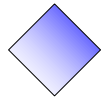


The Voice of Truth



March 24, 2013

We Can Understand Truth By Jimmy Pettigrew

With so much religious division in this world in which we live in today, there are those who are going around saying, "We are divided because truth is unattainable, impossible or beyond our reach." Can we not know truth? Please notice what the Bible teaches on this subject concerning truth.

Look with me in the eighth chapter of the book of **John**; we find Jesus speaking to the multitudes. We read that many of them believed: "Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are you truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (**John 8:31-32**) Notice, here we had a statement from the Christ, the Son of God saying that one can know truth. If we cannot know truth, then Christ lied to us, and then we can't be free. I want you to notice again; when you look at these two passages in John, you notice that their faith had not made them free, nor does faith alone make people free today as some so strive to teach. But I notice that abiding in Jesus' word, knowing the truth and obeying it; these are the nuts and bolts unto eternal life. Friends, how can you abide in something if you don't understand it? How can you abide in something if you don't know it? To "abide in my word," one would have to understand it! Only then could one be a disciple of Christ.

John writes, "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth." (**1 John 2:21**) What is John saying? John is saying it is not because ye are ignorant of these things that I write to you, but because you know them, and you can by knowing truth, hold up God's word, knowing what it teaches, and say those who teach the doctrines of false teachers, and know that they are liars. You have to know the truth to be able to do this; to be able to tell someone they have contradicted the truth, that your doc-

trine is a lie. Why? Because no lie can be of the truth. Now you have to know the truth to know what a lie is. A lie here is any doctrine contrary to that taught by the Christ and the apostles. "...We know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (**1 John 4:6**). We can distinguish those who embrace the truth from those who do not. But this is impossible some say, because they say we can't know truth. Again are you saying John lied? One must be careful for truth can be distorted (**Romans 1:25**). Jesus said, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (**John 7:17**). How can we do His will if we can't know the truth? How can we know that the teaching is from God or man it we can't know the truth? If we can't know truth, how could we speak the same thing and be perfected joined together in unity (**1 Corinthians 1:10**)?

Paul tells us, "whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ" (**Ephesians 3:4**). Paul says to the Ephesians by reading you may understand God's word, and His way of saving people, the mysteries of the Christian religion. "Who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth" (**1 Timothy 2:4**). If we can't know truth, how do we know if we are saved? Why would God give us truth if we could not understand it? "Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (**Ephesians 5:17**) Question: Where can the will of the Lord be found? Nowhere, but in the Bible! We can understand that will, and we must be able to understand the Bible. We can understand what the will of the Lord is, and then doing it. We can know the teaching of the Scriptures; we can know truth and we can understand the word of God. No problem with the word of God; the problem is with men! Truth must be known (**John 8:32**), believed (**2 Thessalonians 2:12**), loved (**2 Thessalonians 2:10**), and obeyed (**Galatians 5:7**). Only then can it set one free! ♦

**Either the Bible will keep you from sin . . .
Or sin will keep you from the Bible.**

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“What Determines Truth?”

By Jarrod Jacobs

Truth is an endangered thing. Many want nothing to do with the truth. They are like the Gentiles who *"did not like to retain God in their knowledge"* (Rom. 1:28). Why did they not want to retain God in their knowledge? Because God stood in the way of them doing what they pleased!

In like manner truth, the standard between right and wrong, is cast aside by many today. Many people say, "Truth is relative." Therefore, what may be the truth for you, will not be true for me and vice versa. In spiritual matters, truth must be determined by God. Truth itself transcends all lines. If it is right, it is right, if it is wrong, it is wrong.

Let's study and learn what does and does not determine truth.

What Does Not Determine Truth?

Personal Experience

The Methodists say they determine the truth by: 1) The Bible 2) Scholars 3) **Personal Insight/Experience** 4) Reason 5) Tradition. With this in mind, we can understand why the Methodists have changed their beliefs at different times through the years!

Just like the Methodists, there are many people who try to determine the truth based upon what they have experienced in their lives. Consider the following statements of those who try to determine the truth based upon personal experience.

1. **"I have always heard it said"** Or, **"I have never heard it said"** Before Columbus sailed to the Americas, people had "always heard" that the earth was flat, did this make it the truth? Obviously not!

2. **"I have never done it like that."** Just because something is unknown to you does not necessarily make it wrong. There were several people in the Bible who thought their personal experience revealed the truth. Consider the Athenians who, after hearing Paul preach the truth, "mocked" him (Acts 17:32). Why was this? It is because what Paul said was different from all they had ever experienced. They had "never heard anything like that"! Therefore, they automatically assumed it was wrong.

In like manner, the Jews persecuted Christ and the apostles because what was taught by them was not what

the Jews had experienced before. Clearly, personal experience does not determine the truth.

One's Conscience

"Let your conscience be your guide" is the cry of many. The word "conscience" is defined as: *"1. the sense of what is right or wrong in one's conduct or motives, impelling one toward right action. 2. the complex of ethical and moral principles that controls or inhibits the actions or thoughts of an individual"* (Webster's).

Our conscience can be helpful in our decision-making process, but it depends upon how it was trained. If our conscience is trained right, it will bother us when we do that which is wrong. Otherwise, our conscience will not bother us, even when we do wrong things.

Something interesting to note is the number of people in the New Testament who did the wrong things and their conscience did not bother them. For example, the apostle Paul did *"many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth"* (Acts 26:9-10). He persecuted the Christians in Jerusalem, *"ravaging the church, entering house to house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison"* (Acts 8:3). His life is described as follows: *"You have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers"* (Gal. 1:13-14).

Having done all of these things, he stood before the rulers of his day and said, *"Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day"* and *"So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man"* (Acts 23:1, 24:16). Did Paul's conscience bother him as he persecuted Christians? No, sir! In fact, when he showed *"raging fury against them"* (Acts 26:11), his clear conscience did not change the facts.

Consider some other people in the Bible. Paul said there were some who would *"depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron"* (1 Tim. 4:1-2). Still others had *"defiled consciences"* (Titus 3:15). Does this sound like these people are worthy of emulation? Of course, not! Therefore, we cannot blindly follow our conscience, and expect to be

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pleasing to God. Our conscience alone does not determine the truth.

One's Family

Some blindly follow whatever their family does. The problem is that doing this is about like following our conscience. Families can be helpful or harmful to us spiritually, depending on how they are! While we are expected to honor our fathers and mothers (**Matt. 15:4; Mk. 10:19; Eph. 6:1-2**), our family does not determine the truth.

There were some people in the Bible who followed their family, and they paid dearly for it. Consider Lot's wife (**Gen. 19:24-26; Lk. 17:32**). The screams of her family and loved ones meant more to her than the safety provided by God. In her disobedience to God, she was turned into a pillar of salt.

Many Jews followed the traditions of their families rather than Christ. Therefore, Jesus told the people, *"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me"* (**Matt. 10:34-37; Lk. 14:26**).

What Determines Truth?

Now that we know some things that do not determine truth, what determines truth?

God

Jesus said, *"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth"* (**Jn. 17:17**). In saying this, we see that God's word (not man's) is synonymous with truth. When we speak of truth, we are speaking of God's word; and to speak of God's word is to speak of the truth! Jesus said that the truth is what makes men free (**Jn. 8:32**). Our Lord also said, *"Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you"* (**Jn. 15:3**). Whose word was He speaking? God's (**Jn. 12:49-50**)!

Looking to David, *"the sweet psalmist of Israel"* (**II Sam. 23:1**), we read His words of praise to God's word when he

penned, *"all your commandments are true"* (**Ps. 119:151**). He also declared, *"And now, O Lord GOD, you are God, and your words are true"* (**II Sam. 7:28**).

Since God determines the truth, when we push away the truth we are pushing away God (**Rom. 1:28**)! When we say that truth is relative, we have cast God aside as King. We are trying to determine what is truth, rather than yielding to God and His word. This is a dangerous position in which to be, because it is God who determines truth, not us.

A beautiful description of God's word is found in **II Timothy 3:16-17**: *"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work."* Based upon what has been said, we know that we could not make it through this life without God's word.

God's word is what is to be preached and taught today (**II Tim. 4:2, 2:2**). Why must this be done? Because in so doing, we are spreading the truth! The truth that transcends borders, racial lines, and all other man-made divisions!

Conclusion

God's word is what determines the truth because it is the truth (**Jn. 17:17**). That is why we stress that *"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God"* (**I Pet. 4:11**)! Nothing else determines the truth. This is made clear in **Galatians 1:6-9**. If we follow our thoughts, or what any man says, then we are jeopardizing our soul's salvation!

Let us determine that we will let nothing keep us from following the rock-solid, unchangeable, indestructible word of God! This is all that matters. If we lose our soul, we have lost it all (**Matt. 16:26**). This is why it is so important that we follow the Lord's will and not man's whims. When we appreciate the fact that it is God who has determined what is the truth, it makes the choice much easier, doesn't it? Who will we follow, God or self? Truth or error?

May we follow God's will, so that one day we can see Heaven together (**Rev. 22:14, 17-19**).

Credit: The Old Paths - 3/31/13 ♦

**Truth is truth even if no one believes it.
Error is error if everyone believes it.**

A pint of example is worth a barrel full of advice.

"Confused" by the Truth

By Jonathan L. Perz

Have you ever had a discussion where the truth seemed more confusing than the lie? If you have, you know that awkward, discombobulating feeling that arises because something you have believed for an extended period of time—even a lifetime—has proven to be false. It can be quite overwhelming.

It is natural that your instinctive response is defensive, even hostile. "Who do you think you are?" and "How dare you judge me?" are phrases on the tip of your tongue. In the heat of the moment, you might even rationalize, "That can't be right." Should you utterly reject the "preposterous idea" while in your "confused" state of mind or should you recognize this feeling of "confusion" as a mental flag that moves you to openly reconsider a conviction, no matter how deeply held it might be?

We often become emotionally attached to what we believe and it is rarely pleasant to be proven wrong. This

explains the initial defensive response. However, the real quality of a heart is seen after the initial emotional roller coaster ride ends. Will we stay "confused" by the truth or will we embrace it, giving up the lie?

We can fear and procrastinate like Felix (**Acts 24:24-25**). We can shoot the messenger, as we reject "his truth" and "gnash at him with our teeth" (**Acts 7:51-60**). We can be moved by every wind of doctrine (**Eph. 4:14**). We can even remain in a perpetual state of "confusion" and have God reinforce "our lie" (**2 Thess. 2:11-12**)! On the other hand, we can simply receive the "love of the truth" (**2 Thess. 2:9-10**).

Momentary confusion at having a conviction disproven is understandable. Choosing to reject the truth or remain "confused" is simply inexcusable. What ever you choose, remember, your response will demonstrate the quality of your heart (cf. **Matt. 13:18-23**). *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com* ♦

The Nature Of The Kingdom Of God

IS NOT

1. Of This World (**John 18:36**).
2. Eating and Drinking (**Rom. 14:17**).
3. In Word (**1 Cor. 4:20**).
4. With Observation (**Luke 17:20**).

IS

1. In Power (**1 Cor. 4:20**).
2. Righteousness (**Rom. 14:17**).
3. Peace (**Rom. 14:17**).
4. Joy (**Rom. 14:17**).
5. Within You (**Luke 17:21**).
6. Unshakable (**Heb. 12:28**).

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn** - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe** - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent** - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord** - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized** - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching** - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew

How to Contact Us	Our Address	Schedule of Assembly
<p>Telephone: (920)499-5677 E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>	<p>1621 Hillcrest Drive Green Bay, WI 54313</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*</p> <p style="font-size: small; text-align: center;">*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month</p>