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Cognitive Dissonance—P3

“For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Where does the leaven of Cognitive Dissonance come from? (Remember that Cognitive Dissonance refers to beliefs, thoughts, and knowledge that are incompatible yet which “coexists” in our heads and hearts). Some Cognitive Dissonance comes from our own misunderstanding of things—maybe we don’t quite understand grace and so we mix it with rules. But other times it comes from people who have intentionally sown it into our hearts and minds. This was what had happened to the Church at Galatia: *“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ”* (Gal. 1:6-7).

Cognitive Dissonance distorts your understanding. It is sowing false information into truth to create mental confusion. Here in Galatia, people were maliciously trying to sow confusion into the Gospel – most likely mixing false teaching with Scriptures from the Old Testament, bringing the Law into the Church. In a similar way, satan tried to undermine Jesus’ integrity with Cognitive Dissonance by distorting Scripture: *“the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command His angels concerning You’”* (Matt. 4:5-6a). As at Galatia, there are malicious people who mix man’s “wisdom” with God’s wisdom to undermine the Church’s integrity. And if this “wisdom” is what you are using to build on the foundation of the Gospel, you create disorder and harm. *“If you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly,*

natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy” (Jam. 3:13-17).

What you build on the Foundation of Christ really matters. *“According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire”* (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

Hay and stubble are incompatible with precious stones. If you are mixing the two, you will produce nothing beautiful or useful, but something more akin to a head-scratching, modern art exhibit.

Similarly, if you don’t realize that works of the law are incompatible with faith (as at Galatia), you are living out this fractured life in your behavior and you are teaching this leaven in the unleavened bread of the Gospel, sowing confusion in others. Everywhere today, people are confused about even the basics of the Gospel, because of Cognitive Dissonance, largely because of malicious people trying to manipulate Christians and prevent them from being fruitful in good works.

The leaven of Cognitive Dissonance is so insidious. But we can detect it when we humbly examine our beliefs and recognize confusion in our lives. Open the Word with a genuine desire to be taught by the Spirit of God, and He will teach you. Even so, Amen.

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