

## 2 Peter 2:19-22

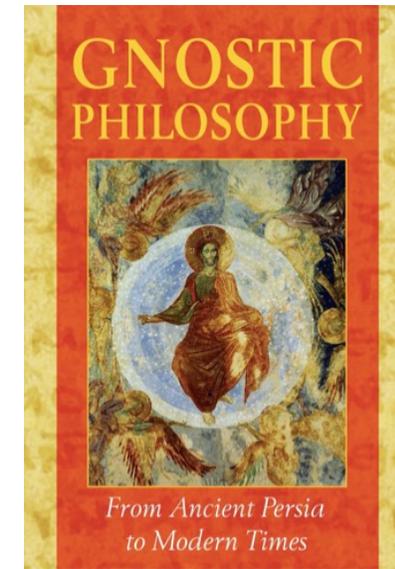
Hope in the Fight

*...Slaves and Masters / Dogs and Sows!*

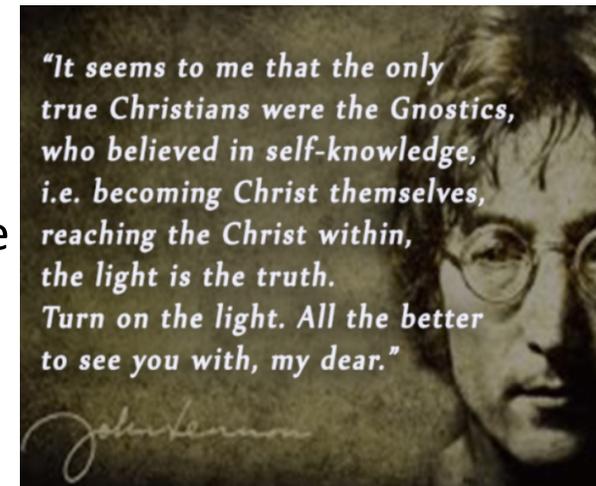


Again, throughout chapter 2, Peter is addressing the problem of false teachers, and as we saw last week, he is undoubtedly addressing the problem on the left. The Judaizers were the problem on the right – trying to mix the Law of Moses and Christianity – “***Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch***”. “Get circumcised, keep the Sabbath, keep the feast days, don’t eat pork”, etc. The apostles, (who grew up in Judaism), rejected this mix of Christianity and Judaism soundly and unanimously! They concluded, together with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, that the Gospel is about Jesus alone, ***plus nothing!***

Then, on the left of the spectrum, there was **Esotericism, Antinomianism, and Gnosticism** which were a mixture of philosophies and the mysticism of Eastern religions. The teachers of these philosophies were trying to blend in with the other Christians in the local churches, but their lifestyles were so similar to the pagans that they simply could not blend in. Plus they viewed themselves as the “enlightened ones” – the ones with a fuller knowledge and understanding that was intellectually and experientially superior to the apostles teaching. So they could not keep their mouths shut. They were busy proselytizing - inviting others to join them in their ideas and ungodly lifestyles that catered to “***the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life***”! Remember – many of them (as Peter points out in our text) thought that the more that they indulged their lusts, the more glory that God could give Himself by covering their sin-filled lives with His grace and forgiveness, cleansing them of their many blatant sins, and allowing them to continue in more of the same shameful behavior! The apostles taught that although Christians were NOT under the dictates of the Law of Moses, that did not mean that they were totally free of natural moral law, such as was found in the 10 Commands of the Mosaic Law. With the exception of the covenantal law of the strict observance of the Sabbath Day of rest – which was an important part of the covenantal agreement with Israel exclusively.



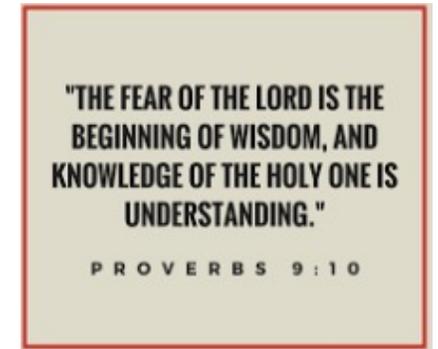
So, the apostles taught that the Law was a good, solid, and **permanent** starting point for discerning the everyday moral will of God for our lives! They taught, as Jesus did, that the Law (the 10 Commands) were the foundation of Christ's Law of Love – 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> “commands cover ***“love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind [Matt. 22:26-40].*** Then Christ and the apostles taught that the second part of Christ's Law of Love – ***“and to love your neighbor as yourself”*** fulfills the 5<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup> Commands. **[Romans 13:8; Galatians 5:18; James 2:8]**. Christ's Law did not do away with the 10 Commands, but expanded upon them! *“Control yourselves”,* was His message. *“Love people with agape love (God's love), not selfish love! Care about people and their well-being and their futures, rather than using people for your own gratification without regard for how your behavior with them will affect them!”* This message was in total contradiction to the Gnostic message which was a crazy mixture of early Hinduism, Buddhism, Platonism (Greek philosophy), and Christianity. \*John Lennon, the famous musician from the ground-breaking early rock group “The Beatles” wrote in a letter to some woman he was interested in, *“It seems to me that the only true Christians were the Gnostics, who believed in self-knowledge, i.e. becoming Christ themselves, reaching the Christ within, the light is the truth. All the better to see you with, my dear.”* Notice the idea that we “become Christ ourselves” instead of “becoming Christ-like”! It is a seemingly subtle difference, but the two are actually a million miles apart! In the Lennon point of view, I AM CHRIST (I am God). I find God within me as well as God's truth – enlightenment comes from within the self - a very well-worn idea in Greek philosophy! But the apostles taught exactly the opposite - that from the self comes primarily bad things, untruth and bad behavior, and certainly just about anything BUT the truth and good behavior. ***“For I know that nothing good lives in me”***, said the apostle Paul in **Rom. 7:18**. Trying to find ultimate truth in the far recesses of our own mind would be like pretending to discover in our brain the knowledge of a language we have never learned! It is not only unlikely, but impossible! You would think that smart people would abandon such foolish notions!



By the way – this is my word to mothers on Mother’s day, 2021. The Bible’s point of view on human nature is that all human beings come into this world with the stain of Adam’s sin upon their souls. Those precious babies of ours are primed and ready to become little savages, not saints! We have to move into parenthood with that in mind! You will not have to teach your child to be **BAD** – they will already have that covered on their own! You will have to teach them to be **GOOD**, because they DON’T have *that* covered! They must be taught how to be honest, compassionate, generous, kind, polite, hard-working, conscientious etc. \*A good analogy is that our kids must learn how to eat with manners – for instance, how to hold a spoon or fork so that they don’t look like slobes at the table when they get older. They must learn not to reach over someone else’s plate for the mashed potatoes, but to ask politely and wait for the potatoes to be to be passed to them. It will take parental persistence to teach them not to chew with their mouth open or gobble their food down like beasts! It took years of constant reminders for my mother to teach me to chew with my mouth closed – years! My older sisters helped my mom a lot with reminding me again and again during every meal – mainly because I did not want to chew with my lips closed. I *wanted to do it wrong* – wanted to make smacking sounds, and splatter my food from my mouth as I chewed, and talk with my mouth full – I wanted my freedom to eat badly to my hearts content! So I resisted. I thought the rules were ridiculous! But my mother and sisters were relentless, and finally, after many years they wore me down, and I matured a bit, until I could finally eat in a presentable manner! I could keep my fingers out of my food. I could keep my elbows off the table. I could hold a fork and work a table knife properly rather than grabbing my fork like a wrench (demonstrate). I waited for our guests to be served first. I didn’t talk with my mouth full, and so on. You see, my mother didn’t want anyone looking down on her children and despising their behavior at the table. We came from pretty rough stock, and it was her intention to break that mold with *her* family! It used to be assumed that a child’s behavior was a reflection on their parent’s **parenting skills**, and on their parent’s **character**, and even upon their parent’s **honor**! By the way, I am very grateful to her for her efforts and I am sorry that it took me so long and that I afforded my mother (and sisters) so much aggravation! It has stood me in good stead throughout my adult life and it proved invaluable when raising our two boys.



It is exactly the same way in all things that have to do with raising children. Bedrooms do not pick themselves up and make themselves orderly. Mother's shouldn't be doing it either. They should be teaching that their kids do **their own** rooms and that they do not do **anything** that they want to do until their room is picked up! When their room is picked up or the mess they made is picked up, then they are rewarded with parental approval, and freedom to go do something they want to do, and an allowance, and whatever else a parent chooses to reward them with – just so long as it is not OVER-done! The old way – my grandparents way – was that the kids did as they were told – no reward offered but a roof over their head, three square meals a day, and shoes if and when they could be afforded. Now, let me assure you that these qualities of character are not learned. They are taught. Who teaches them? The public school? Not on your life! They are taught by Mom/Dad!



It is the same with Biblical truth. When I was a boy, I thought my parents knew everything there was to know about the Bible. Both my mom and dad taught the Bible to children and adults alike. I, myself, enjoyed contemplating spiritual things. My mother always steered me to the answers I needed in the Bible. I could rely upon her and had absolute confidence in her knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. She did not leave me on my own to nurture childish questions and to come to childish conclusions. She gave me the advantage of her own knowledge and experience. She gave me confidence that there was a right way and a wrong way to look at things. She showed me that judgment and discernment and balance were valuable in life if one was to know and appreciate the truth! Both my parents had both grown up in error and ignorance of God's truth and were **so** appreciative of having learned God's word as young adults, and they deemed it vitally important to pass it on to their children! They did not depend on the church to do this but the process was central to our home life! ***"Keep this book of the law upon your lips day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful"*** (Joshua 1:8)

Peter really derides/attacks the false teachers where they live! He attacked them on the freedom they were always talking about, always pushing, and pushing, and pushing the idea of “freedom”. Their definition of freedom was **freedom from restraint** – the freedom to indulge human passions without guilt or fear! So that became their lifestyle – planning, plotting, stalking, seducing, using people, lying (because lying is the stock and trade of sexual sin). Christ had nothing to do with it. It was ANTI-Christ! There was no Christ in it at all! It was a rejection of Him and all He stood for! All that these men offered was a tragic hoax, a self-indulgent, self-serving lie! All their so-called “wisdom” was only an attractant for those without understanding – like ant poison is craftily designed to draw in the ants, only to send them away satiated and drunk on the sweetness, but without the knowledge that they are the walking dead! Peter says the Gnostic teachers were better off before they ever heard of Christ! Their guilt was only compounded by their knowledge of Him. Human lusts and impulses are a trap – an addiction waiting to happen – it is slavery under the rotten, reeking guise of happy indulgence – of pleasures! These false teachers had had the opportunity to be really free, but like Lot’s wife they turned back and were destroyed! Like a dog, they re-ate their own vomit (dogs are known to do that), and like a clean pig, they greatly prefer the muck and mire – rolling in their own unspeakable filth! That is being chained, my friends! That is having your free will stolen from you! You no longer can choose! You must indulge! You must dive deeper into it. You must! And therein lies disgrace, death, and Hell!



Set your eyes upon the truth. Eagerly read, feed, and heed it! It is what Christ-followers do! It is what we must do to survive and flourish! If we make the effort to have God’s word in us in increasing measure, then the world’s philosophy cannot attach itself to our mind and heart. The truth that we have ingested in reading and study will reject those many available falsehoods out of hand – those many fake truths that are out there trying to get in and attach themselves to our soul, will never find a foothold! Satan will not be able to deceive us, and too the world will lose its attraction because we have its measure and see it for what it really is, and, we will no longer be our own worst enemy! Spiritual health will define our heart and soul, and our communion with God will be joyful and enriching – true and authentic! He protects us from the 3-fold traps, pitfalls, and snares of 1) the world, 2) of Satan, and 3) of our own flesh that is by its own self-destructive nature attracted to excess, to addiction, and to domination! That is **slavery says Peter!** I have to agree! I hope you do too!