

**Transforming Daily**  
*“ . . . in all wisdom and spiritual understanding . . . ”*  
*Colossians 1:9*

The book of Colossians is considered one of the best treatments of Christology in the Bible. Paul lays out a great defense for the efficacy of the life and work of Christ for salvation. Part of the reason for the defense was to thwart the false teachings of what some scholars call an early form of Gnosticism. The primary tenet of Gnosticism is secret “knowledge” from the Greek word “gnostos,” know, or “ginosko,” to know). So it was very important for the Galatians to “know” what they believed and why they believed it. In part and simply put, the Gnostics believed that one had to have special knowledge to be saved. Salvation wasn’t just for anyone. Their teaching didn’t convey a right type of exclusiveness (I Am the Way the Truth and the Life . . . John 14:6), but a type of elitism. Again, this is very oversimplified. Gnosticism is very complex in all its tenets. It is a false teaching, but nonetheless complex.

As it is with all false teachings, they exist to undermine truth. And all truth is God’s truth. So by transitive property, Gnosticism moves to undermine the truth of God. Though the 21<sup>st</sup> century Christian may not have to face first century Gnosticism, the Christian does have to deal with the claims of false teachings in other forms. That begs the question, “How does one defend oneself from a false teaching or teacher?” I subscribe to the old adage, “a good offense is the best defense.”

The best way a Christian can defend them self from any false teaching is to know the truth. As truth forms the backdrop for life’s decisions and spiritual discipline, false teachings will become vivid and unmistakably identifiable in comparison and contrast against that backdrop. So the simple answer to the matter (if one exists) of knowing what is false is to know truth. Therefore one of the assaults of false teachers on truth is to claim that there is no absolute truth, but that truth is relative. If one is not careful, they can easily buy into that claim. There is absolute truth and it is God’s truth, but just like everything else sin touches it has perverted the one’s perspective to what is righteous and what is unrighteous, that is in this context, what is true and what is false.

The reason that false teachers’ claims for relative truth rather than absolute truth are so easily accepted by some is because of personal experience. Everybody has a personal experience, and so that personal experience becomes the litmus test against God’s Word. Once again, oversimplified, usually an individual takes the Bible and runs it through their life as a proof grid and that produces something personalized of the Bible, but nonetheless perverted. Whereas the appropriate way to handle God’s Word is to use God’s Word as the proof text through which one runs their life in order to be transformed to the image of Christ (truth) by the renewing of their mind. This is all the more reason for the believer to wrestle and agonize with the Word of God that he or she might be filled with all wisdom and spiritual understanding.