

You Smell Like Broccoli Soup

By Jim Elliff



My precocious and normally charming five-year-old granddaughter hugged me this week, then paused and said, “You smell like broccoli soup.”

She flitted off and left me wondering how that could possible be.

I shared this with her father who laughed with me and said that she had said the same thing about him. Since neither of use broccoli aftershave, or had ingested broccoli recently, we surmised that the smell was more about her nose than our clothes.

This incident was a reminder however. What people think about the world that surrounds them is often wrong. Perceptions can be skewed.

Perceptions

We all wear glasses colored by our own experiences, biases, and fears. We can believe lies rather than the truth as it is given to us in Christ. If so, we need a new prescription.

As the children of Israel came close to the Promised Land after crossing the Red Sea in an amazing deliverance, they sent 12 spies into the land of Canaan to survey it prior to their anticipated entrance. Ten of those spies gave a report that claimed the tribes of Israel were unable to conquer such a people as the Canaanites. “We are like grasshoppers and they are giants, so we cannot possibly win” said the spies. There were giants, but their conclusion was entirely wrong. Only two spies believed they could overcome and take over the land God promised. The majority prevailed and God sent them back into

the wilderness for forty years, one year for every day they had spied out the land, until all the nonbelievers died. Then they went in to conquer, forsaking the lie and believing the truth.

How do we know what is true as Christians versus what is false? We listen to God. The Bible is where we find that truth that can correct deceptive perceptions.

That’s a Lie

Several years ago, another pastor in our church waited outside in the hot Florida sun for me to come out and join him for a trip to a restaurant. I was stalled by a telephone call in my office by a man who was trying to get our church to support his work. He was likely a genuine believer seeking help for his venture, but we did not have extra at that time to give, nor was it our procedure to make those decisions on the phone. And, I was in a hurry to get off the phone. But he would not get off the line. When I finally got clear, I went to the parking lot and into the scorching car where my sweating associate was waiting. “You just have to get angry with those people to get them off the line,” I snapped. Without a moment’s pause, my fellow pastor said, “That’s a lie.”

That stung. And he was absolutely right. The truth is that I did not have to become angry to get him off the line. James asserts, “The anger of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God” (1:20).

There are many lies that believers find too easy to believe. But you may be reading the situation entirely wrongly, no matter what your senses seem to tell you. And the consequences may be worse than telling your hard-to-offend grandfather that he smells like broccoli soup. That brought a laugh and nothing more, but other misperceptions can cost you dearly.

What does the Bible teach us? That’s the truth.