

Caveat Emptor – “Let the Buyer Beware.”

Caveat Emptor was first introduced to me in a business law class in graduate school when I was working on a master's degree in business. It is often taught during sections on contract law and based on the principle that the seller always has more information on the product or service being sold than the buyer. Thus the buyer should beware or do his due diligence before proceeding with a deal or purchase.

When this topic as a lesson title was first implanted in my mind, the Holy Spirit showed me the principles behind caveat emptor first came from the Lord. Throughout the Bible, God gave His people many warnings. The fact that the Israelites repeatedly ignored them, led to sin, disobedience, and, ultimately, their destruction and captivity. Paul gave similar warnings to the churches. They apply to us today.

The focus of the first part of this lesson is to better understand our enemy, the deceiver, and four specific areas of temptation in which he leads men astray, even Christian men. The consequences of ignoring God's caveat emptor warnings are often devastating, leading men to “fall on our own swords”.

The second part replaces Satan's lies with biblical truth to exhort and encourage our hearts and strengthen our resolve. I find it interesting that God used ‘fruit’ from beginning to end. Consider the failure of man began with misuse of forbidden fruit. Yet throughout the generations and until Christ returns, the Holy Spirit works to produce freeing fruit in our lives that makes us more like Christ.

Biblical Insights on Caveat Emptor (aka Warnings from God)

Thus, sin and death invaded God's perfect creation, and we now live “the rest of the story” with the consequences of that sin

and those of our own doing. But the Deceiver did not stop there. Today he taunts and tantalizes men with inviting fruit, the consumption of which produces devastating consequences that can destroy men and their families. Following are four such areas in which we are highly susceptible to attack. Consider each one carefully and how it applies to your life.

What the Deceiver is selling, too many men are buying...

- Lies. Veiled lies that sound like the truth. This 'fruit' looks great on the surface. So men bite and buy into the lies of the deceiver, thinking they know the Truth, now paying the consequences.

"For (men) exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator"
Romans 1:25

- Confidence. Men (mis)placing confidence in themselves believing the lie they control their own destiny. Confident "in the flesh" that, in and of themselves, their strength is sufficient. "People, despite their wealth, do not endure; they are like the beasts that perish. This is the fate of fools who trust in themselves, and of their followers, who approve their sayings." Psalm 49: 12-13 "Do not (put your confidence) in princes, in mortal man, in whom there is no salvation." Psalm 146:3
- Faith. Men build their faith on a foundation of sand unaware it is slowly sinking from the erosion of worldly, ungodly influence. Cavities form over long periods, one bite of sugar at a time. "(Jesus said) Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and floods came, and winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell-- and great was its fall." Matthew 7:26-27

- Trust. Men too often “invest” their trust in assets and net worth, blind to the fact they are one day removed from being “net-worthless”. Separate a man from his money, and you soon find whether he is a man of faith or fortune. “Let (men) no longer fool themselves trusting in empty riches, for emptiness will be their reward.” Job 15:31 “And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again, and said to them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!” Mark 10:24 Knowing Satan, the deceiver, brought down the entirety of man with a lie and a promise, how do we avoid falling prey? We replace deception and lies with the truth and promises to men who heed God’s caveat emptor warnings. What Jesus is selling (make that offering, better yet, freely giving), He invites us to ask for more.

- Truth. The Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth, so help me God. Nothing more to say. “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life.”” John 14:6a

- Confidence. Our confidence is placed solely in the One true God Who is almighty, ever-present, and all-knowing; the only Wise God. Our confidence is not in who we are, rather Whose we are! “Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our competency is from God.” 2 Corinthians 3:4-5

- Faith. Our faith is embedded in the immovable Rock, the firm Foundation that cannot be shaken nor sink. We build our houses on solid ground. Why should we build our faith anything less? “I love you, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” Psalm 18: 1-2

- Trust. We place our trust in our infinitely rich,

generous Father Who supplies all our needs according to His riches in Christ. As fathers, we want our children to trust us even though we fail them from time to time. Our Father God never forsakes or fails. Trust in that and have peace. "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path. Proverbs 3:5-6 Good news, brothers, we win and His story has a happy ending for those in Christ!

"and the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire." Rev 20:10

It may be a long time until this event occurs. Biblical prophecy and the book of Revelation tell us what but not when. Why, we ask? It all comes down to faith. The LORD God set it up that way from the beginning with the only explanation being, "Trust Me on this." Men have a hard time doing that.

I believe the Holy Spirit is saying these words to all of us. "You have done it your way up until now, how's that working for you? You've believed the lies and ate the low-hanging, pretty fruit that made you sick and could have killed you. Is that really what you had in mind? You put your faith in yourself and trust in the treasure you accumulated in your own strength. When the market crashes, you lose your job, or your wife walks out, what then will you trust and to whom will you turn? Will you make even more bad choices in which hopeless men indeed fall on their own swords? Come to Me. I AM."

Brothers, God is so faithful. He warns us against all in the world that can harm or kill us. AND He provides every possible means of help through, support during, escape from, detours around, and bridges over the evil schemes and deceptions of our fierce, relentless enemy whose time nears an end.

We are never in so deep, He cannot reach down to us. We are never so far away, He loses sight of us. And when we turn to Him, He runs to meet us with outstretched arms and smothers us with His kisses, just like the father of the prodigal son. "My son is home," He rejoices. "He was dead and is alive again; lost but now found." And they began to celebrate. (Luke 15:24)

Duly warned, fully persuaded.

Walter