

#NOFILTER

We need to guard against worldly captivation, and intercede for divine revelation.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ Advances in technology have revolutionized the way people can interact with the world.
- ❖ For example, technology can blend virtual reality with real life by superimposing images and information on physical environments, using filters – layers of digital information that create highly immersive and interactive experiences.
- ❖ Certainly, this has many beneficial applications (e.g. in pilot and medical training, or navigation).
- ❖ It can also be used frivolously – for entertainment and leisure, and for nefarious and immoral applications.
- ❖ And then there's social media.
- ❖ Consider how these media filter (and often distort) reality! We get filtered version of people's appearances, lifestyles and opinions. Even the news and world events are filtered.
- ❖ In II Corinthians 3:18 NKJV, Apostle Paul uses the phrase "with unveiled face" (or, "veil removed"). He is inviting Christians to a special, glorious intimacy with God – a transformational encounter intended for all – an intimate, unfiltered encounter with Him.
- ❖ Paul calls it "Beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18). Mirrors for the Jews, Greeks, and Romans were made of highly polished metal, so it would often happen – especially in strong light – that the face would be greatly illuminated.
- ❖ Only when we see God, His Word and ourselves, with no filter, can we truly be transformed into His image.
- ❖ Only then can we be the change He's called us to be.
- ❖ Paul also wrote to the Colossians: "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8 ESV).
- ❖ Like our metropolitan mosaic, Colossae was an eclectic mix of many cultures, religions and traditions – a major trade route where busy people with diverse ideologies, customs, and agendas passed through.
- ❖ A church congregation is usually a microcosm of the surrounding community and the Colossian church was no different.
- ❖ This letter to the Colossians primarily sought to establish the all-sufficiency of Christ to a diverse church with believers who thought they might 'improve' or embellish their Christianity.
- ❖ How? By adding a filter of secularism, other religious practices, cultural/traditional rituals, and other extras.
- ❖ We, too, try to make God's Word more compatible with secular values and palatable to societal norms, or as a vehicle for socio/political activism.
- ❖ Paul sets the record straight: The Gospel of Jesus Christ is all sufficient.
- ❖ Adding to the Gospel does not enrich it, it corrupts it. You don't put a filter on a masterpiece.

KEY SCRIPTURES:

II Corinthians 3:18, Colossians 2:8

- ❖ The Barna Research Group conducted a recent nationwide survey aimed to get a closer look at the worldview of "born- again" Americans.
- ❖ Biblical worldview: believing the Bible is true and it is the foundation for all we say and do.
- ❖ Well, the survey questioned respondents' agreement with statements reflecting biblically based truths, and the results showed that only 9 percent of those who identified as "born- again" believers agreed with all the statements.
- ❖ Barna says, "Although most people own a Bible and know some of its content...many believers have trouble integrating core biblical principles to form a unified and meaningful response to the challenges and opportunities of life."
- ❖ At some point these believers were taken captive by other ideas, philosophies, and life choices.
- ❖ We need to be honest with ourselves and pray about the things which have the potential to take us captive. Some examples: materialism; entertainment; hedonism (pleasure seeking, lust); narcissism (self-obsession); ambition; social radicalization (although we should be aware of and care deeply about human and civil issues, the Gospel doesn't need us to wrap ourselves in nationalism/identity politics).
- ❖ Have you been captured by any? (Remember, ultimately, what you are captivated by has the power to captivate you....)
- ❖ As many prepare to return to school, please accept this challenge of 3 daily objectives:
 1. Become more immersed in the word of God.
 2. Pray for divine revelation.
 3. Curate the content of your life by aligning your affections (relationships, conversation, activities) with His.
- ❖ The purpose? That we would see and reflect the glory of the Lord. That increasingly each day, we will become more like Him.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Identify specific situations where you have noticed yourself/other Christians "filtering" the Word of God to make it more personally or socially acceptable. What were the reasons you/they felt it necessary to do this?
2. Review what the Bible says about its accuracy, relevance, and benefits of "taking it at its word".
3. Take the daily challenge! Keep a record of things you see in God's word. Allow Him to change you!

Prayer Time

Lord, please remove every filter between me and You. Help me to see You clearly and allow You to change my thoughts and behaviour. In Jesus' name.

Start-up: In your family (immediate and extended), who resembles who, physically and/ or in personality or behaviour?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, AUGUST 25, 2019

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

- ✓ (Reminds me/Confirms)
- 💡 (New idea)
- 🧠 (Think about)
- 🗣️ (Do this)
- ❤️ (Speaks to my heart)
- ↔️ (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
 CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD
 Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline