark of Covenant].

❖ Using a mantra or sacred word to shift one's consciousness is an overt New Age practice.

❖ A Christian's God is the Triune God of the Bible and not the alteration of his mind.

Consider: Step 3: Let this word or mantra be gently present in your being.

❖ Focus on your mantra, not Jesus Christ.

❖ Man is still in the vain, selfish business of modifying his own internal states for his own pleasure.

Note: Prayer is communication with God in worship. A repeated word or mantra is not evidence of our intention to be in the presence of the Lord.

Consider: Step 4: Bring your attention back to your word or mantra as your anchor.

❖ Our anchor is in the person of Jesus Christ and the Word of God.

1. It is a move away from the truth of God's Word to a mystical form of Christianity.

➤ Proponents of contemplative prayer teach: All human beings have a divine center.

➤ These disciplines will find the "god within us" even if we are not born again.

Problem: Mystical/eastern roots and mind-emptying techniques

➤ Enter the "silence," breath prayers, chanting mantras, etc.

Did Jesus instruct his followers to empty their minds through contemplative prayer?

On the contrary He said, in Matt. 22:37

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your MIND."

Warning: Any kind of subjective spirituality that draws your focus away from the Lord and His truth can have disastrous results, derailing your spiritual growth and cutting you off from God's plan for your sanctification. [John 17:17]

## B. Prayer Labyrinths

The use of a labyrinth is quickly spreading and infiltrating much of the Evangelical world. It is widely known in the occult and New Age movement that the labyrinth has been used for centuries in magic and witchcraft to cast spells and to control and ward off evil spirits.

Consider: Labyrinths are rooted in ancient mythology. It was set up with a Minotaur [half-bull, half-man] in the center. It required human flesh and was too difficult to control.

A huge labyrinth was created to imprison the monster.

Humans were sent to the center as a type of sacrifice to the Minotaur.

Question: Is The Labyrinth A Spiritual Walk For The Born-Again Christian?

Their stated goal: "Transform the human spirit using the Labyrinth experience as a personal practice for healing and growth, a tool for community building, An Agent For Global Peace and a metaphor for the blossoming of the Spirit in our lives." [Veriditas website]

The labyrinth is a circle with a twisting path that winds its way to the center and is used for prayer and meditation which is the doorway between worlds and the key to the metaphysical. The labyrinth is an ancient symbol of wholeness with a purposeful path to a journey to our own center [divine within us] and back. It creates a sacred place to "That Which is Within." To go "within" is to search for one's own divinity.

3 stages to achieve: a. Purgation: Walk toward the center of the labyrinth and shed the distractions of life while opening your heart and mind.

b. Illumination occurs at the center where you receive a message of spiritual enlightenment through prayer and meditation.

c. Union occurs as you exit the labyrinth and invokes joining God, a higher power, or the healing forces at work in the world.

"Regardless of our differences, the labyrinth is a path we can all walk together."

Baptist News Global: Labyrinth Transforms Prayer Life

"The ancient practice which involves walking a maze while praying has become more popular among Baptists as Christians in general are adopting more eclectic spiritual disciplines. It needs to be used; it's a beautiful space."

Spurgeon: "To pray is to enter the Treasure House of God and to gather riches out of an inexhaustible storehouse."

### C. "Christian" Yoga

Time Magazine: There is a "fast growing movement that seeks to retool the 5000 year old practice of yoga to fit Christ's teachings."

A national association of Christian yoga teachers was started in July. Multiple books and videos are now on the market. Yoga is prevalent in churches as a practice and a business.

"It is a spiritual and religious practice with a physical component."

Its techniques originated in Hinduism.

"Efforts to separate yoga from its spiritual center reveal ignorance of the goal of yoga."

"Christian Yoga" = oxymoron                      yoga = union or to yoke

There's nothing wrong with stretching and calming down one's breathing.

- Hatha yoga's goal is to prepare the mind and body for meditation through posturing, breathing and shifting focus away from thought.
- Use the body as a ground for spiritual techniques to prepare the practitioner to unite with the Absolute. This is another way to awaken and resurrect the 'Higher Self.'"

Yoga's Goal: Obtain oneness with the universe = process of enlightenment

- Transform human consciousness to experience union or yoking with Brahman, Hinduism's highest god = false god
- The sound "om" chanted in many classes is meant to bring one into a trance so they can join with the universal mind.

God's command: Be transformed by the renewing of your mind through His Word. [Rom. 12:2]

- The "salute to the sun" posture at the beginning pays homage to the Hindu sun god.
- "Namaste" used at the close = "I bow to the god within you."

Quote: Warning: "People contend they practice yoga in a neutral setting. The Spiritual Realm Is Activated Just By The Yoga Poses Regardless Of Your Intent. The positions are intended to shift human consciousness toward God-consciousness and pay reverence to objects and entities other than the Triune God of the Bible.

It is an idolatry with the ultimate goal of helping man step into his own divinity."

Quote: "If you yield your body as an instrument to other religious systems, you are consenting to the influence of whatever demonic kingdom is over that system."

Study Revealed: Majority of Christian women began Christian yoga to exercise and stretch. One year later, 62% changed their purpose for continuing yoga. Spirituality became their purpose. If a practice clearly belongs to another religion, we are wise to hold fast to God's warning that seducing spirits lead to apostasy. [I Tim. 4:1]

#### D. Karma

Consider: Pew Research found ~33% of professing Christians believe in reincarnation and karma.

1. "Karma is a spiritual principle rooted in the Eastern concept of reincarnation wherein a person accumulates negative moral debt in their lives that they have to pay off in a future incarnation."
2. Karma = "action" = Every action has an equal reaction either now or in the future.
3. Hinduism: Karma operates in this lifetime and across lifetimes.
4. We are to live out our future as a ransom for the crimes we committed in our past or a previous life.
5. Bad karma needs to be alleviated through enlightenment and the suffering of evil as WE ATONE FOR OUR EVILS on the Wheel of Karma.
6. "Our cycle of births and deaths continues because of our karma until we become God-realized and are freed from this cycle."
7. "What goes around comes around" is a Hindu teaching that rests upon the idea of a force in the universe that balances the scales of good and evil in the world."
8. "The idea there is a force, law or deity making sure we are going to have returned to us in this life the evil we put out into the world opposes the doctrines of sin and judgment."
  - ❖ In Christ, 100% of our moral failures were atoned for sufficiently on the cross.
  - ❖ God won't make us suffer for something His Son already suffered for.
  - ❖ Jesus gave His life as a ransom for us. [Mark 10:45]
  - ❖ Our moral debt is paid in full. Every record of debt that stood against us was nailed to the cross. [Col. 2:14]

I Peter 2:24a Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, ...

There is no judgment against us by God or the "universe" for previous sins. [Rom. 8:1]

9. To believe "what goes around comes around" as a Christian is to believe that Jesus did not atone for some of our sins and that God is holding those sins against us, judging us by returning such evil, despite there being no crime left to pay for.
  - ❖ Jesus was already judged for all of our iniquities and chastised for the sake of our forgiveness. [Isa. 53]

- ❖ There are no longer any vices on my record that I must pay off by enduring evil. Jesus endured it for me.

The New Age movement has a strong foothold on our culture right now.

Study Finds 61% Of Christians Believe Some New Age Ideas. WOW!

Bookstores are lined with best-selling titles teaching people how to use crystals, how to meditate and cultivate "higher consciousness", and how to contact spirit guides. They teach God is an impersonal force in the universe and that we are to cultivate relationship with this force by shifting our consciousness and practicing things like "mindfulness", "presence", or yoga.

1. The Celestine Prophecy > sold over 23 million copies.  
"This is a book that comes along just once in a lifetime to change lives forever."
2. The Secret, based on Law of Attraction has sold over 20 million copies.
3. Life after Life has sold over 13 million copies.
4. Conversations with God has sold over 10 million copies. It includes alleged messages from God teaching "New Spirituality."

A new study released on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 by the Pew Research revealed something shocking.

1. 26% of Americans believe spiritual power exists within mountains, trees and crystals.
2. 25% believe in astrology.
3. 24% believe in reincarnation.
4. 23% believe yoga is a spiritual practice.
5. 15% have consulted psychics or fortune tellers.
6. 40% of Americans practice meditation at least once per week. Billion dollar industry.
7. > 36 million practice yoga; a Hindu & Buddha spiritual practice. \$10 billion industry.

They surveyed Americans to see what they thought about the following four New Age beliefs.

1) Spiritual energy exists in physical things, 2) Psychics have reliable insight into the future, 3) Reincarnation, 4) Astrology.

Results: 62% of the general public hold at least one of these beliefs; 61% of professing Christians held one of these new age beliefs. Teachings straight out of the occult!

- People don't seem to want to hear what God says. They want to hear from someone who knows: a psychic, channeler, palm-reader, card-reader, Ouija boards, astrology, magic charming, or the spirit of a dead friend or relative.

Atheism, 3% of our population, isn't the problem anymore. New Age is the religion of the future and it is beginning to invade our culture and infiltrate the thought-life of Christians.

Our lack of Biblical literacy has led to a lack of Biblical doctrine. LifeWay Research found:

- 67% of Americans believe heaven is a real place,
- 45% believe there are many ways to get there—including 1 in 5 evangelical Christians.
- 59% believe the Holy Spirit is a force and not a personal being and part of the Trinity.
- As a whole, Americans, including many Christians, hold unbiblical views on hell, sin, salvation, Jesus, humanity, and the Bible itself.

Julie Roys: New Spirituality borrows Christian terms to push their agenda.

1. Angel Boards = dressed up Ouija board

Angel boards are used to contact supposed angels and spirit guides. This can be appealing to a Christian who would refuse a Ouija board, but wants to experiment with contacting spirits. Angel board uses Christian terminology and decoration. It uses angels and clouds painted on the board in soft pastel colors.

2. Angel Cards = Tarot cards in disguise

3. Yoga games and cards for children to learn the poses.

2018: Netflix recently came out with a series called "Sabrina the Teenage Witch" and "The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina" complete with spell-casting, incantations, and demonic manifestations.

Sephora announced that they would be releasing a witches starter kit for little girls complete with crystals, sage, and tarot cards.

They did pull the kit because witches in USA said it was disrespectful to them.

Christian Post 2018: The population of self-identified witches has risen dramatically as interest in astrology and witchcraft practices have become increasingly mainstreamed. A recent study found that "witches now outnumber Presbyterians [1.4 million] in the US by 100,000, with 1.5 million self-identified witches as paganism continues to grow "astronomically".

The population of those who identify as witches or pagans is continuing to increase as the those who identify as "Protestant Christian" continues to decrease.

27% of Americans identify as "spiritual but not religious", including 35% of Protestant Christians. People are quick to embrace a form of "spirituality" with no borders or guidelines. People are enticed to seek spiritual fulfillment by the use of supernatural means.

Many people are praying to the 'spirit of the universe', using incantations, potions, spells, charms and other things that have long been associated with witches and witchcraft.

Witches in recent headlines: Rituals to cast a hex on Brett Kavanaugh and Donald Trump by chanting around an altar involving animal skulls and dolls with the faces of the two men on them.

### The Supremacy of Jesus Christ by Oswald Chambers

John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.

The holiness movements of today have none of the rugged reality of the New Testament about them. There is nothing about them that needs the death of Jesus Christ. All that is required is a pious atmosphere, prayer, and devotion. This type of experience is not supernatural nor miraculous. It did not cost the sufferings of God, nor is it stained with "the blood of the Lamb." It is not marked or sealed by the Holy Spirit as being genuine, and it has no visual sign that causes people to exclaim with awe and wonder, "That is the work of God Almighty!" Yet the New Testament is about the work of God and nothing else.

The New Testament example of the Christian experience is that of a personal, passionate devotion to the Person of Jesus Christ. Every other kind of so-called Christian experience is detached from the Person of Jesus. There is no regeneration— no being born again into the kingdom in which Christ lives and reigns supreme. There is only the idea that He is our pattern. Jesus said, "...when He, the Spirit of truth, has come,...He will glorify Me..." (John 16:13-14). When I commit myself to the revealed truth of the New Testament, I receive from God the gift of the Holy Spirit, who then begins interpreting to me what Jesus did. The Spirit of God does in me internally all that Jesus Christ did for me externally.

In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song  
This cornerstone, this solid ground, Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.  
What heights of love, what depths of peace, When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!  
My comforter, my all in all; Here in the love of Christ I stand.  
In Christ alone, Who took on flesh, Fullness of God in helpless babel!  
This gift of love and righteousness, Scorned by the ones He came to save.  
'Til on that cross as Jesus died, The wrath of God was satisfied.  
For ev'ry sin on Him was laid; Here in the death of Christ I live.  
There in the ground His body lay, Light of the world by darkness slain.  
Then bursting forth in glorious day, Up from the grave He rose again!  
And as He stands in victory, Sin's curse has lost its grip on me.  
For I am His and He is mine, Bought with the precious blood of Christ.  
In Christ alone I place my trust and find my glory in the power of the cross.  
In ev'ry victory let it be said of me, my source of strength, my source of hope is Christ alone  
I place my trust and find my glory in the power of the cross.  
In ev'ry victory let it be said of me, my source of strength, my source of hope... is Christ alone.

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the pow'r of Christ in me  
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.  
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man, Can ever pluck me from His hand.  
'Til He returns or calls me home, Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

#### References & Sources:

1. The Second Coming Of The New Age: The Hidden Dangers of Alternative Spirituality In Contemporary American and Its Churches

Written by Steven Bancarz & Josh Peck: published in 2018

"Our lives, our relationships, our world and our churches all depend on our willingness to take action against the deceit of New Age "Spirituality. The first step toward prevention is knowledge. Now is the time to be informed."

2. Jan Markell's interview with former 20 year master reiki and yoga teacher who is now a born-again Christian. Jan Markell's website: [www.olivetreeviews.org](http://www.olivetreeviews.org)
3. The gods Who Walk Among Us by Tom Horn & Don Jones: Published in 1999

"The authors point to Biblical predictions of an end time revival of paganism and warn of increasing idolatry which will lead to Armageddon. Horn & Jones warn that humanity is moving toward paganism's ultimate incarnation: the god-king or Antichrist of the New World Order."

4. God's Word