

WHAT ARE OUR OBJECTIVES?

- To alert God's people to deception. Too many have accepted ways of getting information that challenges their faith.
- To exhort God's people to start reading Scripture daily in order to prepare themselves for the battle.
- To prepare the children and grandchildren of God's people for the ways the world deceives—for the messages embedded in the world's stories, media, etc.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SERIES IS TO DEAL WITH THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM.

- What does that phrase mean? Something big is going on that many are choosing not to talk about because they know it will lead to a battle.
- The problem for churches? We are in mixed company with believers at different stages of spiritual growth, and even unbelievers, as well.
- If we don't talk about these things because we don't want to offend, then we leave Christians vulnerable.

THE CHRISTIAN DILEMMA:

- Is the church service primarily for believers or unbelievers?
- Oftentimes we face a dilemma. Pastors don't want to offend unbelievers, so they don't address controversial issues.
- The problem is that so few actually read Scripture outside of the church service. Few study an issue through reading or proper research. So many go to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, broad Google searches, soundbites from the media, messages in movies, and so on. Universities shape content with their agenda. Even how search engines tailor their results can in turn shape our thinking.
- Check out the work of Dr. Robert Epstein. He earned his Ph.D. in psychology at Harvard University in 1981, was editor in chief of *Psychology Today*, a visiting scholar at the University of California, San Diego, and the founder and director emeritus of the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies in Concord, MA. We are learning from his studies about how people's minds and narratives are being shaped by moving and removing information (called historical revisionism), by social media, by friendships—even by Google. (See more resources at the end of these notes.)
- Our goal is to have our young people **ready for the world**.

THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT WE SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE.

Ephesians 4:14–16 ¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

SCRIPTURE TELLS US WE HAVE AN ENEMY.

- There is a spiritual enemy at work behind the scenes—the puppet master (John 8:44). Most don't know they are being played (lying or being lied to). We are going to have to take a stand, to put on the armor of God.
- Paul was writing to the people of His day to alert them to how the enemy works, and how the enemy is working today.
- We don't need to be afraid, but we need to be alert and resolute. We need to become aware and create safeguards for ourselves and those we are responsible for. (2 Corinthians 11:12-15)

Ephesians 6:10–13 ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

WHERE DO WE GET OUR INFORMATION FROM?

2 Timothy 3:12–16 ¹²In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

WHAT DO WE DO TO STAY GROUNDED, TO STAY ROOTED?

2 Corinthians 10:3–5 ³For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

SO WHAT DO I DO WHEN THOUGHTS AND DOUBTS COME? I WRESTLE AGAINST EPHESIANS 6:10.

I recognize the thought as incongruent with faith, God's Word, and His promises.

- The only way this is possible is if we have hidden His word in our hearts (Psalms 119:11) and have mature believers to help us. The thought (or doubt) comes from our flesh, or the enemy, or the culture.

I remember where I was before Christ—when I lived the way I wanted to.

- Saved from what? Remember honestly (not like the Israelites in the desert—see Exodus 16:2-3).
- For those who grew up in a Christian home and did not have to suffer, look around at the consequences others have had to live with. Look at the obvious effects of sin in our country!

I walk through the evidence and ask myself, "Why I am a Christian?"

- I believe there is a God. Why? The complexity of the universe reveals that God is evident. There is evidence embedded in logic and morals. I look at the evidence of evil.
- I believe Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is unique; He said things that were stunning, did miracles, & rose from the dead.
 - You might notice I am using the Bible as my resource. Here is why: The New Testament is unique. The Scriptures have not been changed; they're accurately recorded with real events, with reliable witnesses, and have been proven archaeologically correct.
- I remember who Jesus is and what He entrusted Himself to. Jesus affirmed the Scriptures, and they reveal truth.

I remember what Jesus has done for me—the truth that changed my life.

- Freed me from sin's control and gave me salvation, relationships, and honor.

I recognize that the enemy is working on others, and I support them. (Deuteronomy 6:4-10)

- The church is a meeting place for people across an entire spectrum—from those who are thriving and have something to give to those who are struggling and need support.
- So many ask the question, "What will I get out of this?" rather than, "What can I give?"
- Teach your kids—your spiritual disciples you are walking with—how to recognize the enemy and defeat him.

REMEMBER:

- I remember that truth is not decided by the majority nor by the loudest, most powerful people. It never has been.
- I remember that propaganda and violence has always been used to silence people.
- Embedded in humans is the belief that there is something beyond the physical world, that we came from somewhere, as well as the understanding that life is more than just physical—that there is a spiritual side, too.
- Embedded in each person is an innate knowledge there is right and wrong; that doesn't make sense if there is no God.

NEXT STEPS:

- Make a goal for this year personally—whether it's to attend a Real Life University class, join a Life Group, specific books to read, etc. Make it your goal to help others, including to prepare your children.
- Next week, attend a Mini-Conference or Training with Sean McDowell: reallifeministries.com/readyfortheworld

RESOURCES:

Books: *Core 52: A Fifteen-Minute Daily Guide to Build Your Bible IQ in a Year* by Mark E. Moore | *100 Bible Verses*

Everyone Should Know by Heart by Robert J. Morgan | *The Grace and Truth Paradox* by Randy Alcorn

RightNow Media (and Books): *Cold-Case Christianity* by J. Warner Wallace | *So The Next Generation Will Know* by J. Warner Wallace | *Finding Truth* by Francis Chan

Movie: *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* with Ben Stein | **Website:** Gotquestions.org

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

Passages to consider: Ephesians 6:10-13; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

1. What from the sermon is impacting you?
2. Read Ephesians 6:10-13 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 two or three times. What is God communicating to His people through these passages?
3. What do you believe about: God, Jesus, the Bible? A) How do those beliefs shape how you interact with the world?
4. What relationships help you seek God's wisdom and perspective? What is your primary source of information?
5. What Scripture have you memorized—hidden in your heart? A) What scripture do you need to memorize? (Suggestions: Ephesians 6:10-13; John 1:1,14; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; or Genesis 1:1)
6. What habits and patterns help you be rooted in relationship with God, His word, and fellow believers? Who can you help grow in their own habits and patterns?

Next Week: The Elephant in the Room (Week 2): So the Next Generation Will Know with Sean McDowell

Passages to Prepare: Psalm 78:1-8