

As we begin 2022 we need to know that...

- This year we will encounter false teaching - in our friendship and family circles, in our areas of ministry
- This has been the reality for every generation, every year, since Jesus was resurrected and will be the reality until he returns! - **2 Timothy 4:1-4**
  
- False teaching always takes aim at core teachings of the Christian faith, which is why New Testament authors repeatedly defended core teaching such as:
  - The authority and inspiration of Scripture - **2 Timothy 3:14-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21**
  - The sinfulness of man and the holiness of God - **1 John 1:5-10**
  - The humanity and deity of Jesus - **1 John 4:2-3**
  - The atonement (what Jesus accomplished on the cross) - **Hebrews 10:26-29**
  - The definition of the gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ - **1 Corinthians 15:1-5**
  
- Christians are called to follow the example of the apostles and combat ideas - **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**
  - With gentleness - **2 Timothy 2:24-26,**
  - With the word of God, prayer and the full armor of God - **Ephesians 6:10-20**

At our Ministry Leader Training sessions, we attempt to train our leaders...

- So that you have correct expectations and are not angered or surprised by false teaching.
- So that you are alert to false teaching and don't drift away, personally
- So that you are prepared to address false teaching and help prevent others from drifting away.
  - **Hebrews 2:1-4**

---

### Today's Topic: Progressive Christianity

Progressive Christians tend to avoid absolutes and are typically not united around creeds or belief statements. Because of this it may be more helpful to look for certain signs, moods and attitudes towards God and the Bible when trying to spot it. For example, Progressive Christians view the Bible as primarily a human book and emphasize personal conscience and practices rather than certainty and beliefs. They are also very open to redefining, reinterpreting, or even rejecting essential doctrines of the faith like the Virgin Birth, the deity of Jesus, and his bodily resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

- **What clues alert us to people's shift towards Progressive Christianity?**
  - Social Media posts
  
  - People reading / quoting / tweeting Progressive Christian ideas and authors
  
  - The word "Deconstruction"
    - "Deconstructionism is the process of systematically dissecting and often rejecting the beliefs you grew up with. Sometimes the Christian will deconstruct all the way into atheism. Some remain there, but others experience a reconstruction. But the type of faith they end up embracing almost never resembles the Christianity they formerly knew."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Childers, Alisa. Another Gospel? A Lifelong Christian Seeks Trust in Response to Progressive Christianity, p 8.

<sup>2</sup> Childers, p 24.

- Famous Deconstruction stories
      - Rhett & Link
      - Joshua Harris
    - <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/4-causes-deconstruction>
  - People Sharing Statements and Concepts like these<sup>3</sup>:
    - Jesus is a model for living more than an object of worship.
    - Affirming people’s potential is more important than reminding them of their brokenness.
    - Gracious behavior is more important than right belief.
    - Inviting questions is more valuable than supplying answers.
    - We should care more about love and less about sex.
    - Life in this world is more important than the afterlife.
  - <https://www.alisachilders.com/blog/5-signs-your-church-might-be-heading-toward-progressive-Christianity>
  - Websites to check out: [www.progressivechristianity.org](http://www.progressivechristianity.org); [www.evolvefaith.com](http://www.evolvefaith.com)
- **“Who” is susceptible to Progressive Christian teaching?**
    - Everyone who does not firmly understand AND embrace God’s character and story as revealed in Scripture.
  - **“What” are the key reasons people often deconstruct or slip into Progressive Christianity?**
    - Church Hurt / Abuse (eg. The Rise and Fall of Mars Hill Podcast)
    - No Safe Place to Doubt
    - The Moral Demands of Historic Christianity - Jan Hatmaker, Sarah Bessey, Nadia Boltz-Webber, Matthew Vines,
    - Trouble with the Bible - Rachel Held Evans / Brian Zahnd / Greg Boyd / Brad Jersak / Rob Bell / Peter Enns
    - An experience of suffering
  - **“How” should we prepare ourselves to engage with Progressive Christian Ideas.**
    - **Expect** that you will encounter people who are drifting into Progressive Christianity.
    - **Educate** Yourself
      - Keep Studying the Truth
      - Learn about Progressive Christian Ideas.. Read books, listen to podcasts.
        - Another Gospel? by Alisa Childers<sup>4</sup>
        - The Ten Commandments of Progressive Christianity by Michael Krueger
        - The Alisa Childers Podcast
        - Apologetics Canada Podcast
      - Practice verbalizing responses to Progressive Christian ideas and objections.
    - **Engage** thoughtfully and prayerfully with people who may be drifting away.
      - Pray a lot.
      - Examine the validity of ideas rather than attacking people.

<sup>3</sup> Kruger, Michael. The Ten Commandments of Progressive Christianity.

<sup>4</sup> Email [ktoews@northview.org](mailto:ktoews@northview.org) if you want a template for taking notes on this book to discuss with others.

- Encourage people to seek answers and recommend resources that match their specific concerns & questions, and give them space to process.
- Find ways to speak about your beliefs indirectly, without necessitating a response.
- Remain friendly and warm, even if they rebuff you.