

Overcoming Spiritual Boredom – Week 1
Recognizing Spiritual Boredom

1 Timothy 4:1-3

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

Today we are witnessing people who have a genuine hunger for God get involved in some very questionable and dangerous things – some would depart from the faith.

Depart – ahistemi (a-phi-ste-mi) – a compound Greek word, the first word means away, and the second word means to stand. When compounded together this word means, to stand or step away from, to withdraw from or to shrink back away from.

How does a committed believer become so seduced that eventually he or she begins to depart or withdraw from the faith?

Every believer has two innate God-given needs in their life. The first of these two needs is spiritual sustenance to feed the inner man: the Word. This required spiritual meat fulfills our desire for more understanding of God.

New believer:

1 Peter 2:1-3

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, ² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Was it hard to follow the Lord when you were first believed? Explain

Mature believer:

Hebrews 5:14

But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

When did you realize the milk of the word no longer satisfied you? Explain

The second need of every sincere, spiritually hungry believer is for **spiritual experience**. Knowledge alone never satisfies the inner craving of man for God. Man also craves to know His supernatural power. In addition to knowledge, we must have a constant flow of God's power in our lives. Paul recognized the need for the Word and power:

1 Thessalonians 1:5

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

Mark 16:20

And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

If we pit one of these against the other, though sincere, we are sincerely wrong. It is not either/or, but rather both. Has there been a time in your life when God's Word came alive with supernatural manifestations?

Explain: _____

Boredom has a lot to do with the reason people depart from the faith. In fact, boredom with the Word is the open door to deception. This is especially true when you are in an environment that has a great deal of God's Word available on a regular basis. Do you recognize when you are falling away from God's Word?

Explain: _____

Build your life on the Word. It is necessary for the Word to possess our hearts.

Job 23:12 *I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured (esteemed) the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.*

Daily interaction with God's Word is fundamental to being a Christian.

Matthew 4:4 *But He answered and said, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.""*

Overcoming Spiritual Boredom – Week 2

How to Remedy Spiritual Boredom

James 1:22-25

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

1. Apply what we have heard

Knowledge without application always becomes boring and unfulfilling. If all you do is sit and listen to the Word and never apply it, you will reach a point of over-saturation. This is where boredom begins to settle into our lives.

When boredom settles in, what are the effects on a believer's life?

There are a lot of people who attend church regularly, go to special meetings, read books, and listen to teachings via the Internet or CD. Though they have seen a lot, heard a lot, and know a lot, they do nothing with the knowledge they have acquired. This is why James commands us to be a doer of the Word.

The one who is a hearer of the Word only opens the door to self-deception. Where there is no true submission to God's authority, which includes the authority of His Word, the door is open to subtle but great deception.

Has there been a time in your life (maybe even now) where God said, "DO" and you didn't?

2 Timothy 4:3-4

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Has there been a time when you followed your own desires instead of God's? WHY? What was the consequence?

2. Earnestly Contend for the Faith

Jude 1:3

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Even before the New Testament Scriptures were finished being written by the apostles, the devil was already attempting to invade the church very slowly, seductively, and methodically with false prophets and teachers who would bring gross spiritual error into the church.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Paul uses the word inspiration, which is a compound word in the Greek meaning *God breathing His very own breath and presence into something*. Paul is saying that the written word actually contains within it the presence, life, breath and spirit of God. In light of this, the written Word is the highest form of revelation that is available to man today. While it is wonderful to have visions and dreams – we sorely need genuine manifestations of these in the church – these are not on the same level of the Word and never will be.

Have you ever been confused by contradictory doctrine? And how did you find out if it was true or untrue?

Everything we are spiritually – right now and in the days and years to come – is because of God's Word at work in our lives. If we remove the Word of God, we remove the work of God from our lives

Overcoming Spiritual Boredom – Week 3 Recognizing Deception

2 Corinthians 11:1-4

Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me. For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

We have a very strict warning by the apostle Paul not to be deceived. This is not a new warning. The phrase, “*Do not be deceived*” appears over and over again in the Bible. I’m a firm believer that deception is the #1 tool that Satan uses to bring believers into captivity and reduce their effectiveness in the earth.

Has there been a time or area of your life that deception has caused chaos in your life? What caused that deception?

There are certain THINGS WE DO AND ATTITUDES WE HOLD that tend to open our minds to Satan’s lies and make us more susceptible to the deceptions of the devil. Sadly most Christians don’t realize that deception is the root of their experiencing the curse of the fall.

Deception is a very scary thing. Why? Because it is deceptive! A person who is deceived believes with all their heart that they are right when, in reality, they are wrong. Jesus repeatedly warned us against deception in the gospels. In Matthew 24 alone, He warned us four times to beware of it. In fact when the disciples asked Him about His return, the first words out of His mouth when describing our day was, “**Take heed that no one deceives you**” (**Matthew 24:4**). You can sense the urgency in His warning. He wanted the words imprinted on their hearts and ever before them.

What do you believe is the root cause of deception?

Why is this deception able to run its course unchecked?

John 3:4 - *Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.*

Simply put, lawlessness means not to submit to the law or the authority of God.

Matthew 24:12-13

And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Jesus is saying that deception will run rampant in the last days.

Has there been a time that you let lawlessness into your life? And how did you overcome it?

To love the truth is not just to enjoy hearing it, but also to love obeying it.

Many people come to church and they love to hear good preaching and teaching but when it comes down to reality, they still love their own lives more than they love God's will (**2 Timothy 3:1-4**). We must love truth more than anyone or anything else.

Overcoming Spiritual Boredom – Week 4
The Secret Power of Lawlessness

Thessalonians 2:7 - New International Version (NIV)

For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.

This verse describes the spirit of the antichrist that will be prevalent in the last days. The power of lawlessness would be significantly reduced in the life of the believer if it weren't done so subtly. Satan is the master of deception. While in heaven, a perfect environment, he was able to deceive 1/3 of the angelic hosts to rise up against God. Jesus warned us that not only is he a masterful deceiver, but he is the very father of it.

Can you give examples of how deception has slowly crept into the church (or Body of Christ)?

Can you give an example of how deception had or has slowly crept into an area of your life? And how did you overcome it?

Paul compared the vulnerability of believers to the deception of Eve (2 ***Corinthians 11:3***). Without a doubt one of the devil's most spectacular feats was the deception of Eve. She also lived in a perfect environment, free from demonic rule and influence. She walked in the very presence of God. Causing her to rebel must have been one of Satan's most crafty schemes. He resorted to cunning and subtle tactics to corrupt her mind. By understanding his tactics with Eve, we expose his best weapon; we gain an understanding of how he tries to deceive us as well as why so many fall into disobedience.

How did Satan maneuver Eve into deception?

To put it into contemporary terms, the serpent said, “ I hear that God said you can’t eat from every tree” Is that right?

With a single question the serpent started to distort the only command, given to protect, into an unjust denial of good. By causing the Lord to appear unjust, the serpent could attack God’s dominion. God’s throne represents His authority. If Satan could pervert His righteous character through deception and distortion, then the very foundation of His authority is under question in the eyes of His creation.

With God’s character, integrity, and goodness in question, and the assurance of no harm, there no longer remained any reason for submission to His authority in the matter. Her self-will overrode the Father’s will. Eve reached for the fruit, turned it in her hand – nothing happened. The serpent must be right. She then ate it and gave some to her husband who was with her.

Have you ever made decisions based on a misconception (deception) of God’s Word? Give an Example

Satan’s mode of operation differs little today. He still desires to pervert God’s character to turn us against His authority.

James 1:16-17

Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

James wants to make sure that we would not fall to the same secret power of lawlessness that Eve did. We must carefully heed his words and settle them in our hearts; there is nothing good outside the realm of God’s will. It may appear good, but if it doesn’t line up with His will, make no mistake, there is nothing good in it for us.

Have you disobeyed the will of God because you were enticed by what appeared to be good and pleasant? Give example.

This sums it up. Learn from the first Adam’s fall, and follow hard after the last Adam’s obedience.

Overcoming Spiritual Boredom – Week 5 Exposing Deception with the Truth

John 8:31-32

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Contrary to current public opinion, there is such a thing as absolute truth, and it is found in the Bible. There is a hidden danger in our society that we need to be aware of – Moral Relativism

Moral relativism: The prevailing philosophy of our day that teaches there is no absolute truth, and that all philosophies, all religions, all opinions, are EQUALLY VALID, with no way to distinguish one as being morally superior to others. It’s also known by the name “tolerance”.

Before we can ever recognize deception there has to be truth to measure it against. Deception is a perversion of the truth. Without truth there can be no perversion. So it becomes imperative that we know the truth. If there is no absolute truth in spiritual matters, we are forced to accept contradictory “truths”.

With the saturation of the media and information technology, are there truths that you are in confusion about?

Example:

Jesus claimed He is the only truth and only way to God; that no one can come to the Father except through Him. Islam claims that Christianity is false.

How can they both be true? They cannot be true for some, and not for others – they make claims of exclusivity. Jesus did not qualify His remarks by saying, “I am the way, the truth, and the life for Palestinian Jews and Western Europeans.” He claimed to be the only way for everybody.

You cannot have mutually exclusive viewpoints be true. One must be right and another wrong. We must be willing to consider the option that though it may be difficult to discover the truth, this does not mean that truth does not exist. When we believe a lie to be the truth, we have been deceived, and deception leads to a fall.

IF ABSOLUTE TRUTH EXISTS, WHERE CAN IT BE FOUND?

If you want to find truth that doesn't change, you'll want to limit your search parameters:

1. Only look at things that have stood the test of time.
2. Only look at things that have worked for all segments of society (rich, poor, educated, uneducated, western, eastern, and everywhere in between)

At the risk of sounding intolerant...I believe that absolute truth can be found in 3 places.

1. In Jesus.

John 14:6 (Jesus said this Himself)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

How has coming to Jesus led you to the TRUTH?

2. In Jesus' teachings.

John 8:31-32 - (Jesus said this Himself)

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide (hold to) in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

How has Jesus' teachings led you to the TRUTH?

3. In the Bible

John 17:17 - (Jesus said this Himself)

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

How has the Bible led you to the TRUTH?

Overcoming Spiritual Boredom – Week 6 Knowing the Truth

2 Timothy 2:15 KJV

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 Amplified

Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.

This verse of Scripture gives us an understanding of how we are to react to the Word of God.

Our first glance at this Scripture

1. Approach: diligent; it's not casual, but serious.
2. Attitude: workmen; not lazy, but studious. It takes some energy and effort to study the Word.
3. Actions: Rightly dividing; not haphazardly, but skillfully.

Rightly Dividing - In the Greek it means to handle something with precision.

4. Study brings approval that will withstand scrutiny.

Study so that when the test comes you will pass it. It is standing up to the scrutiny that life puts on everyone of us. It's having enough of the Word in us so that we can stand up under whatever the circumstances.

Give an example of having enough of God's Word in you that you were able to stand up to the circumstances around you.

Meditation Establishes the Word in My Heart

Joshua 1:8

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Meditation means to ponder the Word, to study the Word, to imagine the Word until you see yourself being who the Bible says you are, having what the Bible says you have and doing what the Bible says you can do.

The purpose of meditation is to enable you to **do** the Word of God and bring forth fruit. It moves you from being a hearer to being a doer. Meditation will allow you to see the Bible working in your life, even when the circumstances say otherwise.

Give examples of how the meditation of God's Word has opened your eyes to the truth.

Psalm 1:1-3 Amplified - The Fruitful Tree

BLESSED (HAPPY, fortunate, prosperous, and enviable) is the man who walks and lives not in the counsel of the ungodly [following their advice, their plans and purposes], nor stands [submissive and inactive] in the path where sinners walk, nor sits down [to relax and rest] where the scornful [and the mockers] gather. But his delight and desire are in the law of the Lord, and on His law (the precepts, the instructions, the teachings of God) he habitually meditates (ponders and studies) by day and by night. And he shall be like a tree firmly planted [and tended] by the streams of water, ready to bring forth its fruit in its season; its leaf also shall not fade or wither; and everything he does shall prosper [and come to maturity].

To be like this man we must do what this man did.

1. Blessed is the man - Do you feel blessed by God's truth? And how are you blessed?

2. His delight was in the law of the Lord. Have you been delighted in the law of the Lord, even if it is hard?

3. He meditates in the Word day and night - Are you truly meditating on God's Word?

4. He who meditates will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water – thriving and prospering. When you are meditating are you hearing from God?

5. Brings forth fruit - Are you seeing fruit in your life?

6. His season - Many lazy Christians use this as an excuse for not bearing fruit. "It must not be the season." Are you being diligent and patient for God's timing?

7. His leaf also shall not wither - Do you find your passion increasing or decreasing for the things of God?

8. Whatever he does will prosper - Do you believe that you are prospering in your walk with God even if circumstances make it look otherwise?
