

# IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU BELIEVE

## II PETER 2:4-9

IT IS A COMMON THOUGHT THAT IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU BELIEVE, JUST AS LONG AS YOU ARE SINCERE ABOUT IT. BUT GOD SAYS TRUTH IS TRUTH REGARDLESS OF WHAT WE BELIEVE.

### Outline

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#### I. TRUTH WILL JUDGE THE WICKED (VS 4-6)

THOSE WHO REJECT THE TRUTH OF GOD ARE CHARACTERIZED BY PRIDE, REBELLION, INDIFFERENT UNBELIEF, AND SEXUAL IMMORALITY.

- A. PRIDE AND REBELLION (4)
  - B. PRIDE AND INDIFFERENT UNBELIEF (5)
  - C. PRIDE AND SEXUAL IMMORALITY (6)
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#### II. TRUTH WILL VINDICATE THE RIGHTEOUS (VS 7-9)

THOSE WHO SUBMIT TO THE TRUTH OF GOD AS DEFINED IN THE BIBLE, WILL BE BROUGHT SAFELY HOME TO HEAVEN BY GOD.

- A. NOT SO RIGHTEOUS (7)
- B. NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM US (8)
- C. GOD ACTS ON TRUTH (9)

1. ABLE TO RESCUE THE RIGHTEOUS (9a & 5b)
  2. ABLE TO PUNISH THE WICKED (9b)
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## IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU BELIEVE

### II PETER 2:4-9

A couple of weeks ago, before the worship service, Ken had mentioned that “Focus On The Family” was preparing a presentation on the defense of the notion of absolute truth. I commented to him that the battle for the concept of absolute truth had been won theologically way back, over and over again throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

However, he and Beth pointed out the fact that in general, most people do not want to affirm the notion of absolute truth, especially with the popularization of deconstruction philosophy and theology.

They went on to say that if we would just poll the common person as to the notion of absolute truth when it came to God, most would say something like, “It doesn't matter what you believe, just so you practice some sort of faith and are a good person.”

Their words stuck in my head. And as I started to study today's passage, it became clear to me they are right. In fact, there are many people who claim to be Christians who accept that kind of belief. The Apostle Peter faced some of the same kinds of problems with false theology in his churches as we face in ours.

How did the church become so confused? We have come to believe that everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion. And I guess that's true. However, there is something called absolute truth. And we will all be judged based on how we have submitted to that truth and conformed our lifestyles to it. Did you hear that? We can have our own opinions, but someday God will judge those opinions based on truth.

Listen, I have said this more than once, out of church I think I have put it a little more crassly. However, you get the point if I say, “Opinions are like armpits. Everybody has a couple, and they usually stink.”

Let me give you an example. There was a period of time when I wasn't feeling so well. Luining brought me to the doctor, and after all the tests were done, the doctor said that I would need an operation, and there was a chance it could affect my manhood in some way.

Luining and the doctor were talking and scheduling the surgery. I said, "Excuse me, but I think I should get a second opinion." Luining looked at the doctor, and then at me and said, "O.K. ... You're ugly too."

Let's see what Peter says about the relationship of opinions and belief.

Here is the main idea of this morning's text. **IT IS A COMMON THOUGHT THAT IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU BELIEVE, JUST AS LONG AS YOU ARE SINCERE ABOUT IT. BUT GOD SAYS TRUTH IS TRUTH REGARDLESS OF WHAT WE BELIEVE.** Let me break that down for us. Our society has come to believe that everybody's thoughts and opinions are as valid as everyone else's. And we have come to think that tolerance is the highest ideal. Our country is built on the ideal that everybody is free to believe in what they choose. And to a great extent, that benefits us as Christians. As good Americans, we must conform to this ideal. In other words, we are called to live in peace with our neighbors. In the public school system, I don't want the teachers teaching or promoting any religion, including Christianity. The market place is to be a place in which there is a free exchange of ideas. And to summarize, I think the American attitude is, "It doesn't matter what you believe or what faith you follow." That attitude makes us good Americans.

However, this attitude must never be accepted when talking about truth. When pursuing truth, it doesn't matter what anyone believes. Truth is truth whether we agree with or not. For example, let's take the laws of physics. A person can believe with all their heart that they can fly. They believe it sincerely. They are convinced of it. So one day, he goes to the top of the John Hancock Building (because that's where Oprah lives), starts to psych himself up, let's out a great yell, "I can fly," and jumps. Lo and behold, he flies, ... for about 15 seconds, ... until he is splattered all over the sidewalk. You see, truth does matter. It doesn't matter what we believe. I can

believe all I want that if I stand in a puddle of water with bare feet and grab hold of a live electric wire, that I won't die. But the moment I do it, ... I will die.

Here is an issue in the scientific community that really gets me going. Now before you get crazy and start taking sides, listen to the whole argument. For years schools have been teaching Evolution as scientific fact. First of all, it is not a fact. In order for something to be a scientific fact, it must be observable and repeatable. There are some very serious gaps in the Evolutionary theory. I don't have time to go into them all, but a good book to read on the subject is "Darwin on Trial." There are many good books out there by scientists who are moving away from the evolutionary theory.

The reason a great deal of the scientific community is holding on to the theory is because to let it go would be to invalidate their lives for the years they spent teaching and believing it.

But more importantly, they don't want to let go of the evolutionary theory because they are afraid of the alternative, that right wing politicians and Christians will bring back Biblical Creation into the classroom.

Now let me get to this point. I am also afraid of that. The reason the most consistent theory, the one that describes our human experience the best, can't get a fair hearing is because many Christians don't understand it and try to attach their beliefs to it and push it into schools with a defective presentation.

The best position out there that describes the origin of earth and human race is called "Intelligent Design." Intelligent design looks at the cosmos and the operation of the cosmos and determined that creation from the beginning had to have an intelligent designer. Now hear this. That in no way attributes the creation to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The theory could point to women from outer space or some other being. The theory simply states that based on the observable facts of our world, the evidence points to a purposeful, intricate, and guided creation.

Because everybody is entitled to an opinion, evolutionists argue against Intelligent Design because Christians continue to publicly attach Christianity to intelligent design.

I think if the scientific community and the school districts were completely honest, they

would have to admit that the non-religious view of “Intelligent Design” makes the most sense. That is what I would like to see taught in school.

I think it is up to churches, Sunday school teachers, and parents then to show how the God of the Bible is consistent with this theory of creation.

O.K. I’m done with that, but I’m not done with the church. In the 50’s and 60’s a form of this “whatever you believe is true for you” attitude found it’s way into the church. Home Bible studies became popular. Here is how people did Bible study. They opened up the Bibles, and asked one another, “What does the passage mean to you?” as if whatever they thought about the passage was valid. One person could say, “It means this to me,” while another person could say, “It means this to me.” Both thoughts could be totally contradictory to each other and the people in the Bible study would be satisfied they had done serious Bible study. Let me just say this. That is why the church in the United States is so screwed up today. Hear this because all of us have been infected with this attitude. The chances are that the Jesus many of us believe in is not the Jesus of the Bible. If we do not believe in the Jesus of the Bible, then we believe in a false god. There are many of us who may think we are Christians, but are not because we have come to believe in a false god.

There are many of us who have developed false beliefs and false theology and come to think that we are fine because we have come to think that what we believe is personal. Last week I wanted to make sure we were all warned about what happens to false teachers and people who follow them.

Let me just start this sermon out with this example. There are actually people who call themselves Christian who say that all religions are equally good and equally true. That’s what they say. Let’s just hear what Jesus said about that. “<sup>6</sup>Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me” John 14:6 (NLT).

Jesus says clearly that there are not many ways to God, to salvation, or to heaven. Jesus says there is no other way. The Bible is crystal clear about that. Now when someone who claims to be a Christian comes along and says there are many ways to God and that all religions are fine as long as people are good and follow their religion,

they are actually calling Jesus a liar. How can this be? How can someone claim to follow Jesus as Lord and Savior and then call Him a liar?

I want all of us here this morning to be frightened. We have come to accept all sorts of things as normal, and good, and right. But Peter says in this morning's text that eternal hell, eternal torment, and eternal suffering await all those who teach, accept, or follow false teaching. Think about this. We are all approaching death and we will all face the judgment. The Bible clearly says that none of us are good. I don't know about you, ... but I do not want to spend eternity in hell. The next time you hear someone say, "I think," ... or "I believe," ... or "My opinion is," you better stop and evaluate what is coming out of that person's mouth by comparing it to the Bible.

That's why Peter graphically describes in verses 4-6 that truth will judge the wicked. He states emphatically that **THOSE WHO REJECT THE TRUTH OF GOD ARE CHARACTERIZED BY PRIDE, REBELLION, INDIFFERENT UNBELIEF, AND SEXUAL IMMORALITY.** People can say all they want that it doesn't matter what we believe but someday our words, our thoughts, and our deeds will all be evaluated by the truth of God.

Before I get into the individual verses, I want you to look at your outlines. Points A, B, and C all begin with pride. When we think that we can believe whatever we want and if we think that we are the judge of if we are good or not, then we are filled with pride. Your opinion and my opinion don't mean a thing when we come before the judgment seat of God. He will judge us on how we submitted ourselves to His truth.

That brings us to verse 4 where pride and rebellion are described. In this section, it seems that Peter gives us more details concerning these three incidents than our Old Testament gives us. Peter gets his information from at least four different sources. The first of course is the Old Testament accounts of the events. The second source is from what has come to be known as the Apocrypha. These are twelve works produced somewhere between 400 B.C. and 100 A.D. The originals seem to have been written in Aramaic and then translated into Greek. They describe the period between the prophet Malachi and the time right before the birth of Jesus. These works have been accepted as official Scripture in the Roman Catholic Church. They have been rejected as official cannon in most of the Protestant churches. However, they have continued to

be revered as important in many Protestant churches. They are books that we should all read because they fill in the history between the Old and New Testaments for us.

The third source Peter uses is a group of books called the Pseudepigrapha. These were Jewish books that were about religious issues. They talked about Old Testament celebrities and tried to fill in a lot of the gaps in the biblical stories. The Jewish and Christian communities never accepted any of these books as official Scripture.

However, both the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha were widely read and a lot of the ideas were popular among the people. What is noteworthy for our study this morning is that these books focused a great deal on angels and on the end times.

Finally, and most importantly, Peter used the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as a source for his letter. When Peter uses details from these extra-biblical sources, he is not acknowledging the entire books as accurate. He is simply using from them what the Holy Spirit guided him to use. This shouldn't surprise us. The historical books in the Old Testament tell us they used sources. Some of the sources are quoted. In the New Testament, Luke informs us that he researched writings, eyewitnesses, and other sources in compiling the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.

So please don't get all worried when some person who is interested in discrediting the Bible comes up to you and says, "Did you know that Peter used the book of Enoch when he wrote II Peter?" You can say, "I'm aware of that and I'm sure the Holy Spirit directed Peter in what to use."

The first incident Peter uses in warning us against following false teachers is the incident that seems to come from Genesis chapter 6. I'm sure he uses the complete story of Satan rebelling against God and a third of the angels in heaven following him. God cast them all out of heaven. Ever since that day, Satan and all the evil angels have been at war with God. In the incident Peter describes here, it seems that some of the angels had sex with human women and produced a race of super-humans that were evil. They seemed to be bigger than life. God took this particular group and angels and sent them directly to hell.

I have always felt that Greek mythology got their ideas about gods, who appeared like humans, interacted with humans and were more than a little malevolent, from the

remnant of the stories that remained about these angels.

That brings us to the next point. Peter uses the Greek word Tartarus to describe hell. Tartarus was the lowest place in the entire cosmos. It was the place evil, rogue, and rebellious gods were sent to be chained, tortured, and punished. Evil humans who partnered with these evil gods were sent there as well. This would be very graphic to Peter's readers.

In our culture, many people joke about hell. The Bible talks about hell as a horrible place where people suffer and are tortured in darkness, separated from God for eternity. Do we realize what's really at stake when we say things like, "I think, ... or it's my opinion," that hell is a very real place and all of us deserve to go there. If any of us think we will not go to hell because we are good, ... then that's probably exactly where we are headed. These evil angels are chained in a dark dungeon isolated from everyone. And here is the worst thing about their fate. Keep in mind that Peter's readers have the picture where these angels are being chained and tortured. If that's not bad enough, ... he says that they are simply being held for judgment. What fate awaits them after the judgment? Could it possibly get any worse?

Jesus says that hell is a place where the fire never dies, and where people are tormented so badly that they gnash their teeth. It is a place of eternal suffering. It is so horrible that it cannot compare with anything we can even imagine. It is a place we should be frightened to go to.

When we rebel against God by thinking that we are good in any way, when we call God a liar by contradicting the plain truths of Scripture, we are in grave danger of going to hell. We are called to fear God. If we don't fear God, then we don't know that He is the One Who can send us to hell for an eternity. Good healthy Christianity should have a good healthy fear of God. He is dangerous.

Let's just follow that up with verse 5. Pride and indifferent unbelief leads us straight to hell as well. As I revisited this text this week, it hit me that our society is certainly guilty of all these characteristics, and sadly, many people who go to church every week and think they are Christians are guilty of all these things. I know there are many in this church who have faulty theology and are guilty of prideful rebellion, making up their

own rules for living and believing. But this verse 5 really characterizes most people who go to church. In this second incident, Peter describes the flood, in which God destroyed all human beings except for Noah and his family. Now we all know about the flood. Noah built an ark, he entered the ark with his wife, his sons and their wives, along with 2 of each animal. It then rained for 40 days and 40 nights. The entire human race was wiped out. It was God's horrible judgment on the entire human race. Are we starting to get the idea that God is a dangerous God? He does not take sin lightly.

But as I thought about all the descriptions throughout the Bible of the flood, what seems to stand out is the indifference of the people towards the things of God. In describing the situation of the world when He would return Jesus described it like this, " <sup>37</sup>When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day. <sup>38</sup>In those days before the Flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. <sup>39</sup>People didn't realize what was going to happen until the Flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes" Matthew 24:37-39 (NLT).

Did you catch that? People were totally indifferent to God's will for their lives. It's a lot like our culture. We go about making money, entertaining ourselves, and racing through everyday life. The only time people really start to think about God seriously is when a tragedy to the magnitude of "9-11" hits or if we start to experience some personal tragedy in our lives. That pretty much characterizes our culture.

The sad thing is that it characterizes the life of the church in the United States . I used to really feel sorry for people who couldn't make it to prayer meetings, or join a small group, or couldn't seem to make it to church. But over the years, I have come to think that we all make time for things we think are important. I think we go about our everyday lives, not really giving much thought to God. We say we are Christian, we may even pray before meals, ... but if we look at what we spend our time, money, and energy on, could we say that God was our first priority? I have shared with you my struggle with keeping Sabbath and keeping God as first in my priorities. In the end, I have to stand before God. I may be able to fool others. I may even be able to fool myself. But God knows that I have time, energy, and money to do what I want to do. Am I committed to following God, spending time with Him, and doing the things He

wants me to do? Listen, we are so tainted by the world, that it seems as if we have time, money and energy to do the things we want, ... but when it comes to spending time with God we don't seem to have enough time. When it comes to money, we never seem to have enough to give to God. When it comes to being humble and truthful, we are too busy trying to make ourselves look good. The point is we should start to evaluate our lives and start getting ready for the judgment.

The last example Peter uses of judgment has to do with pride and sexual immorality described in verse 6. Again, we all know the story of Sodom and Gomorrah . It wasn't only the fact that they were sexually immoral in many ways, especially in homosexuality, but it was they didn't hide it, nor were they ashamed of it. In fact, they celebrated it. Our culture is characterized by all sorts of sexual immorality. And we celebrate it. People today have sex with multiple partners as if they were just going to a different restaurant. We even have invented the words, "casual sex." We openly celebrate sexual promiscuity at events like Marti Gras, Spring Break, and we portray sexual immorality as a normal part of life on television. Think about all the heroes on television. They are all involved in some sort of immoral sexual relationship. We don't even flinch when thinking about homosexuality. We celebrate it with things like Gay Pride Parades. The Bible says that sexually immoral people will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven . There is nothing unclear about the wording. Heterosexual people having sex outside of marriage will not go to heaven. Practicing homosexuals will not enter the Kingdom of heaven. We can say or believe anything we want. But the truth Peter is driving home is this. When it comes time for judgment, it doesn't care what we think, God will judge by truth. God smoked Sodom and Gomorrah . And Peter adds at the end of verse 6 that God smoked them in such a graphic way in order that it would be a warning to all who choose to be ungodly. I know there are many people who call themselves Christians who live sexually immoral lives. Somehow they have fooled themselves into thinking that they will be forgiven by God. I know there are people who make up their own rules for living. I hear people say the stupidest things every day. I see people do the stupidest things every day. I see people claim to be good that are clearly headed for hell.

Peter wants to warn us in the strongest possible terms that God is a dangerous God and He will not play with our pride or stupidity. We need to take God seriously and

submit to His truth as spelled out in the Bible. Peter is really describing our culture. **THOSE WHO REJECT THE TRUTH OF GOD ARE CHARACTERIZED BY PRIDE, REBELLION, INDIFFERENT UNBELIEF, AND SEXUAL IMMORALITY.** Remember, the summary that Peter gives us is that people went about their everyday lives thinking they were o.k. But judgment and disaster overtook them by surprise. There is no reason for us to be caught by surprise. Let's start today. Let's start seriously studying our Bible. Let's start humbling ourselves before God. Let's start being serious about actively pursuing holiness, seeking out the will of God and doing it.

Sometimes it seems as if we are hopelessly trapped in our culture. But in verses 7-9 Peter encourages us to keep on trying because truth will vindicate the righteous. Peter encourages us with this thought. **THOSE WHO SUBMIT TO THE TRUTH OF GOD AS DEFINED IN THE BIBLE, WILL BE BROUGHT SAFELY HOME TO HEAVEN BY GOD.**

I don't know how carefully you read your Bibles, and I know that I have read this passage many times before, but when I reread the example Peter picks to illustrate a righteous man rescued from an evil world I almost fell out of my chair. He picked Lot . When I read that I said, "Hah?" As I read verse 7 I said to myself, " Lot does not seem so righteous to me." Lot chose to live in the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah , twice. And when the angels were rescuing him and his family, Lot still hesitated to leave. The city was about to be smoked by God, and yet, listen to his exit, "<sup>15</sup>At dawn the next morning the angels became insistent. 'Hurry,' they said to Lot . 'Take your wife and your two daughters who are here. Get out of here right now, or you will be caught in the destruction of the city.' <sup>16</sup>When Lot still hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety outside the city, for the LORD was merciful" (Genesis 19:15 -16 NLT). Please go back and read the whole story of Lot . I would say that from the Biblical account alone, I want to say that Lot is truly a poor example of God rescuing a righteous man. His life is a series of poor choices followed by tragic consequences. So why did Peter pick Lot ?

Perhaps because as we read verse 8 we can see that perhaps Lot was not so different from us. I am amazed at how many Christians I come in contact with actually think

they are good. I am just going to give you some examples from my life. You need to get before God alone and have Him speak to you. Isaiah was one of the most powerful prophets. When he came into the presence of God, listen to how he responded, “<sup>5</sup>Then I said, “My destruction is sealed, for I am a sinful man and a member of a sinful race. Yet I have seen the King, the LORD Almighty!” (Isaiah 6:5 NLT)

Any Christian who takes their Christianity seriously struggles with living their faith out in our culture. Church people have become good Americans and good members of society. But we have lost our way in our pursuit of holiness.

We are not outraged at sin. We have learned to politely accept all sorts of things that God hates. Let me share with you another thing I learned on Sabbatical. Television disturbs my spirit. In Costa Rica , I didn't watch television. On day I remarked to the other students that when I get back to Chicago , I'm going to try and not watch television. They were shocked and asked me why. I noticed that without television, my soul was much more at peace, and I didn't struggle as much with my spiritual life. For example, for a period of time, I regularly watched a television show called “The Osbournes.” It was a reality t.v. show that followed Ozzie Osbourne's family around. Ozzie is a 60's rock and roller who has burned himself out on sex, drugs, alcohol, and all sorts of hard living. He constantly swears and walks around confused. He makes statements like, “Don't they know I'm the prince of darkness?” I find myself laughing at how he fumbles and stumbles through life. Then I have a conflict within my own spirit. I am laughing at this stuff because it's funny. But in reality it's not funny. It's tragic and it is certainly not pleasing to God. So I'm laughing and being entertained by things that Jesus suffered and died for. That puts me on the wrong side of God's heart. You may say, “John, well you're exceptionally sinful. I don't watch that kind of stuff on television.” You're probably right. But think of the things that we have come to accept as normal because we live in a “tolerant” culture.

Now if you know me, you know I have consistently preached against a hateful and judgmental brand of Christianity. I still feel that way. However, when I look at my own life, not only do I have practicing homosexual friends and family, ... I actually like them and being around them. In some way, I have come to think their “gayness” is cute, charming, and often funny. If I really loved them, I would tell them that what God

thinks of their behavior. To be sure God loves them, but in the spiritual judicial system of heaven and hell, they are clearly headed for an eternity in hell. What I have come to think of as cute and charming, God thinks of as an abomination. I have friends who are divorced and remarried, and I often think nothing of it.

I can tell you this. I believe in Jesus with all my heart. I believe that He alone is the way, the truth, and the life. I feel as if I am pursuing holiness with everything I have. Yet, when I evaluate my life based on God's standard of holiness, I'm just as dirty as the culture in which I live. I would invite all of you to think about how good you really are. Isaiah cried out, "Woe is me," when He came into the presence of God. I think if we were honest before God, we would have to say that with as much passion.

But there is good news for people who are really humble and submitting to God's truth. Verse 9 clearly states that God acts on truth. In the first half of verse 9 and the second half of verse 5 Peter demonstrates that God is able to rescue the righteous. In the flood, God saved Noah and his family while the entire human race was destroyed. Even though Lot was not living such a holy life, because of grace and because of the prayers of his righteous Uncle Abraham, God saved Lot while He reduced the cities to ashes.

For us, Peter's point is simple. We must submit to the clear teachings of the Bible. I know that I'm not the only one here who struggles to place my thinking and behaving in line with the Bible. I have heard all sorts of crazy things come from the mouths of many of you. Quit being proud. Quit calling God a liar. When Isaiah humbled himself before God, God had an angel take a coal from the altar, touch Isaiah's lips with it, and declared him forgiven and clean. The bible is clear that if we humble ourselves and confess our sins, we will be forgiven of all our sins and cleansed from all our righteousness.

The alternative is spelled out in the last half of verse 9. God is able to punish the wicked. At the beginning of the passage we said that God is holding the rebellious angels in the pit where they are being isolated and tortured in the most horrible way, ... and yet a future judgment awaits them that will be much worse. Those of us who follow false teachers and refuse to humble ourselves and grow as Christians are being punished now, and we will face a worse fate at the judgment. Here is one way we are

being punished now. When we refuse to submit to the truth of God, He allows us to keep on going down that road. We start to think we are right and even pride ourselves on false thinking.

I know I probably shouldn't say this as a pastor, but I'll share with you my attitude. I have preached this sermon. I have shared with people personally the truth of God's word. If people choose to ignore the teaching or advice I give, I let it go. I will not argue with anyone. I will not keep trying to make you understand. As far as I'm concerned, your walk with God is between you and God. It's your choice how you want to respond to God. Let me just leave us with the words of Jerry Bridges in his book The Discipline of Grace.

“Grace first teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions. Ungodliness is usually equated with wickedness: that which is immoral, dishonest, cruel, evil, or debased ... Ungodliness, however, in its broadest form basically comprises disregarding God, ignoring Him, or not taking Him into account in one's life. It is a lack of fear and reverence for Him. The wickedness portrayed by Paul in Romans 1:18-32 all starts with the idea that ‘although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him’ (verse 21). In this wider sense, then, a person may be highly moral and even benevolent and still be ungodly. ...

What does it mean to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions? Basically it means a decisive break with those attitudes and practices. In one sense this decisive break is a divine act that occurred when we died to the dominion of sin in our lives. ... In another sense, however, we are to work out this breach with sin by putting to death the misdeeds of the body (Romans 8:13 ). ... To say no to worldly passions means ‘to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul’ (1 Peter 2:11 ). It means that we recognize these desires as ‘deceitful’ (Ephesians 4:22 ) and ‘evil’ (James 1:14 ), and thus refuse the pleasure they suggest and the acts to which they beckon us” (pages 82-82).

The Apostle Peter pleaded with his congregations to stay away from false teachers and to correct the wrong thinking in themselves.

I know many people who consider themselves to be Christians but have all sorts of

thinking and behaviors that call God a liar. I'm pleading with all of us to seriously evaluate our lives, ... because hell is a horrible place and eternity is a long time.