



Links Players

FOLLOWERS OF JESUS 7: AWAY FROM FALSE TEACHING

... there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them... (2 Peter 2:1, NIV)

KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN” may be the most repeated of all golf advice. It may also be the worst.

Does it surprise you to hear this? It’s quite possible that your beloved memories of the game include a friend or teacher who used this expression (or one like it) to help you get started. What they may have inadvertently accomplished was to produce a stiffness in your swing that thwarted fluidity and tempo.

Bad advice can, of course, sneak its way into any arena. No one is looking for a losing stock tip or a deleterious drug prescription. And while the latter might kill you, this pales compared to the kind of false teaching that can keep a person from eternal life.

Where does deadly false teaching come from? From false teachers. This is not to establish a witch hunt mentality, where we cast suspicious eyes on any preacher whose theology isn’t just like ours in every point. But the writers of Scripture weren’t afraid to call heresy by its ugly name, so we do well to find out what they meant when they used this word.

Briefly, the heresies that set themselves against Christ and the gospel that proclaims him come in three forms:

1. *They take away from the person or work of Christ.* In their teaching, he is not God, not sinless, and not singularly powerful to save through his death and resurrection.
2. *They add requirements to the saving work of Christ.* As examples, Sabbath-keeping or evangelistic efforts or even sleeping with the leader are taught as avenues to added enlightenment and eternal reward.
3. *The heresies are taught by greedy teachers.* Sometimes this greed is passed on to congregations, who are encouraged to seek material blessings as a sign of God’s favor. It’s a deceitful distraction.

When the time comes to stand before God and cash in our life’s chips, there is only one currency that counts: Christ our Savior. We must cast off all other teachings as the worthless coin-op slugs they are.

Opening questions How can you tell the difference between good advice and bad advice—in golf or other hobbies, in business, in family matters, and in regards to faith-filled living?

READING Luke 21:8; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:1-3 & 2 Timothy 4:1-4

Deception (Luke 21)

Why was Jesus serious about deception? What deceptions in our world today can draw our attention away from eternal matters? How are these deceptions made to sound like appealing truth?

Destructive heresies (2 Peter 2)

What makes heresy so destructive, both for the teacher and the listener?

False teachers and their listeners (1 & 2 Timothy)

What marks of false teachers do we see in these passages? And what marks of those who desire their teaching? How can a faithful teacher help us guard against falsehood (2 Tim. 4:2)?
