

Voices & Choices – The Truth vs. The Twister

THEME: The devil twists the good things God has planned for you into terrible things that draw you away from God & destroys you.

Ads can be very subtle sometimes. They appeal to something great or grand, but actually don't deliver. In essence, they twist the truth to get you pumped up about the product, but the results are not good at all. I think about Coca-Cola with adds like "Coke adds life" or "It's the real thing". Coca-Cola began in 1886 as a "medicinal drink" that contained 2 very addictive drugs, caffeine & cocaine. In 1903, the cocaine was removed, though spend coca leaves are still used in making Coca-Cola. Today, Coke contains 34 mg of caffeine & 38grams of sugar (HFCS) per 12 fluid ounces. With Coke, the truth has been twisted. The "real thing" has fake sugar, fake energy boost & empty calories (140/serving). Coke, which is known to ruin teeth and take rust off metal, says it "adds life". But it's really an addictive, unhealthy beverage than likely diminishes life not adds to it.

The same thing is true for cosmetic ads. They suggest that their use with bring amazing, life-changing beauty and all that might result from that. But they even twist the truth with airbrushing & "Photoshopping" of their ads to give an unrealistic, unnatural image of feminine beauty. A Dove soap campaign from a few years back clearly illustrated how the truth is twisted in the cosmetic advertisement world. Beauty ads have come under increasing fire lately for giving girls false expectations of physical norms. (VIDEO)

These are two good examples of how things get twisted, oftentimes without people knowing about them and oftentimes leading to bad results. These are bad, but a far more sinister truth twister is out there: the devil, who wants to separate you from God. The skit tonight shows the devil's initial efforts in the Garden of Eden.

Now in the beginning of human existence (at the time of Adam & Eve), people lived with God in paradise. There was no work, no school, no chores, no trouble, no drama, no arguments, no fighting, no insecurities, no shame, no depression, no breakups, no broken families, no drugs, no diseases, no anger, no crime, no sin, no death. This was the perfect paradise: everything and anything that was good for you was available at any time. This was possible because God Himself was in full & perfect relationship with humans, walking with them, being with them. God gave them only one single command: Do not eat the fruit from this one single tree- the Tree of the Knowledge of God & Evil. God knew the harm that tree would do to them & He warned them that if they ate from this tree, they would surely die –meaning that they would bring sin & death into the world by eating the forbidden fruit which would bring spiritual & physical death to humanity (**Gen 2:9-8, 15-17**).

But the devil/Satan disguised as a snake was also there. He had **total hate** for God & His highest creation – humanity. So the devil twisted God's Words to tempt & confuse Eve (**Gen 3:1-5**). Despite the fact that Adam & Eve had everything available to them – they foolishly believed the twisted lie of the devil & ate the fruit and sin came into humanity.

The sin of Adam & Eve broke down the perfect relationship humanity had with God too. So after Adam & Eve, everyone has this inner, sinful urge to seek **fulfillment, happiness, intimacy, acceptance, significance and security** in anything **EXCEPT** in God Himself.

The devil is the Father of Lies (**Jn 8:44b**) & has been twisting the good things of God ever since. Take beauty & food. When God originally made humans everything was healthy, organic-certified, pesticide-free, GMO-free. Beauty was also totally natural since there was no cosmetics at the time. But the devil has **twisted** the good things of God big time now. Let's look at the beauty. Survey show that 80% of women feel *worse about themselves* after seeing beauty ads. The devil's **twisting** the concept of beauty to make people feel bad about themselves. Now 42% of girls in grades 1-3 want to be thinner, 40-60% of girls age 6-12 are concerned about their weight, and 81% of 10 year olds are afraid of being fat. So the devil twists more and gets people thee consider abnormal & unhealthy eating habits. Guess what? Now the devil **really twists** minds: eating disorders are now on the rise big time with 30 million people in US afflicted by eating disorders (10m men, 20m women). Between 2.5 and 4% of teens have either anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa. 76% of people with eating disorders are first afflicted between the ages of 11 & 20. Sadly, anorexia has the highest mortality rate of all psychiatric disorders. I'd say the devil's twisting of God's truth about food & beauty has been wildly successful lately. I think **Ecc 7:29** is dead on: We were completely honest when God created us, but now we have **twisted** minds.

Do you want this in life? Do you want to settle for this or do you want the best? The best can only be found in God (**James 1:17 ERV**) Do you want the twisted lies of the devil to trick you & drag you down? I'm telling you, it doesn't have to be like this. *Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth & the life. No one comes unto the Father except through Me" (Jn 14:6)*. Jesus, our creator & Savior, is the only Way back to God (and to the paradise we talked about earlier). He is the only way we can find of eternal life in Heaven. Finally, He is the source of truth. Tonight, I ask you: 1. Do you want the absolute best in life?.They can only be found in God Almighty. 2.) Do be lied to? Do you want the twisted lies of evil to ruin the good & perfect things of God? You can start right now by trusting in Jesus: the Way, Truth & Life!

BIBLE VERSES

Jn 8:44b The devil has always been a murderer and a liar. There is nothing truthful about him. He speaks on his own, and everything he says is a lie. Not only is he a liar himself, but he is also the father of all lies.

Ecc 7:29b (CEV/AMP) We were completely honest [& uncorrupted] when God created us, but now we have twisted minds.

James 1:17 (ERV) Everything good comes from God. Every perfect gift is from Him. These good gifts come down from the Father who made all the lights in the sky. But God never changes like the shadows from those lights. He is always the same.

Jn 14:6 *Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth & the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS/EXERCISES

1. Name some ads that seem to twist & distort the truth about a product in order to sell it. Why do people fall for these ads?
2. What did you think about the Dove video that showed how cosmetic companies literally twist & change images to give a false impression of beauty to sell products? Do you think these ads negatively impact young people today?
3. Read Jn 8:44b. Dan gave some chilling statistics on eating disorders & young people (above). How could the devil twist good things like food & beauty to get people to fall into these terribly destructive patterns?
4. Read Ecc 7:29. What are some other areas of life that the devil twists to hurt people & take them away from God's good plans?
5. Have you ever fallen victim to a twisted lie of the devil? What happened? How did you get out of it?
6. Read James 1:17. Why do people settle for anything other than God's good & perfect things? Where does it get us
7. Read Jn 14:6. Jesus *the only* source of life-truth & eternal life. How can Jesus alone help us escape the devil's twisted lies?
Do you want to accept Jesus' gift of life-changing truth & eternal life tonight? If not, what is holding you back from Jesus?