

# Family TableTalk

Conversation 95

## Don't Get Fooled

read

1 John 2:18-28

think

"Grandma! It's Seth. . . your grandson! Help! I'm in trouble. It's all a big mistake. But I need you to give me your credit card number so that I can pay to get out of jail!" Perhaps you've heard the sad stories of these phone call scams that fool trusting and loving grandparents into giving their financial information to a deceptive poser who proceeds to empty out their bank account. Just enough truth is given to convince them to respond to what's at its root a lie.

From time to time our local TV news station will report on these stories as a way to warn viewers about falling prey to this dishonest scheme.

In his first letter, John warns his readers about falling prey to dishonest schemers who are bent on misleading followers of Jesus out of believing the truth about Christ and into believing lies. Specifically, this is one more of the Bible's many warnings about "false teachers" and "antichrists" who want to lead Christians astray. But not only does this passage warn us about those whose mission it is to deceive, but about how susceptible we all are to *being* deceived ourselves.

What's most helpful in this passage is not just the warning John issues to us, but the secret he shares to successfully being able to spot and avoid getting fooled into believing the scammers' lies. This secret is found in three little words that appear at the end of verse 27, and again at the beginning of verse 28: "*abide in him.*" To "abide" in Christ means that we are to "continue" and "remain" in him. John tells us that we are able to "abide" in Christ because of "the anointing" he has placed on us. In other words, because he has made us his own, we have all the resources we need to know the truth and recognize the lies. But this is not something that just happens. We have a role to play as we take steps to "continue" in Christ everyday by reading his word, talking to him through prayer, engaging in fellowship with other Christians, and by our faithful obedience as his followers.

The sheer amount of the Bible's warnings about false teachers and others who would lead us astray are there for good reason. Heeding and responding to those warnings through a commitment to "abide" will keep us from some day having to utter the words, "I can't believe I fell for that."

apply

- The Bible tells us that Satan – the enemy of God and the wrecker of this world – is a thief who has come to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). His main target is the sheep who are in God's fold. That's us. He also desires to steal the truths of God's Word and exchange them for lies. He did this with Adam and Eve when he asked, "Did God really say. . . ?" (Genesis 3:1). How have you seen Satan work in today's world to steal truth?
- What are some habits and practices each of us can develop to "abide in Christ"? How can we encourage each other in those habits?
- What are some of the distractions that steal our time and attention from our need to "abide in Christ"? How can you adjust your schedule to make and take the time to focus your attention on "abiding in Christ"?

pray

Almighty God, in your goodness and grace you call us to be followers of Jesus. We know that as followers of Jesus, we are targets to be deceived, stolen, and destroyed. We know that the enemy wants to derail us from following you. Give us a deep hunger, thirst, and desire to abide in you above all other pursuits in life. May we be faithful followers of Jesus. Amen.

by **Walt Mueller**

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