

## Twisting The Truth – Session 2: All Is Not As It Seems

### Series Background

The CTU (Changing Truth Unit) gains a new member and works to train Agent Bender to become a valuable member of the group.

Each session in this series begins with Agent Bender learning new ways to succeed in giving the world new ways to think about what has always been God's will.

Andy Stanley follows that with a 30-minute teaching about what the truth has always been and what it always will be.

Session 1 – The Source of Deception  
Session 2 – All is Not as it Seems  
Session 3 – Says Who?  
Session 4 – Facing Forward  
Session 5 – It's Only Physical  
Session 6 – It's No Mistake

You know how amazingly weird it is — moments of clarity followed suddenly by moments of insanity. We may know the right thing to do, yet we go out and do the exact opposite. Why is that? Is something wrong with us?

Or could it be there is an invisible world impacting our visible world? Is there something we cannot see influencing everything we can see?

The Bible's answer is that, yes, there is an unseen world affecting our lives. It is all around us. It impacts every single thing we do, everything about us. It affects all our relationships. It influences our thinking, our attitudes, and our decision-making. It colors our perspectives on finances, on morality, and on how we do business. And it can actually be life-threatening — physically, emotionally, and relationally.

### Background

When Jesus accused the religious leader (in John 8) of belonging to Satan — whom He called “a murderer” and “a liar” — He was foreshadowing a tragic fact: These same religious leaders, under Satan's deceptive influence, would soon murder Jesus by plotting to have Him crucified.

The invisible world would do its work. Deception would lead to death, fulfilling Satan's destructive agenda.

About thirty years later, the apostle Paul showed how fully he understood what Jesus had taught about this invisible world. Paul was writing letters of instruction and counsel to Christians in the new churches scattered across the Roman Empire, teaching them about their relationships and their conduct and how to live. He told them what *not* to do and what *to* do. And Paul emphasized the dangers coming our way from this unseen world.

### Discussion Starter

What is something that you have heard lately that was twisted?

What is something that was true that someone took and twisted for his or her purpose?

### Video Overview

In his letter to Christians in Ephesus, Paul told them, “Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against *the devil's schemes*” (Ephesians 6:11).

Paul, who wrote much of the New Testament, believed that there is a devil — an individual personality — who has *schemes*. And Satan's strategy behind those schemes is simple: Take

what is true and twist it. Take what is evident and distort it. Change it just enough to lead people astray.

For example: Our appetites are good things, but Satan twists them to where those appetites become addictions. Satan twists our desires and our appreciation into things like greed and jealousy and lust. Satan twists people's views of God so that they get angry at him, make rash decisions in their anger and then blame God for the consequences.

Satan has schemes, plans, a strategy. And when you begin factoring this into your own experience, there is a lot to learn.

Paul goes on to say, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).

*Our struggle is not against flesh and blood.* This is so helpful when you are in the middle of some relational issue. It is not just your spouse that is the problem. It is not just your daughter or your son that is the problem. It is not just your boss or your coworker that is the problem. It is not just you that is the problem. Paul is telling us, “Remember to factor this in: It is not just what you see. What you see is being impacted by an invisible realm — dark powers, spiritual forces of evil.”

You may be skeptical about this. If so, that is understandable. After all, it is invisible! Besides, we tend to have our own explanations for the struggles and troubles people get into.

But every once in a while, we see something or hear about something or read about something, and we think, “That is just evil.” Ultimately it cannot be explained without factoring in Satan.

## Discussion Questions

1. From your observations, how has our world been affected by twisted thinking?
2. How have you fallen victim to twisted thinking in the past? Are there times when you have looked back and asked, "What was I thinking?" How were you led astray?
3. If it is not because of an evil entity called "the devil," how do people account for twisted thinking?
4. Read Ephesians 6:12. Do you agree that we struggle not only against what we can see, but also against unseen forces? How does this fact affect some of the current conflicts you are experiencing?
5. According to Ephesians 6:13 – 17, how can you protect yourself from twisted thinking?

## Mileposts

- Satan's destructive and deceptive strategy includes many schemes that attempt to twist the truth.
- Though Satan is invisible, his destructive campaign against us inevitably brings struggle into our lives.
- The degree of evil we see in our world is a compelling argument for Satan's destructive and deceptive power.

## Moving Forward

As you more clearly recognize the power and influence of Satan's deceptions, Proverbs 30:8 is a good prayer: "Keep false hood and lies far from me." Another good request to pray regularly is this: "God, help me see as you see."

Think about the most important struggles and difficulties you are facing. They may include temptations to sin, as well as difficulties in your marriage, family, other relationships, finances, or work. Think about what you have learned in so far in "Twisting the Truth" regarding Satan and his opposition to us. How should that influence your perspective on your personal struggles? Write out the most important things you need to remember about what you have learned.

## Changing Your Mind

God's Word is full of reality checks about our lives. The following passage is one of them. Meditate on it using a reminder of our true enemy.

*Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.  
For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,  
but against the rulers, against the authorities,  
Against the powers of this dark world  
And against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

## Preparation for Session 3

- One of Satan's biggest twists has to do with authority. Read Romans 13:1. What response to "governing authorities" are we told to have? What does it involve? What reason for this response does Paul give? What is the most important element in how God wants us to view governing authorities?
- Read Romans 13:2 – 3. What are some common ways in which we might "rebel against ... authority"? Why is this the same as rebellion against God? What is the easiest way to avoid trouble - and God's judgment – in this area? And what would that mean in practical terms in your life?
- Read Romans 13:4. What description is given twice in this verse for someone in authority? What is the purpose of this authority in God's eyes? Does this description apply to all human authorities? Why or why not?
- Read Romans 13:5. Paul gives two reasons here for submitting to authority. What are those reasons? Is it enough to obey authorities just to stay out of trouble? What do you think goes into having a clear conscience with regard to the authorities over us?
- Read Romans 13:6 – 7. Paul mentions a specific aspect of submitting to authorities. Is this particular area one about which you have a clear conscience? Also, Paul repeats a description of authorities that he gave twice in verse 4. What is it? Who do you believe it is so important for us to have this perspective about human authorities?