

Where is Truth?

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INTRODUCTION

(Begin with video on 'absolute truth')

The discussion of absolute truth is fairly new to me. I imagine that the topic itself is not new, but it certainly seems to be more loudly discussed these days. I don't pretend this morning to know all the answers, but this is a topic I'm becoming more and more compassionate about.

For some of you this morning this may be new to you as well, so let me start by explaining the issue the best I can, which may not be good at all.

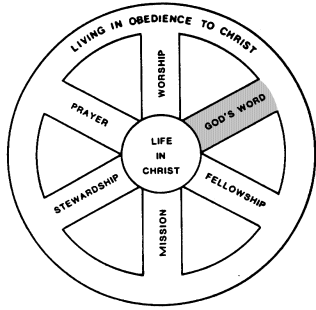
When we talk about absolute truth, we are talking about final truth. Some questions of truth are obvious. In mathematics, one plus one will always equal two. You would be hard pressed to find anyone who would debate that. Gravity is the same way. These are absolute truths.

But what about absolute truth when it comes to moral issues. When it comes to abortion is there an absolute truth? Some of you might very quickly say that there is an absolute truth and abortion is always wrong. Others might say it's always wrong except for when the mother's life is in danger. Others might say abortion is okay in the case of rape. So is there an absolute truth in regards to the ethics of abortion? If there is, who decides what that truth is?

The discussion that I've already referred to is a discussion as to whether or not there is such a thing as absolute truth. In the video you saw and heard some people say that absolute truth is found within the person. That answer is ludicrous because to be absolute it must be the same for all people.

Let's take one more example. The hot topic of today is the war in Iraq/war on terrorism. Is there an absolute truth there? I believe there is. The war is either just and good, or unfair and bad. Who gets to decide which it is? If you don't believe in God, the answer comes from the group who demonstrated the loudest, spends the most money and gains the most support.

As a human being, I have a difficult time denying the existence of God. There is too much evidence for His existence. I also have just as difficult a time denying the Bible as a reputable and trustworthy text. There is far more evidence for its authenticity than any other historical work of the same era. I am convinced then that God is the only determiner of absolute truth in moral situations. Therefore, I believe it is God who decides if the war is just or unjust, good or bad. If I want to know, I need to seek God and ask Him for answers.



God is the source of all truth and for us today an enormous source of truth is found in the pages of the book that record His words through the hands of men writing on His behalf. This brings me to the 7th part of our series on Discipleship and the last of the inner disciplines of a disciple. We have already looked at the first two inner-disciplines of worship and prayer. The 3rd and last one is the 'Word' of God.

If the Bible is the basis of truth and the source of direction for the Christian, it must have priority in our life. Probably the most direct verse of scripture written about itself is found in Paul's 2nd letter to Timothy. Paul writes to Timothy,

“All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim 3:16-17)

It has been suggested that this spoke may be the most important spoke of our wheel. Without this spoke you cannot learn about the rest of them. It is vital, yet often it is neglected. Learning the Word of God is like eating a steady, healthy diet. It requires consistency and deliberate, daily decisions to follow the plan. This morning I want to leave you with 4 action points that you can use to help you know the Bible better.

HEAR THE WORD

Paul helps us here again, but this time in the book of Romans, chapter 10. Here he is talking about how the word of the Lord gets out to people. Read Romans 10:14-17. One of the most valuable lessons in my college classes came in one of my communications classes. It was the lesson on how effective messages are translated from person to person. The bottom line is that a person has not received a message, though they may have heard the words, until they appropriately processed the words in their minds. Right now I believe you are hearing the Word of the Lord in the form of a message based on His word. Some of you are simply hearing the words and doing nothing with them. I might as well be saying “Blah, blah, blah, blah”. But others of you are hearing the words and are processing them. You are comparing them to other messages you may have heard. You are looking at the scripture references and verifying that my words are Biblical. You are internalizing them and deciding whether or not you will follow through.

READ THE WORD

While hearing the Word is good and helpful, hearing should not replace your own reading of the Word. At the beginning of the book of Revelations in chapter 1, verse 3, John writes,

“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophesy and heed the things which are written in it...”

Henry Ironsides was one of the great authors of the 1900s. He was also an evangelist and pastor of a church in Chicago founded by D.L. Moody. For a short time he was also a Salvation Army officer. At the age of 14 he lamented that he had not read the Bible through in its entirety the same number of times as he was years old. (He did catch up and surpass that number quickly.)

Reading the word helps you get a better understanding of the whole picture of God's work throughout the history of the world.

STUDY THE WORD

Reading the Word and studying the Word are different. Reading helps us with the overall picture and is faster than studying, which causes us to ask questions about the scriptures to help us further understand it.

In Acts 17 Paul is run out of Thessalonica by people who wanted him dead because of the trouble he was stirring up. When he leaves there he comes to the town of Berea. Look what is said about the people of Berea in Acts 17:10-12. (read)

MEDITATE ON THE WORD

Obviously, I'm not talking here about meditating in the sense of new age thinking. Simply thinking about the Word of God. Maybe its on a verse or short passage or maybe its on a larger theme God is trying to teach you.

I like the words of Psalms 1:1-3 in this regard. The picture of the tree on the side of the river has always intrigued me. Usually I look at that picture in terms of the roots. The picture here is about what happens above ground. Because there is a constant supply of water to the tree, the leaves never wither.

The same can be true for the person who keeps God's word always before him. There won't be the dry spiritual times when we are more prone to temptation and wondering. We are continually fed when we continually meditate on God's Word.

CONCLUSION

Christians believe God is the ultimate source of truth. Believing that we believe God Word as contained in the Bible is truth for us. If that is true, we must know God's Word and refer to it often. The idea that truth is found in the person and that each of us determines our own absolute truth is ludicrous. There is either absolute truth or there isn't. If its absolute it doesn't change and it is the same for all people.

Some truths are easily accepted by all people. Others are constantly debated because of sin in our world, lack of clarity, and because the spiritual freedom we

have. Even Christians argue about what is true or not true. The abortion issue, women in ministry and homosexuality are just a few of the issues that are dividing churches. God knows the truth about these issues and everyone seems to have access to the mind of God and knows the answer.

The bottom line is that we need to continue to seek God's word on the subject.