

EXTENDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD...ONE PERSON AT A TIME.

ONE-TO-ONE[®]

SUMMER 2018

WHAT
IS
TRUTH?



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ONE-TO-ONE®

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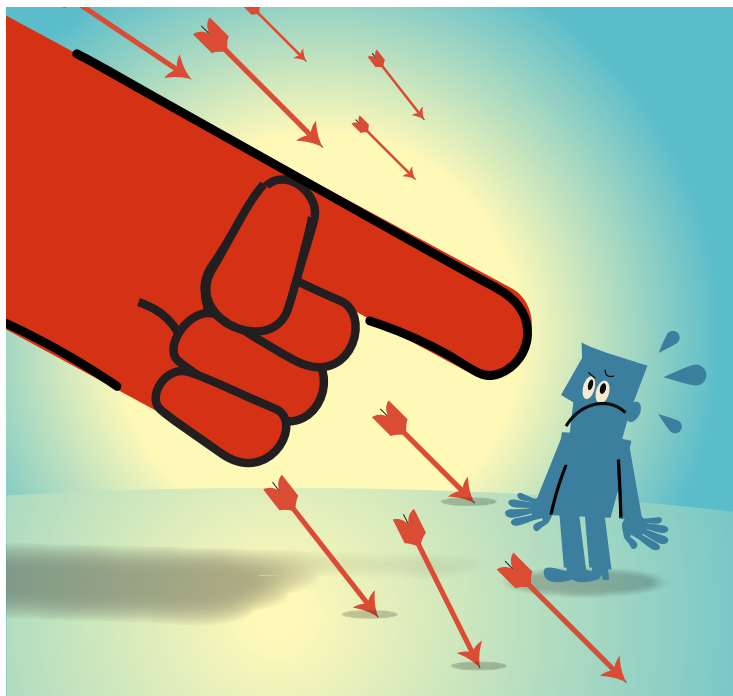
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From the Editor

SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE?

BY STEPHEN SIMPSON



It doesn't take a prophet to be critical. What is our motive for declaring the Gospel?

WE LIVE IN A TIME WHEN too many people believe that objective, authentic truth is a myth. This grave deception has lead many people over the cliff and into destruction. Some will declare authoritatively, "There is no such thing as truth!"

The wise response to such declarations should be, "*Is THAT true?*"

I've heard it said that "Facts don't care about your feelings." As followers of Jesus, commissioned by Him to preach the Gospel and make disciples, we are called to tell the truth, regardless of cost. Our mission at CSM is, "*Embracing the truth with our lives.*"

Recently, the Lord spoke to me about the "whole truth" from Ephesians 4, where the apostle Paul describes the gifts that Jesus

has given to us as we extend His Kingdom:

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:11-16).

Truth defeats deceit and

trickery. But Paul tells us that the key to effectively communicating saving truth is the godly motivation behind it: speaking the truth in love. As I read this passage, I sensed the Lord saying, "Truth that is not spoken in love is not the whole truth." Truth spoken apart from love brings hopelessness and condemnation, rather than conviction and redemption.

Our late friend Dr. Dow Robinson said, "Some people think they are prophetic when actually, they just have a critical spirit!" Our hope is that we can speak truth in a way that brings life to all who hear it. In this issue of *One-to-One*, we are honored to feature four outstanding teachers who "walk the talk" with integrity and love. I commend their articles to you. **121**

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Keynote

CHARMING THE SNAKE

BY CHARLES SIMPSON

Can Our Culture Be Cured From Its
Inclination to Gullibility?

IT IS DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS TO BOLDLY CHALLENGE A CULTURE, BUT that is often what prophets are called to do. They must love God and truth more than their own lives. Jeremiah was a true prophet among false prophets and is often called “The Weeping Prophet” for good reason. Jeremiah was the major prophet in one of Judah’s most tragic eras and he saw it devastated by Babylon (circa 627-586 BC). He was a truth-teller in a time when most leaders and prophets were liars and self-serving.

Jeremiah 8:17 records this Word of the Lord to Judah: “For behold, I am sending among you serpents, adders which cannot be charmed.” Like today, snake charming was practiced in Jeremiah’s time as well.

Snake charming is often associated with India, but goes back much further and was spread

more widely. We know that it existed in Egypt. The serpent was used as a symbol of the throne and as a religious symbol in many places. Serpent gods were symbols of fertility, wisdom, and protection; they were therefore worshipped. By worshipping serpents, those who did thought that they could appease that “god”. That kind of thinking continues to exist today.

WHO IS BEING CHARMED?

Serpent charming is the notion that a snake, often a cobra, can be hypnotized with music. The “charmer” plays a type of flute, sways back and forth seemingly inducing a hypnotic state. In fact, the snake cannot hear the music but can detect the vibrations and is moving with the instrument. The snake often strikes but has most often been defanged and the poison removed. In 1972, India outlawed the practice based upon animal cruelty but there remains thousands of “charmners”.

Who is being charmed? Not the snake! It is those who believe in the snake, watch the dance, hear the music, and watch the skillful charmer. It is those who are beguiled, deceived, hypnotized, and oblivious to the poverty, disease, and other conditions that surround them because of idolatry.

When obedience to the Lord God is taken from the culture, humanity becomes vulnerable. The snake will not be appeased or charmed in his drive to destroy.

Judah of Jeremiah’s time had degenerated into the worship of Baal and other false gods that promised fertility, protection, wisdom, and other benefits. They had hewn out “Cisterns that could not hold water” (see Jeremiah 2:13). The religious and political charmers were in charge (see Isaiah 3:12). The leaders had charmed the people with words that the people wanted to hear (see Isaiah 30:10). But false guidance would lead to a destructive end. Nice words and music do not charm the snake; only the observers.

We know that the serpent is a symbol of evil from the beginning. His cunning serves seduction and destruction. When obedience to the Lord God is taken from the culture, humanity becomes vulnerable. The snake will not be appeased or charmed in his drive to destroy. The serpent, a fallen angel, was from “before time”. This enemy is self-serving and uses self-serving to seduce and charm those who place self above God.

CAN INTELLIGENT PEOPLE BE CHARMED?

Another question would be, can Christians be charmed? Several years ago, I told a Christian judge in England that there were Sharia courts in England. He scoffed at the very idea. Now we know that there are scores of them and that they have a different view of women, child marriage, female genital mutilation, and numerous other issues. (That happens in other Western countries as well, including the United States.) Much of Europe has been charmed.

Did you ever wonder how a feminist who believes in abortion could collaborate with a Muslim extremist? How do these groups collaborate with those of opposing views? The answer is simple; they both get what they want. It is an age-old method of the enemy: if you want to use or seduce, give them what they want. When *want* overrides *truth* the trouble begins.

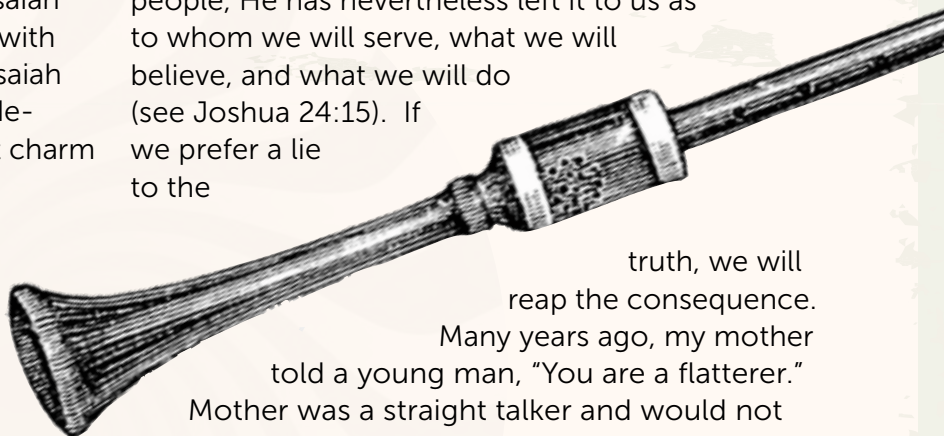
That can happen to otherwise intelligent people. And these same people come to believe that appeasing evil charms the serpent, but evil cannot be charmed. Ask Neville Chamberlin how appeasement worked with Adolph Hitler. Like the ancient parable teaches, the camel doesn’t just want to get “his nose in the tent”—he wants the entire tent and you out of it. Look at what has happened to Christians in some countries

Intelligence without God is a formula for deception and defeat. People have a choice and a free will created in the image of God. Though God is Sovereign and rules in the affairs of all people, He has nevertheless left it to us as to whom we will serve, what we will believe, and what we will do (see Joshua 24:15). If we prefer a lie to the

truth, we will
reap the consequence.

Many years ago, my mother
told a young man, “You are a flatterer.”

Mother was a straight talker and would not listen to less. She was hard to lie to; I tried that myself with poor results. When one prefers “nice” to true, that is what they get, but the results are often catastrophic. We can only be



"charmed" if we choose to be. Going under hypnosis is voluntary.

THE CURE

Can our culture be cured from its inclination to gullibility? All things are possible with God; nothing is too hard. But from our vantage point, it will not be easy. Remember, Jeremiah is called "The Weeping Prophet" for good reason; decline is difficult to watch. But, there are some things that we *can* do:

- **Get serious about prayer for the nation.**
- **Walk in the fear of God and obedience.**
- **Love the truth more than self and stay in the Word of God.**
- **Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit; we need His power in order to be bold.**
- **Ask for discernment and wisdom from above.**
- **Pray for our leaders and for righteous government.**
- **Stand with those who have the courage to speak truth.**
- **Collaborate with those who take righteous positions.**
- **Be friends with those who build your faith.**
- **Pray for those who suffer for their faith.**

If we do these things as the Lord directs, we can be a light in the darkness. We must get our light from under the bushel and into the street, home and workplace.

Remember, appeasement and compromise do not work. We can love our enemy and those who disagree without ignoring or diluting the truth. What took down Judah and other nations can take us down if we fail to humble ourselves before God and His truth. We do not know all the truth and that should move us to seek the One who is Truth. What we do know to be true, we must embrace with our lives daily. There are those today who love the truth more than self. Many have died for love of truth and others are willing. But our best efforts will not produce salvation. We need Jesus; He alone can save us!

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CHARLES SIMPSON is Editor-in-Chief of *One-to-One* Magazine. He ministers extensively throughout the United States and among the nations. In 2018, he celebrates his 81st birthday and 63 years of ministry.



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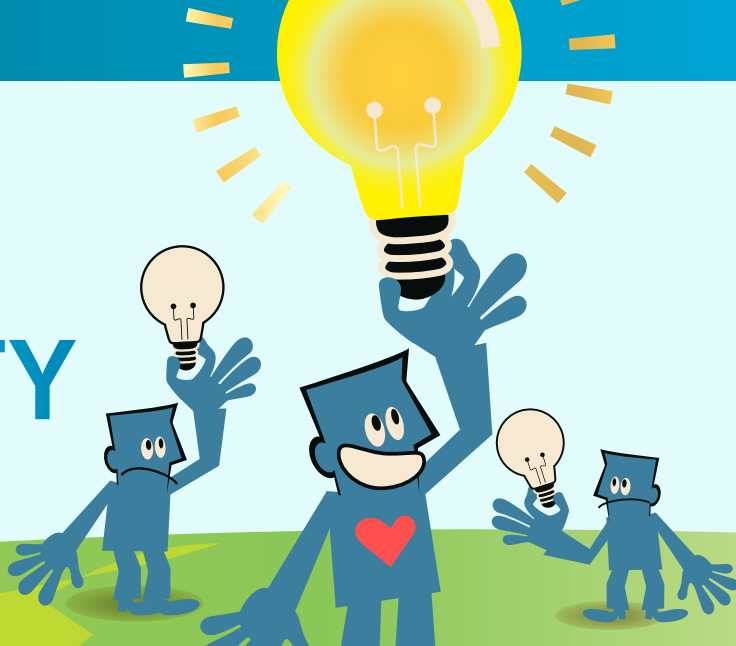
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Wisdom

THE KNOWABILITY OF TRUTH

BY TIM PARISH



Understanding begins in the heart, not simply with your IQ

LAST YEAR, I TOOK MY TEENAGE sons to see the film *Assassin's Creed*. I am skeptical of any movie that has its genesis in a video game, but it was a chance to get away from work and relax with the boys. Happily, to my surprise, it turned out to be a great "discipling moment" as it was an opportunity to discuss the postmodern view of truth. In the film, each new initiate to the guild of assassins must go through an initiation as follows:

Assassin: "Where other men blindly follow the truth, remember..."

Initiate: "Nothing is true."

Assassin: "Where other men are limited by morality or law, remember..."

Initiate: "Everything is permitted."

Assassin: "We work in the dark to serve the light. We are assassins."

The Creed's Maxim is "**Nothing is true, everything is permitted.**"

After the film, my sons and I had a great discussion comparing the movie's view of truth (which, sadly, reflects accurately many in our culture) to Jesus' view of truth. I reminded them of the scene in John 18, immortalized in Antonio Ciseri's painting, *Ecce Homo*, where Jesus

says: "For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." And Pilate responds, "What is truth?" (John 18:37-38).

Jesus affirmed the existence of truth and even made the bold assertion that everyone on the side of truth listened to Him. Pilate, by contrast, questioned the existence and definition of truth, sounding eerily like an initiate in *Assassin's Creed*.



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In the conversation with my sons, I explained that the Creed's Maxim would actually be accurate if there wasn't any truth. If it were true, it would be correct. The obvious problem with the Maxim, however, is that it is clearly self-defeating. It

claims itself to be a truth statement while at the same time denying that there can be any truth statements.

Now, lest you think this is a peripheral, esoteric philosophical debate, you should know this view of truth is enormously popular in the culture right now. If you don't believe it, pick up any newspaper or look at any newsfeed from your smart phone and you will see it. People are constantly saying things like: "There is no objective truth." "No one knows the truth." "What might be true for you isn't true for me." Each of these statements, like the Creed's Maxim, are self-defeating.

In a recent article for CNN.com entitled "Why I am a Muslim," Reza Aslan argued that he was a Muslim, not because Islam is "truer" than any other religion (it isn't), but because it gave him a "language" to express his faith. ¹ The underlying idea was "no religion is truer than any other religion." Which is another way to say, "We can't really know objective truth."

So, I asked my sons why we as a culture are so quick to dismiss the idea of truth? Could it be an attempt to give ourselves, in the words of the *Assassin's Creed*, the permission to do what we want to do? Could our denial of the existence of truth have less to do with our legitimate questions and more to do with our desire to cast

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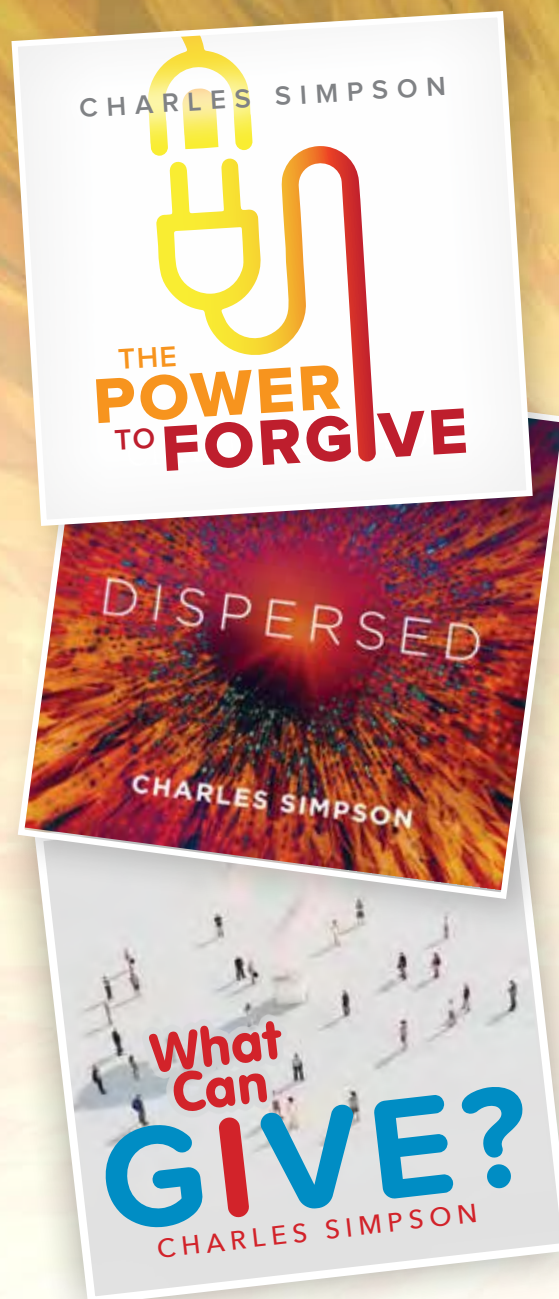
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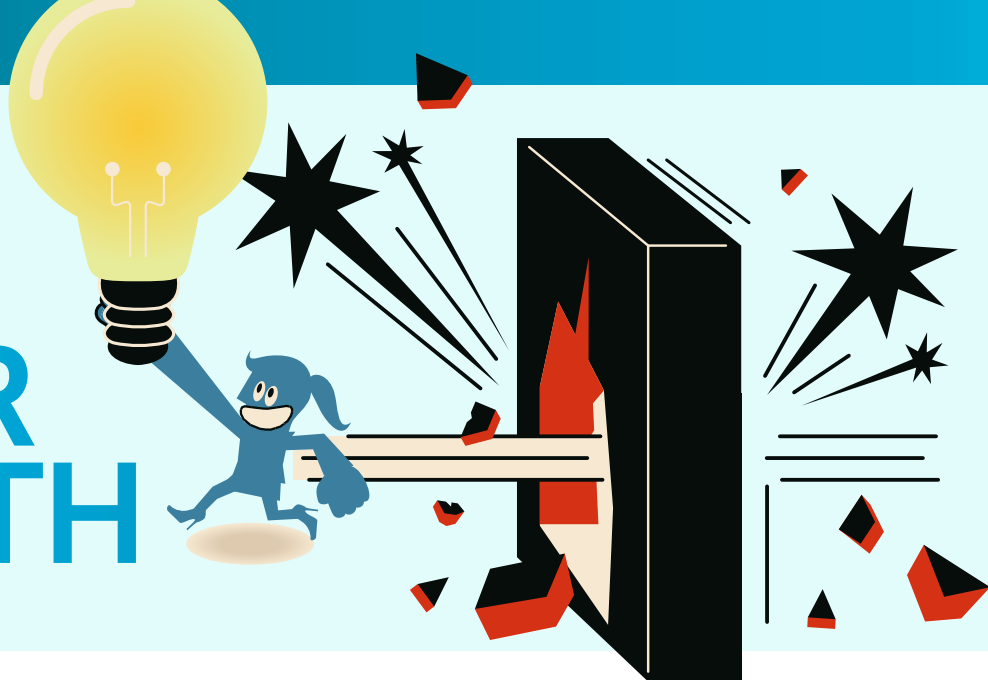
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Victory THE POWER OF TRUTH

BY LARRY GRAINGER



Walking in God's reality gives us strength to overcome deadly deception

TRUTH IS NOT ONLY SOMETHING we accept, but it actually has an effect on our lives. There is a power that truth provides in our Christian walk. In John chapter 8:31-32 tells us that "Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" We know that Jesus would later identify Himself as "the Truth." There is only one way to know the truth and that is to believe in Him and obey His words. As Pastor Tim Parish said, "Obedience is necessary to know the truth."

The late author R.C. Sproul of Ligonier Ministries says that "Truth is defined as that which corresponds to reality as perceived by God. This is because God's perception of reality is never distorted. It is a perfect perception of reality." The only way to arrive at the purity of truth and allow it to have its powerful effect on our lives is to accept the fact it is God's perspective and opinion that determines what truth is.

In his 1828 dictionary, Noah Webster offers this definition: "Conformity to fact or reality; exact accordance with that which is, or has been, or shall be... We rely upon truth of the scriptural prophecies." We conform to fact or reality, recognizing it is God's fact and reality to which we conform. And because God does not change, neither does truth (see Malachi 3:6). Truth cannot be fluid; it is unalterable and unchangeable.

There is a story of Abraham Lincoln engaging a disputer of his who was very stubborn. When it was apparent Lincoln could not convince the disputer, he asked this question of him. "Well, let's see how many legs has a cow?" "Four, of course," replied the dissenter with disgust. "That's right," agreed Lincoln. "Now suppose you call the cow's tail a leg; how many legs would the cow have?" "Why, five, of course," was the confident reply. "Now, that's where you're wrong," said Lincoln. "Calling a cow's tail a leg doesn't make it a leg."

You can attempt to call a cow's tail a leg if you want, but it will not change the fact it is not a leg, but a tail. In our counter culture today, all too often we find people and groups of people attempting to change the definition of something to align with

their opinions or desires. When God has spoken concerning a matter, the facts about that matter become unalterable and unchangeable. You can create your own truth if you wish, but it will always lead you in the wrong direction and maybe a disaster.

TRUTH SETS US FREE

The unchangeable truth can be a source of power and ability in our lives. Jesus says in John 8 that truth sets us free. What are we being set free from? Mostly we are set free from ourselves. We are born in sin and therefore we are in bondage to sin. There is nothing we can do to escape the control of sin's clutch in our life.

Being a slave to sin means we are unable to escape our sinful proclivities without help from "the Truth" to make us free. The commentator Adam Clarke paraphrases Jesus' words in this way, "You shall have a constant experimental knowledge of its power and efficacy." Our relationship and engagement with the Truth is what allows the power and effectiveness of the truth to change our lives. The Swiss theologian Frederic Godet wrote that sin causes us to live with an illusion. Knowing the truth in an

intimate way lets us escape the net of the enemy.

Another way in which truth empowers us is that truth confronts and challenges; it does not allow us to remain in our folly, but will confront our perspective and even our beliefs. When Jesus asked the disciples who people were saying that He was, they replied John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets. I'm sure this sounded like a nice religious answer, but when Peter answered "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," the false views of Christ that had been purported were confronted and challenged. Jesus revealed the confession of Peter to be the truth!

On another occasion at the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John were invited by Jesus to a meeting. The disciples fell asleep and when they awoke, there before them were Moses and Elijah conversing with Jesus. As he was prone to do, Peter started speaking: "Hey Jesus, it is a good thing we are here, we can build three houses; one for You, one for Elijah, and one for Moses." The Father replied in what seemed a certain amount of anger, "This is My Son; listen to Him!" Some time ago it occurred to me that Peter in his religious effervescence was equating Moses and Elijah with Christ. The truth, which was spoken by the Father, brought adjustment to Peter's impetuous plan. So, truth allows correction in our lives to bring our thinking into alignment with the Father. To Peter's credit, he did not attempt to argue with God's truth, as I believe some today are doing.

THE STABILITY OF TRUTH

Another benefit of truth is that it provides stability. Paul writes to the Ephesian church to "stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of

truth." What is this belt of truth and what does it have to do with our stability? A soldier in that day would have worn a sash or girdle around his loins, which was incidentally the central point of his whole physical system. This sash formed the common bond of the whole armor; it is where it all came together and would remain in place. The sash was where the sword would have been supported. It was also necessary to be able to run, travel, or even do labor, as the soldier would gather his garment and tuck it into the sash.



Commentator Albert Barnes wrote, "The girdle kept all the parts of the armor in their proper place, and preserved firmness and consistency in the dress; and so truth might serve to give consistency and firmness to our conduct." Since truth is unalterable and unchangeable, it is also immovable. Embracing the truth prevents me from chasing some "wind of doctrine" or philosophy that might lead me down a wrong road. It keeps me steady and stable.

Truth preserves us from moral laxity. A person with no consistent worldview of truth is fertile ground for the enemy's deception. Or as St. Augustine wrote, "When regard for

truth has been broken down or even slightly weakened, all things will remain doubtful."

Embracing the truth provides inoculation from the lies of our adversary. Pastor Tim Parish said, "Disobedience places me outside the realm of truth—and therefore I embrace lies." Jesus said of the devil that "he is a liar and the father of lies." This is the currency of the devil—lies and deceit. The only legal ground the enemy has over us is when we believe his lies and act upon them. Lies are powerful enough to lead us to do the most insane things.

What is insanity? It is losing touch with reality—believing that the lie is real. The whole *modus operandi* of the enemy towards us is to alter the truth just enough that we don't recognize it as a lie (see *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis). In the Garden, the devil said to Eve, "Did God actually say...?"

The words of the apostle Paul to the Corinthian church ring true today: "But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3). Holding to the truth will guard us against the lies of our enemy. If they do not line up with God's truth, we must resist them.

One thing that might not seem obvious to us is that holding to the truth gives us listening ability. Jesus said to Pilate "Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice." This is because if we are embracing the truth as God's unalterable reality, it eliminates other conflicting voices that don't align with God's truth. We can hear and respond to the voice of Christ because we have "trained our senses" to recognize the truth and disregard the deceptive suggestions

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Reality

THE INTOLERANCE OF TRUTH

BY DR. MICHAEL PETERS



How to embrace reality and live in freedom

THE WORLD CANNOT tolerate the truth and the truth cannot tolerate the world. Belief in tolerance shapes our culture, but the one thing tolerance can't tolerate is the truth. For years, I taught critical thinking and biblical worldview at a university and one textbook we used was *The Closing of the American Mind* by Allan Bloom.

Bloom's introduction was about "openness" and how it closes us to the truth. He wrote: *"There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative."*¹ Professor Bloom saw how openness closed us to the truth because of the fear of intolerance. The world cannot tolerate the truth and, at the same time, keep its commitment to openness.

Openness is not just a value embraced by secularists. Many Christians also embrace the value

of openness. I cannot count the number of times a fellow believer has approached me by saying, "Are you open to?" Then he stated some weird belief that I was expected to be open to. Before you approach me on the basis of openness, you need to know that I'm not open to openness. Openness is a secular value. I want the truth.

My desire for the knowing the truth is based on the reality that the truth is knowable. Beliefs don't create reality. Beliefs correspond to reality if they are based on the truth. That's the power of truth; those who know the truth live in agreement with reality. If what you believe does not correspond to reality, you have to live a contradiction. Only the truth can explain the way things really are, and when you discover the truth, it empowers you with reality. The most confident person in the world is the one who walks according to the truth.

But what is truth? That was the question Pilate asked Jesus in John 18:38. This is first a question about the nature of truth before it becomes a question

about the content of the truth. Once we understand the nature of truth, we'll see that only Jesus could speak the truth.

Saint Augustine explained that truth as *that which is*.² Truth is eternal reality. It is not something you create. You can only bear witness to it. Jesus said, "I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37). The truth existed before Jesus came into the world, and He came to bear witness to it.

Only Someone Who came from outside this world could bear witness to the truth in the world. The rest of us who were born in the world are like fish born in water. What a fish sees above the water line is distorted by the water. It's not the fish's fault. It's a cultural condition.

Once you realize that truth is eternal, you know that only Jesus could bear witness to the truth. Jesus is the only one who could say, "I speak what I have seen with my Father" (John 8:38). Jesus is like the umpire who calls it as he sees it. Except, Jesus saw it as it really was. That's why His words are the final arbiter of what is truth.

Jesus bore witness to the truth. But is the truth knowable? The postmodern person doesn't deny the existence of truth. What's in question is whether it can be known. The father of postmodernism, Frederick Nietzsche, didn't deny that the truth existed. He denied the possibility of knowing it. He said, "We have no organ wherewith to know the truth."

This may be the one thing Nietzsche said that agreed with Jesus, Who said, "Unless you are born again you cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Unless you are born again, you have "no organ wherewith to know the truth."

CULTURE AND TRUTH

For centuries, philosophy sought for the truth through reasoning. Whether it was Plato's cave or Aristotle's forms or even Descartes's belief that I am a thing that thinks about God, philosophy reasoned from the material to the transcendent. Nietzsche, however, rejected that we could know the truth and introduced a world beyond Good and Evil that is built on what is useful.

Nietzsche wrote, *"We have no organ at all for knowledge, for 'truth': we 'know' (or believe or imagine) precisely as much as may be useful in the interest of the human herd, the species: and even what is here called 'usefulness' is in the end only a belief."*³

Nietzsche envisioned a world built on what was useful, not truthful. This is the basis of the emerging culture within which we live. If you read Justice Blackmun's Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion or Justice

Kennedy's decision legalizing gay marriage, you will discover that their reasoning was based on what was "useful, not truthful".

Blackmun, being an unwitting disciple of Nietzsche, wrote, *"We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins."* The truth of life, upon which the decision should have been made, was dismissed as irrelevant. What mattered to Justice Blackmun was what was "useful". Justice Kennedy did the same thing for gay marriage.



They did this because they did not believe the truth was knowable. Whether it's the Supreme Court or the school board, we are told over and over that no one can know the truth. This "absolute of relativism" (notice the contradiction) spreads even into religious schools. One of my professors in the historical theology department of Saint Louis University said, "I run from anyone who claims to know the truth."

I must confess that I know the truth. Please don't run. You can know the truth, too. The truth is knowable. Jesus said, "If anyone

is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself" (John 7:17).

If you are willing to do God's will, you will know the truth. The real issue isn't whether you can find the truth, but whether after finding it, are you willing to do it?

TRUTH CLAIMS YOU

Those who believe in relativism talk about truth as though it was something you claim. They speak about my truth and your truth as though it's up to you to claim a truth. But you don't claim the truth. The truth places a claim on you. The truth that God is our Creator places a claim on our obedience. If God created me, He has the right to command me. Likewise the truth of the Cross places a claim on my faith.

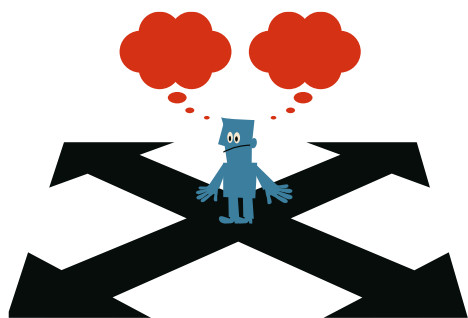
A few years ago, I taught a church class called the *Overcomers*. It was an in-depth look at the Cross of Jesus. Fred, one of my close friends at church, asked me if his dad could take the class. His dad was dying of cancer and was not a believer. Even though the class was directed towards believers, Fred's dad joined us. At the end of the class, I asked everyone to list one truth they learned that will change their lives. Fred's dad answered, "I now know that I must address the claims of the Cross."

He got saved weeks before passing into eternity. Fred threw a salvation party like Matthew did when he chose to follow Christ. Friends and family gathered to toast salvation because Fred's dad addressed the claims of the Cross.

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off any moral constraints that truth might lay upon us?

At this point, the boys were understandably questioning their decision to take their dad to the movie. I, however, was just getting warmed up. "OK, Dad, how can



we really know truth?" one of my boys asked, wanting to look more studious than his siblings.

Well, the fundamental answer from Scripture is you must submit to truth to know it. Knowing truth is not merely a cognitive faculty but includes a moral element as well. Consider the following Scriptures:

*** Romans 1:18-19** *"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them."*

In other words, it was their wickedness, and not their I.Q. that suppressed the truth.

*** Ephesians 4:17-19** *"So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts."*

Please note that the problem isn't our heads, it's our hearts. According to Paul's words in Ephesians, ignorance of the truth has more to do with a hard heart than it does lack of intelligence. As the historian Will Durant once mused, *"When riches made us comfortable, we found thousands of 'scientific' reasons why religion was wrong."* It is our hearts that are the problem.

Jesus tells about the freedom that truth brings: "To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free'" (John 8:31-32). We want to be free, but the only way to be free is to know the truth. The only way to know the truth is to be Jesus' disciple. The only way to be His disciple is to hold to his teaching. Thus, obedience is necessary to know truth.

This text led the reformer, John Calvin, to write, "All true knowledge of God is born out of obedience." Contrary to the world's idea of freedom, true freedom is the result of embracing truth and obeying it rather than denying it.

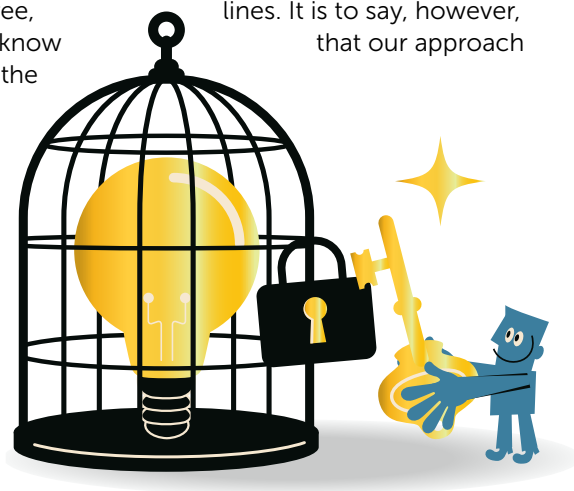
Surprisingly, the philosopher who helped me the most with this is Soren Kierkegaard, who said, "Truth is subjectivity."² When he said this, he did not mean truth is subjective or relative in the way people use it today. Here is what he meant: the most profound truths can only be known subjectively by committing to them. Only when you make them a part of your life will you understand their truth.

There are some truths in life you cannot understand until you experience them. For example, love. You cannot know love by looking it up in the dictionary or Googling it or reading the "love" Wikipedia page. No, you only know real love by committing your life to love someone. You can only know love from the inside, from experience.

The same is true of Christianity.

You can't just read about it or hear it in a sermon. You can only know the truth of Christianity by committing yourself to it. You can only know Christ in a real relationship with Him, which requires committing your life to Him. You have to submit to a relationship with the One who said, "I am the truth" (John 14:6).

This, of course, is not to deny the need for good, solid, rational, logical arguments for our faith. Kierkegaard clearly went too far in his denial of such arguments. I believe we desperately need apologetics in the Church today; I have given a portion of my life to argue along those very lines. It is to say, however, that our approach



to truth cannot merely be a cognitive one but must include the submission of our hearts and wills.

Indeed, without submitting ourselves to it, we cannot know truth. And, if we do not know truth, we condemn ourselves to the darkness of *Assassin's Creed* and miss the beauty of Jesus' Kingdom. **121**

1 <http://www.cnn.com/2017/02/26/opinions/believer-personal-faith-essay-reza-aslan/index.html>

2 Concluding Unscientific Postscript, trans. D.F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie, (Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 49-55.

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of the devil, or anyone attempting to promote their own truth. Remember that Jesus said "My sheep hear My voice."

TRUTH SANCTIFIES

Finally, we understand that truth sanctifies. In His prayer in John 17, Jesus says to the Father, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth." We have obviously been given the righteousness of Christ when we are born from above by the Spirit, but there is a progressive sanctification that we all experience as we go through life in and with Him.

Truth will establish boundaries for us and keep us within the parameters of blessing and abundance of life. While in our rebellious nature we don't much care for boundaries, they in fact bring a settling effect and a feeling of security into our lives. Again, Jesus said to His disciples "...you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you." Since His word is truth, it is His word that makes us clean as we are set apart unto the Lord for His service.

It is interesting to note that Jesus did not say "Your Word is **true**," using an adjective. If God's Word was only true, then there would be a lot of other sources that could be true. But, rather, He used the noun indicating that His word is **truth** in itself. It is the standard by which everything else is tested and compared. If we desire to find the "truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," we must find it in God's Word. And when we find the truth, regardless of the currency necessary, we should "Buy the truth and do not sell it" (Proverbs 23:23). 121

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But in truth, it wasn't the claims of the Cross that saved Fred's dad. The claims of the Cross pointed him to the Savior who died on the Cross. The truth is more than words. Truth is a person. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

In Christ is where the claims of truth meet. What will you do with the claims that truth places on you? Relativism seeks to isolate those claims to the individual who believes. The claims of truth can't be isolated to those who believe. The truth is universal. It applies to everyone, including you. Receive Christ and follow Him, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free (John 8:31-32). Reject Christ, and He won't judge you, but His words will judge you on the last day (see John 12:47-48). Either way, the truth of Christ places a claim on you.

That I know this doesn't make me intolerant of the world. It makes me compassionate, because God in His compassion has given the world time to come to terms with Christ. Peter wrote, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9). Paul wrote, "Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:4). Mary said, "His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation" (Luke 1:50).

You can trust the words of Peter, Paul and Mary. That's Saint Peter, the apostle Paul, and the Virgin Mary! They knew the truth and loved everyone. 121

1 Allan Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 25-26

2 Saint Augustine *Soliloquies*

3 Frederick Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 211



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