

Can Christians Really Know What is Truth, and what is not?

by Tony Warren

N

ot only can we know what is truth, it is an imperative obligation that we seek to know it. For to some degree, the knowledge of truth is how we avoid the error wherein the unfaithful are deceived by false doctrines. i.e., how can you even know for certain what *is* false, if you don't really know what is true?

1st John 4:1

- "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but **try the spirits** whether they are of God: because many False prophets are gone out into the world."

You cannot try or test the spirits if you do not know what is truth. Without knowledge, any misguided person can claim that he is a Christian and teach you every false doctrine known to man. By contrast, *if* you have the Spirit to know the truth, you will know what is falsehood. We test the spirits by comparing their words with the authority of the unadulterated Word of God. So that if what someone is saying is in total agreement with the scriptures, then we know that it is true. If it is not what scripture actually say, then it is a personal interpretation. This is the exact process by which those Jewish men in Berea tested Paul's witness to see if it was biblical (*in agreement with the Bible*) when other Jewish leaders simply condemned him out of hand. And as a result, the men of Berea found his testimony true and many believed. That is God's faithful example for us today.

Acts 17:11

- "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.
- therefore many of them believed; also honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."

How did these noble or honest Jewish men know what the truth was? It was simple--they read the scriptures to compare what God had said to what Paul was claiming. They did so in order to

discern whether or not what the apostle had said was the truth. That is how we try the spirits (1st John 4:1). We don't blindly follow our church leaders, or trust in tradition or rites, or simply believe what theologians claim is the truth. We compare what they say to the authority, which is the Word of God. If it is in agreement with the whole of God's Word, then it is true. If it is contrary to scripture, then it is false.

1st Thessalonians 5:20-21

- "despise not Prophecyings.
- Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

Again, the word encourages us to prove or test all things. We are to examine them to see if they are accurate and true teachings or not, and then hold fast to that which is faithful. That is how we can know for certain what is absolutely true in comparison to what man alleges is true.

As a practical example, if someone were to teach that we are saved by works and not grace, the only way we would know if that were true or not, is to read the authoritative divinely inspired writings of God. Not our Pastor's writings or a book author or blindly accept what a Televangelist says, but defer to God's Word. When we read His words, we find that God declares unambiguously that we are saved by Grace, and not by works lest any man should boast. Therefore, we must receive what God has divinely inspired written, rather than what man claims He ment. For He is the ultimate authority over doctrines and practices. In doing this, we have tried the spirits and found them to be wanting. In this way, the Holy Spirit of God works within us to reveal truth, and indeed is called the Spirit of truth.

John 8:32

- "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

God not only informs us that we *can* know the truth, but that it is the truth that will set us free. Indeed, if we couldn't really know the truth for sure, how could we be held *responsible* for believing false teachings? This modern church philosophy of, "*don't worry about it because we'll understand it all by and by,*" is a careless and dangerous way to look at the question of doctrine. It is specifically because the truth is written down and witnessed to us, that those who will not receive this love of truth (or truth in love) will receive greater condemnation by God.

2nd Thessalonians 2:10-12

- "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; **because** they received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be Saved.
- And **for this reason** God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie;
- that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Those who want to privately interpret scripture for their own agenda, or who make claims that we can't really know what the truth is on this side of the grave, do not demonstrate much spiritual understanding of Christianity. The truth is what is written in the scriptures, and those who have no love to *receive it* will be damned by God because of this neglect. No one is going to be able to stand before God and say, "*I didn't know where truth was*". Because man can fool himself, but he cannot fool the discerners of even the very intents of the heart. All hidden desires, reasons, agendas and secrets are made manifest to God and illuminated by the light of His Word.

Hebrews 4:12-13

- "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and

is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

- Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Thus we can't fool God by proclaiming that we didn't know where truth was. The truth is, you will generally find that those claiming that one cannot really know for certain where truth is, are those who aren't really looking for truth. They are those who profess with their mouth a love for Christ, but who really don't have time for Him as Lord. They don't really want to conform to the teachings of scripture and so feign that it is ambiguous, confusing and understanding of it is a non-essential. They will refuse to *receive* the truth for one reason or another. But merely calling ourselves Christian doesn't really mean that we are actually regenerated and really are Christian. True Christians are born from above that they are a new creation wherein they possess the Spirit of Truth. They don't pretend that they cannot for sure know it, they know God and are known of Him specifically because they have the Spirit of Truth. They are loved of God and therefore as faithful stewards love His Word. By Grace of God they accept it and receive it as the ultimate authority over the church in matters of faith and doctrine. They know the truth because it alive within them. It was never that man cannot know what is truth, it was that man is carnal and doesn't want to receive what is written. It's not that scripture is so terribly unclear, it is that man wants to make the clear, unclear, the better to hide his rebellion. But Christians with a conscience should understand that it's not in how we work the Scriptures, it's in how the Scriptures work us.

Ezekiel 36:27

- "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

May the Lord, who is gracious in all things, comfort us and move His Spirit within us to receive the truth so boldly declared within His Word, that we might humbly walk in His statute, keep His righteous judgments, and receive the love of the truth as the Spirit directs.

Amen!

Peace,

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The Mountain Retreat / twarren10@aol.com

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