**SEVEN CAUTIONS FOR THE BELIEVERS**

**Introduction**

The Bible not only provides guidance on the Word of God. It is the divine power to a divine end **Rom. 116 “***For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek***”**

**The word of God does the following things:**

* **It illuminates Ps. 119130 “***The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.***”**
* **It quickens Ps. 11925** “*My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.*”
* **It cleanses Jn. 153 “***Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.***”**
* **It emancipate Jn. 1332 “***If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.***”**
* **It is a lump for stumbling feet and a light to dark paths Ps. 119105 “**Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.**”**
* **It is gentle as the deer or the rain Deut. 312**
* **It is a hammer for the stubborn Jer. 2319 “***Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked* **”**
* **Its precepts supply laws for life**
* **Its examples stimulate holiness**
* **Its promises comfort when all else fails**
* **Happy is the man who loves the word of God Ps. 119127 “***Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.***”**
* **Woe to him who scorns the word for it will be his fall Matt. 724,29 “***Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.***”**

**Furthermore, the Bible also provides cautions for believers**

A caution is a great care taken in order to avoid danger. If someone cautions you that something will happen, they warn you of it and expect that you will be careful about it.

In this wise, there are seven cautions provided in the Bible for the believer.

1. **Beware lest you forget God**. **Deut. 612** “*Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.* ”

**God is love**

* He calls us sons **1Jn. 31**
* His love is everlasting **Jer. 313**
* He is for us **Rom. 831**
* He gave his Son for us **Jn. 316**
* Who shall separate us from the love **Rom. 835**
* Nothing shall be able **Rom. 839**
* We are save in His love **Jn. 1028**
* The extent of His love **Jn. 11**
* He will come again for us **Jn. 143**
* He takes up His abode in us **Jn. 1423**
* He chastens us because He loves us. **Heb. 126**
* He will never forsake us **Heb. 135**
* He sticketh closer than a brother to us. **Prov. 1824**
* He has graven us on His hands
* He has gone to prepare a place for us. **Jn. 142**
* His love gives peace. **Jn. 1427**
* He loves us as the Father loves**. Jn. 159**
* He cares for us **1Pet. 57**
* He gives us rest **Matt. 1128**

1. **Beware lest any man spoil you Col. 28 “***Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*.**”**

Paul warns us to be on guard against all philosophies, religions and traditions that emphasize humans functioning independently from God and his written revelation, as found in the Bible. Today, one of the greatest philosophical threats to true Bible-based Christianity is "secular humanism." (Humanism is a thought system based on the values, characteristics and behaviors that are believed to be best in human beings rather than any supernatural authority.) This has become the underlying philosophy (i.e., idea, worldview, belief, value system, way of life) and the accepted religion in most of secular (i.e., worldly, non-spiritual) education, government and society in general. It is also the established viewpoint of most of the news and entertainment media throughout the world.

1. What does the philosophy of humanism teach?
2. It teaches that humanity, the universe and all that exists consist only of matter and energy shaped into their present form by natural physical forces and impersonal chance.
3. It teaches that humans have not been created by a personal God, but are the product of a random process of evolution (the theoretical process that proposes how all species develop from earlier and less complex forms of life as a result of changes in genetic material).
4. It rejects belief in a personal, all-powerful and infinite God (i.e., without beginning or end) and denies that the Bible is God's inspired revelation to the human race.
5. It claims that knowledge does not exist apart from human discovery and that human reason determines correct ethics (.e."moral" principles, values, standards) of society. This makes human beings the highest authority.
6. It seeks to modify or improve human behavior through education, economic policies, organization, redistribution of resources, modern psychology or human wisdom.
7. It teaches that moral standards are not absolute (i.e., true and valid for all people, in all situations for all time) but instead are relative (i.e., dependent on the person's own beliefs and circumstances). Standards of behavior are determined by what makes people happy, brings them pleasure or seems good for society according to the goals set by its leaders. As a result, Biblical values and morality (i.e., standards of right and wrong, truth and falsehood) are rejected.
8. It considers human self-fulfillment, satisfaction and pleasure to be the highest good in life.
9. It maintains that people should learn to cope with death and the difficulties in life without belief in or dependence on God.
10. The philosophy of humanism began with Satan and is an expression of Satan's lie that humans can be like God (Ge 3:5). The Bible identifies humanists as those who have "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Ro 1:25).
11. All Christian leaders, pastors and parents must do their absolute best to protect their sons, daughters and others under their care from humanist doctrine. In doing so, they must expose the errors of humanism and instill in their children a godly contempt (i.e., hatred, disgust) for its destructive influence. At the same time, they must instruct their children clearly in the truth of God's revelation as found in the Bible (Rom. 1:20-32; 2Cor. 10:49; Jude 1:4-20;1Co 1:20, 2Pe 2:19,).
12. **Beware of evil workers Phil 32 “***Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.***”**

There is a little doubt that Paul experienced his greatest grief in ministry because of those who twisted and misrepresented the true message of Christ and those who compromised or abandoned their faith as a result. His love for Christ, the church and the true message of spiritual salvation through faith in Christ was so strong that it caused him to boldly oppose those who perverted the truth. He described those who started such deception as "dogs" and "evil workers" (**Gal 1:9)** because of the seriousness of their error and its spiritually destructive, devouring results. "Concision" (mutilators of the flesh] is Paul's expression for the rite of circumcision as taught by the Judaizers (**Gal 2:4,),** who claimed that the OT sign of circumcision (i.e., cutting away the foreskin from the penis) was necessary for salvation (**Gal 2:12**,). These false teachers had so distorted the meaning and purpose of the old covenant sign of circumcision that it had become nothing more than a useless cutting of the body. Paul states that true circumcision is a result of the Holy Spirit's work in the heart of a person when sin and evil are cut away (**Rom 2:29; Ro 2:25-29; Col 2:11**)

1. **Beware of being led away 2Pet. 317 “***Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness*.**”**

**Heb. 312 “***Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God***”**

Apostasy means to "turn away"). The Greek term literally means "standing away" from God, and it relates to spiritual rebellion, abandonment, withdrawal or turning from what one has previously believed and experienced in a relationship with Christ. It typically involves denying a once sincere faith, disowning Jesus and abandoning the body of Christ (i.e., the church community), although some who have turned their backs on a relationship with Christ may still pretend to be part of the church. Apostasy is the consequence of a willing and deliberate choice in "departing from the living God"

* To apostatize means to break off from one's saving relationship with Christ or to withdraw from union with and faith in him. For this reason, individual apostasy (as differentiated from a group, church, people or nation rejecting God) is possible only for those who have first experienced God's forgiveness and been spiritually "born again" In 3:3-7) and renewed through a personal relationship with Christ (**Lk 8:13; 6:4-5; 10:29**). Apostasy is not simply a denial of New Testament belief and teaching by those in the church who do not truly have a personal relationship with Christ. In fact, apostasy may involve two separate but related stages of rejection:

1. theological apostasy, which is a rejection of all or some of the original teachings of Christ and those used by God to write his Word (**1Ti 4:1; 2Ti 4:3**) and
2. moral apostasy, which involves a former believer willingly breaking away from a personal relationship with Christ and becoming spiritually enslaved again to sin and its lifestyle (**Isa 29:13; Mt 23:25-28; Ro 6:15-23; 8:6-13**).

* The Christian faith is primarily about relationship to and companionship with God. The Bible speaks of God as the Father, Jesus Christ as the Son and those who accept Christ by faith as God's family and children (**Ro 8:14-17**). This means that spiritual salvation through faith in Christ is personal, relational and requires our individual response. God's grace (i.e., his unearned and undeserved favor, love and spiritual enablement)-made available through the personal sacrifice of Christ-is enough to forgive and save us spiritually and to sustain our relationship with God. In Jesus' illustration about the vine and the branches (**Jn 15:1-8**), the believer (BRANCH) who remains united in relationship with Christ (VINE) is spiritually secure and has life. However, if that believer becomes spiritually rebellious or faithless toward God and chooses to break from his or her grace-union with Christ, then he or she becomes cut off from the source of life. A person who remains in this condition will, in the end, lose the privilege of living eternally in the presence of God, just as one who never accepted Christ
* The Bible gives urgent warnings about this serious and sobering possibility. These warnings are designed both to alert us to the deadly danger of abandoning our union with Christ and to motivate us to remain faithful and obedient to him. We must not ignore or treat lightly God's purpose for these warnings and develop the attitude that says, "the warnings are real, but the possibility of actual apostasy is not." Rather, we must take these warnings seriously, realizing that they apply in a very real sense to how we use our time on earth until we receive our full, complete and final salvation in eternity with God. A few of the many New Testament passages that warn us are: **Mt 24:4-5, 11-13; Lk 12:46**; **Rom 11:17-21**;
* **Example of actual apostasy can be found** in **Ex 32; 2Ki 17:7-23; Ps 106; Isa 1:2-4; Jer 2:1-9; Acts 1:25 Gal 5:4; 1Ti 1:18-20; 2Pe 2:1, 15, 20-22; Jude 1:4, 11-13**; Apostasy predicted to occur within the church in the last days before Christ returns to take the faithful in his churches from the world.
* The steps that lead to apostasy are as follows:

**a**. Believer: those who have accepted God's forgiveness and entered a personal relationship with him through faith in Christ-become spiritually unconcerned, resistant or outright rebellious. These individuals show their unbelief by failing to take seriously all of the truths, challenges, warning, promises and teachings of God's Word (**Mk 1:15; Lk 8:13; Jn 5:44, 47; 8:46**).

**b.** if the realities and desires of the world become a higher priority than the realities and desires of God's kingdom and purposes, then believers gradually cease to recognize and experience companionship with God through Christ (**Heb 4:16; 7:19, 25; 11:6**)

**c.** Because of the deceitfulness of sin (i.e., anything that offends or defies God or falls short of his standard), believers become increasingly tolerant of sin in their own lives (**1Co 6:9-10; Eph 5.5)**

**d.** Their hearts become spiritually hardened (**Heb 3:8,**), resistant and unresponsive to God Eventually, they openly reject his way, ignoring the repeated inner voice and rebuke of the Holy Spirit (**Eph 4:30; 1Th 5:19-22**).

**e.** The Holy Spirit becomes grieved (**Eph 4:30; Heb 3:7-8**), his fire is put out (**1 Th 5:19**) and his temple (i.e., the person's body and life) is violated (**1Co 3:16**). As a result, the Holy Spirit event departs from the believer's life (**Jdg 16:20; Ps 51:11; Ro 8:13**;).

* **If spiritual "backsliding" (i.e., neglecting or abandoning one's faith and personal relationship with Christ) continues on its course without change, individuals may eventually reach the point where no new beginning is possible.** That is to say, they will not be able to start over and renew their faith in God because no one is able to do this on their own apart from God's grace and the power of Holy Spirit.

**a.** Those who once had a saving experience with Christ but deliberately and continua harden their hearts to the Spirit's voice (**Heb 3:7-19**), continue to sin willfully (**Heb 10:26**) and refuse to turn from their own way back to God may reach a point of no return where repentance and salvation are no longer possible (**Heb 6:4-6;).** There is a limit to God's patience (**2Th 2:9-11; Heb 10:26-29, 31; 1Jn 5:16**).

**b.** This point of return cannot be defined in advance. The only safeguard against the danger of ultimate (i.e., full and final) apostasy is to take this warning seriously: "Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts (**Heb 3:7-8, 15; 4:7**).

* **It must be emphasized that while spiritual backsliding is a danger for all who drift from faith in Christ (Heb 2:1-3) and turn away from God**, ultimate apostasy resulting in the hopeless condition described in the previous point does not occur without constant and deliberate resistance against the Holy Spirit. Just as we are not saved by our own works and efforts, but by God's grace ( **Eph 2:8-9; Tit 3:5**), neither are we fully condemned to separation from God by our actions alone. People are saved spiritually by accepting God's grace and putting their faith in Christ; and people are condemned spiritually by rejecting (or simply not accepting) God's grace and refusing to put their faith in Christ. Refusing to have faith in God can be expressed in several ways, including refusing to believe in God, refusing to rely on God, refusing to take God at his Word, refusing to admit the wrongness of our own way, refusing to accept God's way of spiritual salvation through Christ alone and refusing to accept God's help and involvement in our lives. A person who allows his or her heart to become hardened or rebellious toward God by refusing him in any of these ways is in serious danger of rejecting God permanently
* Some who reject their faith and abandon a true relationship with God (**Heb 3:12**) may still think they are Christians. However, their spiritual neglect and unconcern toward the demands of Christ, the inner voice of the Holy Spirit and the warnings of Scripture prove that they are in rebellion against God. Because of this possibility of self-deception, Paul urges all those claiming to be spiritually saved to "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves".
* Those who genuinely become concerned about their spiritual condition and have a desire to return to God in true repentance (i.e., changing one's attitude toward God, admitting sin, turning from one's own way and submitting to God) can be sure that they have not committed the unforgivable sin, or ultimate apostasy. God's Word clearly affirms that he does not want anyone o perish or be spiritually lost and separated from him for eternity (**2Pe 3:9;).** In la the heavenly Father will joyfully receive any wayward, rebellious or lost child who truly repent and returns to him.

**5. Beware of Hypocrisy Lk. 121 “***In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.* **”**

Jesus condemns the hypocrisy (i.e., false-heartedness, pretense,

**a.** double standards) of the Pharisees, warning his disciples to be careful that this sinful trait does not enter their own lives and ministry. Hypocrisy means acting as if you are what you are not. For example, it could involve acting outwardly as a godly and faithful Christian, when in reality (in your private life or with a different crowd) you are hiding sin, immorality, greed, lust or other ungodly attitudes and behaviors. A hypocrite is a deceiver when it comes to appearing "right"

**b.** Since hypocrisy involves living a lie, it makes a person a partner or co-worker with Satan, the father of lies (In 8:44).

**c.** Jesus warns his disciples that all hypocrisy and hidden sin will be exposed - if not in this life, then certainly on the Day of Judgment. What is done secretly behind closed doors will be at some point openly revealed. This does not mean that confessed and forgiven sin will be brought against us. Rather, it means that what is hidden through hypocrisy will certainly be revealed

**d.** A lifestyle of hypocrisy is a sign that a person does not fear God with a holy reverence and respect for his character, power and judgment. It also means that a person is resisting or does not have God's Holy Spirit within them, transforming their lives to be like Christ (**Rom 8:514; 1Co 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:5**). While remaining in this condition, a person cannot "escape the damnation of hell" (**Mt 23:33**).

**6. Beware lest that come on you Acts 1340 “***Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets***”**

If you reject these benefits, now freely offered to you in this preaching of Christ crucified, you may expect such judgment from the hand of God as your forefathers experienced, when, for their rebellion and their contempt of his benefits, their city was taken, their temple destroyed, and themselves either slain by the sword, or carried into captivity. It is evident that St. Paul refers to **Habakkuk 1:5-10;** and in those verses the desolation by the Chaldeans is foretold. Never was there a prophecy more correctly and pointedly applied. These Jews did continue to slight the benefits offered to them by the Lord; and they persevered in their rebellion: what was the consequence? The Romans came, took their city, burnt their temple, slew upwards of a million of them, and either carried or sold the rest into captivity. How exactly was the prophecy in both cases fulfilled!

**7. Beware of Covetousness LK. 1215 “***And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth***”**

To make earthly gain or riches a primary desire in life is a costly and fatal error that can lead to eternal loss (vv. 20-21). We must realize that in no way does our wealth determine our worth or significance.

* The Greek word for greed (pleonexia) literally conveys the thirst for having more.
* A selfish and wrongful desire for more does not refer to providing for one's own needs and those of one's family (Pr 6:6). While part of our lives must be spent working to provide for our needs, we must be careful to invest our time, efforts and resources in becoming "rich toward God". This involves pursuing his kingdom and his righteousness (i.e., his purposes and standards) above everything else.
* Each of us should pay attention to Jesus' warning and examine whether selfishness and greed exist in our own hearts.

**8.** **Instead of Covetousness a believer should practice self-denial because this is the demand of Jesus Christ.** **Matthew 1624** *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me*

**PRAYERS**

1. Let me not forget God because anyone who forgets God will be lost. Therefore help me not to be lost;

* **by my neglecting the Word of God Heb. 23 “***How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*
* **by my despising the Word of God** **Heb. 1028 “***He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses*:**”**
* **by my rejecting the Word of God Heb. 314 “***For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;***”**

1. **Ps. 327 “***Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble;  
   thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.***”**

**Ps. 178 “***Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,***”**

**Ps. 1439 “***Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.***”**

**Ps. 1413 “***Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.***”**

1. **Ps. 1914 “***Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer*.**”**
2. **Let me O lord be filled:**

* With the Spirit **Eph. 518**
* with Comfort **2Cor. 74**
* with joy**2Tim.14**
* with fruits of righteousness **Phil 12**
* with knowledge of Your will **Col. 19**
* with good things **Lk. 153**
* and with all the fullness of God **Eph. 319**