

Lighted Way Ministries

Study Guide

Exposing Deadly Pitfalls & Causes of Deception

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The **QUEST** *for*
Ultimate **TRUTH**



*“...Be no more children,
tossed to and fro, and
carried about with every
wind of doctrine...”*

Ephesians 4:14

Today, the idea that there might be ultimate Truth—Truth that stands of itself, whether recognized or not, existing outside the scope of one’s own personal experience—is a concept as rare as an endangered species. Truth is usually viewed as “relative”. In other words, truth is changing, depending on one’s personal needs and circumstances. Rather than believing in some over-arching, all-encompassing, whether-we-recognize-it-or-not-it-still-stands TRUTH; most say ultimate Truth does not even exist!

KEY POINT

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Instead, people tend to believe that there is “your” truth and “my” truth.

As mystic Fran Hafey explained in her online article titled, “Your Truth is Within You”:

“When your truth unfolds like a flower being born, you will feel it in your heart and know its true.”

(Holistic Living, www.1stholistic.com)

In this way, TRUTH is replaced with “what is true for me”. With such a perspective, the pursuit of ultimate Truth becomes irrelevant. For if truth is relative to the person who believes it, man is his own “god”. And one need not know TRUTH, in an ultimate sense, one needs only to know ONESELF, discovering one’s personal truth.

By this popular way of thinking, the path of ultimate Truth has become overgrown by the brambles



of disuse. So few seek for ultimate Truth, that this formerly well-trod path of thought, which was once the most important philosophical quest, is now nearly totally out of sight.

Perhaps, more than anything else, this way of thinking is the reason we are in a time of spiritual famine today. Most, even among Christians, don't really know what the Truth is.

“Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the Words of Yahweh.”

Amos 8:11

It's a scary thought really. But this is the most fundamental reason many, even among Christians, search for emotional experiences and mystical moments rather than studying the Bible. But, Scripture tells us that there is ultimate Truth. Specifically, the Bible states that the Word of God, in Flesh (Christ) and Book (the Bible), are Truth:

“Sanctify them through Thy Truth: Thy Word is Truth.”

John 17:17

“Yahshua saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”

John 14:6

Spiritual Maturity Involves Knowing and Understanding True Doctrine

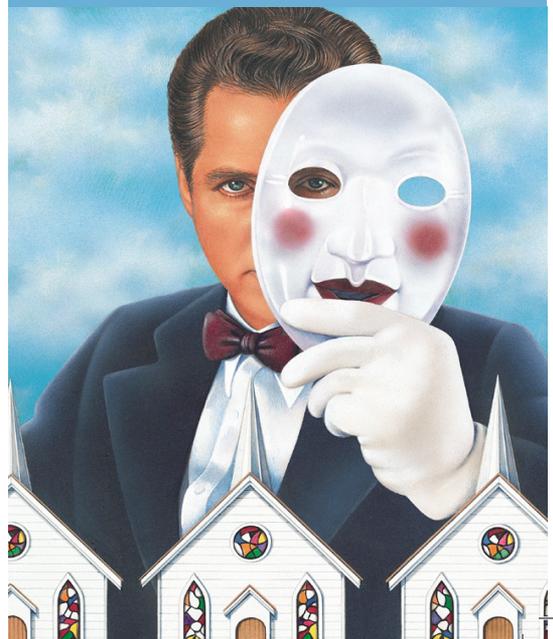
“Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.”

Isaiah 28:9

Blowing Wind is a Scriptural Metaphor for False Doctrine

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

Ephesians 4:14



Scripturally, wind is a metaphor used for false doctrine and spiritual deception. These false concepts are powerful and forceful, gusting the biblically unrooted person about; much like a helpless tumbleweed is blown this way and that, in a trackless desert.

Threatening Christians, there are winds of personal experience. They puff at us to believe this way or that way because of our own life-experiences, whether good or bad. How does this deceptive “wind” manifest itself, effecting the beliefs of Christians? Consider the following three examples; all of which are true accounts from the experiences of Christians, which we have tried to help in our ministry.

CASE #1: “The Sick Child”

A few years back, we received a phone call from a thirty-something woman, who was an active member of the local church congregation. The woman, whom we will call Misty, had come to believe that it was perfectly acceptable for Christians to get “help” from New

Age healers, mystics and Shamans (which is an old word meaning “witchdoctor”).

Misty’s Dangerous Belief: One should do whatever it takes to get help. If a Shaman is able to help, while prayers do not. God is helping through the Shaman!



As obviously twisted as this doctrinal viewpoint may seem, this deceived woman had come to hold this belief by a profound experience. Misty and her daughter, who was about 11 years old at the time, were waiting to catch a flight out of New York. The child was sick and worsening by the minute.

In the layover time, Misty grew very anxious when the girl's fever reached 104°F (40°C) and was not responding to fever medicines or Misty's prayers. At her wits end, the worried mother called a Shaman (recommended by a friend) for help. The Shaman prayed with Misty over the phone. Instantly the child's fever was gone and the girl no longer even felt sick at all!

The young mother concluded that the Shaman had it "in" with God. She also was convinced that because the Shaman had helped her, doing something "good", that this mystic was "good".

When this Shaman later invited Misty to join her for a séance, Misty gladly attended. It was the beginning of an occult journey for Misty, in which she was ultimately blown completely out of Christianity altogether. But it all began when Misty believed she had found the "truth" based upon her "good" experiences with the Shaman.

Adjusting her doctrinal viewpoint to suit her sensual experience was a deadly mistake. Had Misty used God's Word as her Source of ultimate Truth, testing her personal experience against Its Teachings, she would have been protected from this deadly, doctrinal wind.

KEY POINT



THE TRUTH FROM THE WORD OF GOD: Those who practice witchcraft and consult spirits are not "good" – nor are they working under the power of *Yahweh*.

- Isaiah 8:19-20, Leviticus 19:31

CASE #2: "The Unconverted Teenager"

A teenager, whom we'll call Derek, had no personal interest in Christ; although he had been raised in a conservative, Christian home. Yet, in spite of being raised with Christian values and beliefs, and even having been homeschooled, he still attended Church only because his parents made him go.

One weekend, Derek visited another Christian church. During the church service, the pastor taught that the Bible wasn't an accurate history Book, but was rather a "spiritual guidebook". Further, he told the congregation that "Jesus"

wasn't really God. But in spite of these doctrinal teachings, which were clearly different than Derek's parents' beliefs, he was drawn to this church and began attending there regularly.

Gradually, as Derek fellowshiped in this new church, his own belief-system came to mirror theirs. But the attraction Derek felt for this congregation wasn't its doctrines, these he accepted as a by-product. What attracted him, convincing Derek that this church had the "Truth", was its miracles.

People in this church regularly experienced healings and miraculous manifestations of power. In fact, there was even a spot, in the scheduled program, for these miracles. During his first visit, the congregation had gathered around Derek. They laid hands on him, saying that he was lost and needed to "receive the spirit." As they prayed for him, a powerful, tingling sensation gripped Derek's body. His limbs grew heavy, yet seemed electrified at the same time. He was so overwhelmed that his typical teenage veneer, of appearing emotionally detached and "cool", broke down. He wept as though the fountains of the deep had been broken up. And, in his own words, he was "converted" on the spot.

Derek's Dangerous Belief: Truth is determined by miracles. The presence of miracles proved that the second church's doctrines were right. Those who pray and worship in conservative ways, studying the Bible and aligning their lives with its teachings, are just "legalists" who don't really have the Presence of the Holy Spirit. The doctrinal teachings of his parents' church must be wrong because they had no sensational validation.

From there, Derek made drastic doctrinal changes which alarmed his parents greatly. He stopped attending church with his family and exclusively worshipped with his new church family, forsaking the Scriptural teachings of his upbringing in the process. He quit believing that "Jesus" was God in the Flesh. And he no longer read any part of the Old Testament, nor participated in Bible study of any kind, since he now believed the Bible was only a spiritual "guidebook", without historical or prophetic value.

Derek's Christianity had become a sensational experience, where the value of spiritual songs and activities was measured by how breathless they made you, or how good you felt in doing it. Had Derek used God's Word as his Source of

ultimate Truth, testing his personal experience against Its Teachings, he would have been protected from the doctrinal winds, which power-

KEY POINT



THE TRUTH FROM THE WORD OF GOD: Miraculous signs and wonders are performed, both by *Yahweh's* Power and by demonic power. Miracles and good feelings don't prove that the spirit behind them is from God.
– Matthew 24:24, 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10

fully blew him away.

CASE #3: "Encountering Angels"

A group of conservative, 4th generation Christians began meeting to study the Bible after church each week. One day, after the group had been meeting together for a couple of years, an angel appeared to the leader. This spectacular visit was repeated until it became a regular event to get messages from the angel.

Soon, it wasn't only the leader who was encountering angels. The members of the group were all delighted with angel visits, exciting visions, and even out-of-body experiences. As these supernatural experiences grew more frequent, the group no longer met together to study the Bible, rather they

gathered to share their miraculous experiences and to hear the angels' instructions.

At first, the angelic instructions were simple. And the results were a "blessing" in the eyes of the whole group. Having "confirmed" that the angel was "good" by testing whether his instructions had good outcomes, the group was fully convinced they were Angels of *Yahweh*.

Group's Dangerous Belief: Angels visited and spoke to them because they were special, being chosen by God for a unique purpose. The messages from the angels were "proven" to be from God, because following the instructions from the prior messages had "blessed" them.

As time went on, the angels began to instruct the group to take things from stores (without

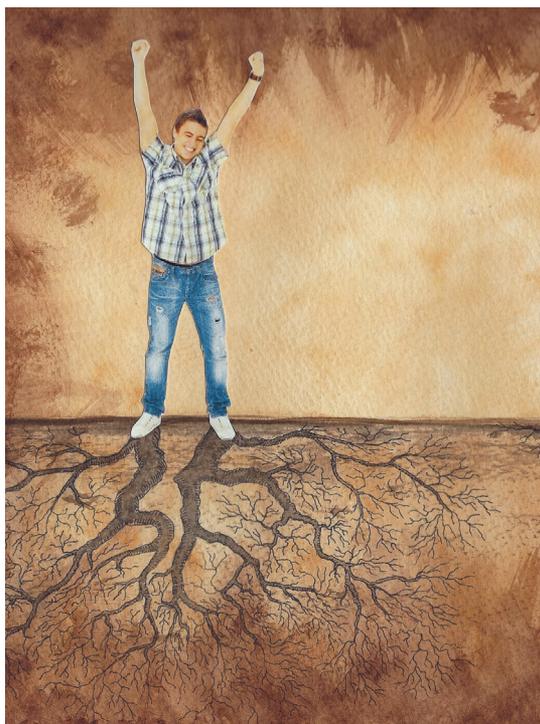


paying) because these items were “needed” in the “Cause of Christ.” Sadly, although these Christians were Sabbath-keepers with a pretty good understanding of the Law of God, they still believed the angels, even though they now plainly gave directions counter to Scripture.

The angel eventually even told some of them to shoot people. After listening to and being “blessed” by visits from this angel for 2 years, they were ready to follow the angel’s instructions, no matter how extreme. Two members of this group were injured and a woman was slain in the resulting gunfire. The shooter, a fourth-generation Seventh-day Adventist, is now serving a life sentence in the Sheridan, Oregon women’s prison. All because a group of conservative Christians wasn’t rooted in the Truth and were taken out by the winds of false doctrine and demonic deception.

As these three alarming case studies show, one’s life-experiences and the feelings and sensations which accompany them, are easily manipulated by the magical workings of the devil. He is a master magician. And in a magic show, the closer you look, the less you see.

To be protected against such deadly



KEY POINT



THE TRUTH FROM THE WORD OF GOD: Angels cannot be given a “blank check”. We cannot assume they are angels from Heaven merely because they are lovely, “loving” and make us feel good. Nor can we judge their source by whether their council has “blessed” us in the past. We have to test their words against the **WORD**.

– 2 Corinthians 11:14, Isaiah 8:20

deceptions, we must be rooted and grounded in the Word of God - seeking and knowing the ultimate Truth from Scripture. This is our only safety in a world where the winds of deceptive doctrines are only getting stronger by the day.

But, to drive one final “nail” in the proverbial “coffin” of using sensory input to determine doctrinal Truth, let’s go back to the beginning. Effectively “blowing” mankind away from Truth, the devil’s first doctrinal wind came in the form of getting Eve to believe her senses, over the Word of *Yahweh*.

The devil shapeshifted, taking the form of a beautiful serpent. (Yes, ladies, it’s hard to believe it now, but the Bible says snakes used to be not only beautiful, but THE MOST beautiful animal in the Garden of Eden!) In this earth-shattering encounter, what Eve perceived

and believed was actually opposite from the reality of the situation. Plainly, even though Eve was perfect, with senses far superior to our own, her senses and her “personal truth” were so far off the mark that they weren’t even in the same “galaxy” with the ultimate Truth!

You can read the whole sad story in Genesis Chapter 3. To make the point very clear that relative truth is a total lie, and that Truth exists, many times beyond our perceptions, whether we recognize it or not; let’s compare what Eve perceived with what was really going



That's so amazing! Eating the forbidden fruit was such a blessing to the beautiful serpent that now it can TALK!

I was just a normal serpent until I ate this wonderful fruit. If it can do so much for me, imagine what eating it will do for YOU!



on during that serpent encounter. Clearly, pursuing the ultimate Truth is a quest we cannot afford to forsake. If we want to survive the devil's dangerous deceptions, we need to be able to know and discern the ultimate Truth, which is far above and beyond our own limited, deceivable perceptions.

We cannot afford to be spiritual tumbleweeds, blown hither and

yon, completely at the mercy of the next sensational gust of wind. Such a rootless state of spiritual immaturity makes us dangerously vulnerable.

"...Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Ephesians 4:14

WHAT EVE PERCEIVED VS. THE TRUTH

	WHAT EVE PERCEIVED	THE TRUTH
To whom was Eve speaking?	Eve perceived an “enhanced” serpent, sitting in the Forbidden Tree, eating Forbidden Fruit.	The devil had taken the form of a serpent. Eve was actually speaking with Satan, himself.
Why could the serpent speak?	The serpent was able to speak (which he couldn’t previously do) because he had eaten the enhancing Forbidden Fruit.	Since the serpent was really the devil, he could speak.
Why did the serpent speak to Eve?	Having been blessed by eating the Forbidden Fruit, he wanted to share the blessing with Eve.	The devil wanted to deceive and destroy Eve.
What would eating the fruit accomplish?	Eve would be enhanced, becoming like a “god.”	Eve would lose her immortality, plunging herself, the human race and the planet into sin, suffering and death.

“... In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Matthew 15:7-9

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” 1 Timothy 4:1

“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with Grace...” Hebrews 13:9

The key to becoming spiritually mature and protected from the doctrinal winds is to develop a “root-system” in the Word of God, formed through personal Bible study. This serves to not only protect us, but also shelters others within our sphere of influence.

“Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.” Isaiah 28:9

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth...”

2 Timothy 2:15-16

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

1 Timothy 4:16

We cannot rely on our feelings, senses, or personal interpretations to determine ultimate Truth. So how can we be assured of finding THE TRUTH in the Pages of Scripture?

Having established that we each need to study the Bible, we naturally turn our attention to the “pitfalls” along the path. Pitfalls are obviously present in the fact that the Bible is used to come up with so many divergent doctrines. Why is ultimate Truth so elusive, specifically? Many Christians do not study the Bible as they should, for the following reasons:

1. They exalt tradition over Scripture. (“I’ve always believed this way.”)
2. They fail to study the Scriptures for themselves.
3. They seek human authorities to interpret the Bible for them.
4. They use ineffective study tools.

5. They read only far enough in the Bible to support their own biases.
6. They study improperly, not using the Scripturally-given methods.

Let us take a moment to carefully map out the first three of these “pitfalls” in the path, exposing them thoroughly and detailing why we must avoid them. Then, in the next Study Guide, we will cover the remaining three issues of improper Bible study. Once this is accomplished, we may prayerfully “*study to show ourselves approved unto God...*” with confidence in Him to help us do it.

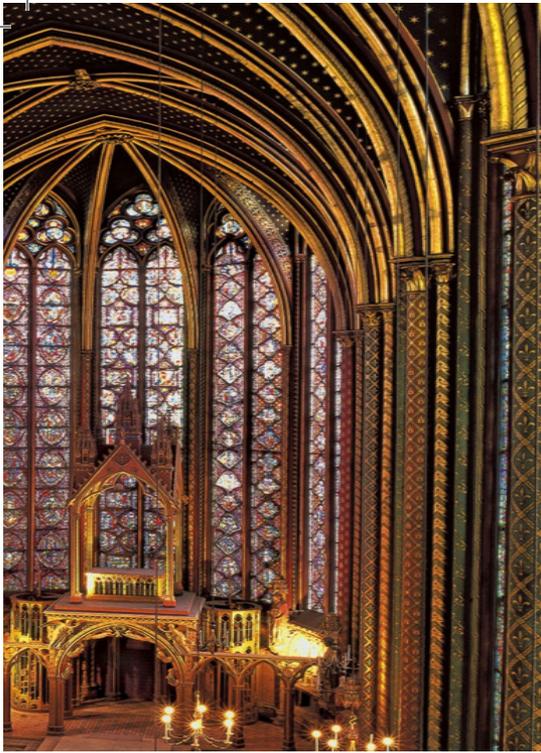
KEY POINT



On the Quest for ultimate Truth, we cannot believe something, just because we’ve always believed it (Exalting Tradition over Truth).

Since our purpose in studying the Bible should be to find *Yahweh’s* Truth, not find support for our own biases, we need to have the right mindset. This means we have to be willing to be wrong. Perhaps, when we have thoroughly studied all the Scripture has to say on a given subject, we will find that our belief on that subject is correct. Great! If this is so, we have





KEY POINT



On the Quest for Ultimate Truth, we cannot avoid the “difficulty” of personal Bible study, relying on our pastors or favorite theologians to study for us and then tell us what to believe.

leaders to correctly tell us what to believe is also dangerous, as history clearly shows.

For example, during the Dark Ages, the common people would attend church, although they knew nothing more about the Truth when they left than before they had arrived. The service was given in Latin, a language known only to theologians. Thus, it was a very impressive display, with little or no doctrinal value. It served as a “sleeping pill” to the common people, keeping them satisfied that the leaders must know what they were doing.

now found a true basis to continue believing in this way. But, what if our Bible study reveals that our former beliefs were wrong? The Quest for Ultimate Truth requires us to lay aside all of our former, wrong beliefs and fully embrace God’s Truth.

This means that studying the Word of God is a risky business - risky to our preconceived ideas and our comfort zone! The Quest for Ultimate Truth will cost us something. We will have to make changes in our lives, at some point or another. And a willingness to change, if we find our lives out of harmony with ultimate Truth, is essential in this quest. Relying on our spiritual

We are now in a new “Dark Ages”. True, Bibles are plentiful (at least in the Western world). But because many believe that only pastors and theologians can interpret and understand the Scriptures, most leave the Bible study to the spiritual leaders, accepting that they must know what they are doing.

But ignoring our personal responsibility to study the Scriptures is not only disobedient to God's Command, it also makes us spiritually vulnerable. **Never—in any age—was following human leadership a safe substitute for personally studying God's Word.**

Consider Noah's Day. Was the leadership right? Knowing the end of the story, we can emphatically say that it was not! But at that time, it appeared that Noah was crazy. Yet, the true Word of God was in the Message of that ridiculed, old man who built a boat on dry land, in a world where no rain had ever previously fallen. The false message of the political and religious leadership, countering the Word of *Yahweh* in Noah, was the biggest reason most people missed the boat!

Consider *Yahshua's* Day. Were the scribes, Pharisees, and religious leaders right about *Yahshua*? No! Once again, people were faced with a choice: would they believe the clear Word of God, or would they follow their leaders? Most followed their leaders and, in so doing, were led to reject the Son of God!

We need to learn from the devastating mistakes of those who have gone before. In the past, the majority has chosen to follow the leaders, trusting them to speak for God. And doing this caused most people

to leave the Truth of the Word, siding with the resistance!

This is why it can truly be said that, **since the Fall of mankind, the religious majority has never been right.** No one may be left to do our studying for us and then rightly interpret the Scriptural Messages on our behalves! For if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch of deception.

“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” Matthew 15:14

“Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture! saith Yahweh.” Jeremiah 23:1

Like the noble Bereans, who even checked the teachings of the apostle Paul, WE are called to study the Scriptures! And having the courage to search the Scriptures, examining every message, no matter who gave it, shows faith in God. It demonstrates our belief that He, Who commanded us to study (2 Tim. 2:15-16), will help us to do as He commanded.

As we pursue ultimate Truth on every subject, we may find ourselves standing out, or even standing alone. But, we must not throw out a Biblical teaching merely because respected leaders disagree. And in our Quest for Ultimate Truth, we will be protected from deception.



The QUEST for Ultimate TRUTH

Lesson Study Questions and Answers

1) What does it mean that our society today largely believes truth is “relative”? (see page 2) _____

2) According to Isaiah 28:9, what must we do to become spiritually mature? (see page 3) _____

3) What practice would have protected Misty, Derek and the SDA Church Group (see pages 4-8)? _____

4) Why is it so dangerous to trust your own senses and perceptions, over the Word of God? (see pages 9-11) _____

5) Compare what Eve perceived vs. the Truth (see page 11)

	What Eve Perceived	The Truth
To whom was Eve speaking?		
Why could the serpent speak?		
Why did the serpent speak to Eve?		
What would eating the fruit do?		

6) Our only protection against being deceived is knowing, understanding and obeying the clear _____ of God.

7) To do this, we must each _____ the Bible for ourselves (see page 12).

8) What are the six “pitfalls” that keep Christians from effective Bible study, which is the only way to find Scriptural Truth? (pg 12)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Prayer of Commitment:

“Dear Heavenly Father, I choose to pursue Your Ultimate Truth, found in Your Holy Word. I understand the dangers of following my own perceptions, respected leaders, or personal bias. And I choose to follow Your Command to “study to shew myself approved unto You.” Please help me in this process. I also state today, that I want Your Truth more than my tradition. Even if I find that I have believed lies and must make dramatic changes in my life to align it with Your Truth, by Your Grace, I will do so. Please help me to faithfully pursue Your Truth! For *Yahshua’s* Sake I ask it. Amen.”

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