

“The Knowability of Truth!”

John 8:25-32

Intro. – Research tells the following statistical horror story that is taking place *every day* in America:

- 1,000 unwed teenage girls becoming mothers
- 1,106 teenage girl get abortions
- 4,219 teenagers contract sexually transmitted diseases
- 500 adolescents begin using drugs
- 1,000 adolescents begin drinking alcohol
- 3,610 teens are assaulted (80 are raped)
- 2,200 teens drop out of school
- 6 teens commit suicide

Journalist Rowland Nethaway wrote an article for Cox News Service, which appeared in the 11-3-93 Hamilton, OH News-Journal: “Adults have always complained about their youth, but this is different. There have always been wild and rebellious kids who would go off the track and do something wrong. Many of today’s youth don’t seem to know right from wrong. Children are robbing, maiming and killing on whims, and with no pity and no remorse.”

Josh McDowell summarizes our present situation as follows: “I believe that one of the prime reasons this generation is setting new records for dishonesty, disrespect, sexual promiscuity, violence, suicide, and other pathologies, is because they have lost their moral underpinnings; their foundational belief in morality and truth has been eroded...” He goes on to say that in March of 1993, 42 Christian youth leaders joined him for a symposium in Dallas, TX. They gathered to discuss the state of the present youth culture. Do you know what these men and women identified as the most dominant problem facing youth today? 100% of them ranked this generation’s loss of a biblically based value system as their number one concern.

Pollster George Barna did 1994 survey of 3,795 evangelical youth = 72% say Bible provides a clear and indisputable description of truth; yet, only 44% assert that humans are capable of grasping the meaning of truth.

Did you catch that last point? People today will admit to the reality of absolute truth but will then say we as finite creatures are incapable of *knowing* truth.

Purpose: to better understand the significance that truth is knowable

Is it possible that truth is so far beyond you and me that we simply can’t know it? Does it make sense that many today will admit to truth but will then say it is impossible to know thus invalidating truth all together? Are you and I guilty in one form or another in buying into this philosophy?

I Truth is BEYOND Our Grasp

A. Infinite Communicating with Finite

1. This thinking is totally based on the assumption that infinite truth exists in the mind of God CANNOT be reliably communicated to finite, created minds like you and I have.
2. Mind you, such is the prevalent thinking in a world filled with the idea there is nothing we can’t do because we are so smart...
3. Even if we accept the idea that in some sense the Bible is the Word of God and is therefore “true,” we will never be certain as to what it means because we are limited, finite creatures...
 - this idea is carried over to the constant phrase I hear amongst people of the world and people who claim to be Christians: “There is no one, right way to interpret the Bible.” Aka “That’s just your interpretation...”

B. Skepticism in Our Ability to Know the Truth

1. The above reasoning is one of the most serious matters facing the Restoration Movement today
2. We distinguish between “essentials and opinions”... and well we should, but when we place almost EVERYTHING in the category of *opinion* we then refuse to challenge the validity of some serious false doctrines:
 - Illus. – writer to “the mailbag” in *Christian Standard* wrote: “The only essential is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Everything else is up for grabs.”

3. We are being urged to *tolerate* the views of those who disagree with us, and not assume our understanding is the only *right* one...
 - a. i.e. we can be right without everyone else being wrong.
 - b. note: when someone is wrong doesn't make them "the enemy"... our wrestle not with flesh/blood... Obligated by our God to not only know the truth but to stand for it as well!
4. Sad fact is, we are being pushed toward a wider ecumenical fellowship in the name of unity at the expense of truth! This, in itself is destroying the very core of the Restoration Movement – "Unity on the basis of God's Word (TRUTH) alone!
 - a. Illus. – Isaac Errett (1st Editor of *Christian Standard*) wrote: "The fact that Christ died for our sins... is clearly expressed... But when it is attempted to explain just how it is that the death of Christ takes away our sins... we are at once involved in confusion and strife. The fact that Christ died for our sins is submitted to our faith; its philosophy is beyond the grasp of our reason..."
 - b. Illus. – Jack Cottrell "There is a world of difference between redemptive friendships and brotherly fellowship."

Knowing truth is NOT beyond our grasp as the next point will further establish:

II Truth is WITHIN Our Grasp

A. Jesus Settles This Matter

1. John 8:32 says, "*You will know the truth...*" You WILL KNOW...
2. Truth begins in the mind of God – John 8:26 "*He who sent me is true...*" – 1 John 3:20 "*...For God is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything.*" – Titus 1:2 "*...God who cannot lie...*" – Romans 3:4 "*Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar.*"
3. God communicates His truth to the world through human language and among other means, He speaks in the person of Jesus Christ, His only Son.
 - a. John 8:28 "*...I speak what the Father has taught Me.*"
 - b. John 8:40 I have "*...told you the truth that I heard from God...*"
 - c. John 8:45 "*Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.*"
4. Note: TRUTH CAN BE KNOWN but such knowledge will not come by osmoses – you will know the truth IF you listen, hear, read, study, apply your God given abilities to do so.

B. Two Matters Make Knowing Truth Possible

1. God has communicated the contents of His mind to man in the form of *WORD REVELATION*:
 - a. truth exists, God is real and the Bible is God's Word = three fundamentals that are inseparably linked – if one of these three "truths" is false the other two are as well!
 - b. has God spoken? Indeed! Hebrews 1:1-2 makes clear of this. He has given His WORD, and His word is TRUTH (John 17:17) = this truth is given to us in the form of THE BIBLE...
 - c. why it's paramount we see the Bible as God's Word. Unless we have some kind of communication from an all-powerful God we have no access to absolute truth and are lost and condemned to relativism.
 - d. word revelation is basic means through which God communicates His sure knowledge to us.
2. God has created us (human beings) in HIS IMAGE – Why? Enabling us fellowship with Him.
 - a. such includes the ability to communicate with God: to understand Him when He speaks to us through His Word... and to speak to Him in response through prayer.
 - b. Illus. – who would build a radio/tv transmitter without building a receiver to pick up the transmitted signals. Human minds are designed by God to receive, process and understand the truth He has given to us.
 - c. would God communicate with us at all if it were impossible for us to receive and understand Him? But God HAS communicated! Why? He knows we CAN receive and understand because we've been created in His image!
3. Denying the *knowability* of truth is denying ability of God to communicate with His creatures... Illus – "That's just your interpretation of what the Bible says."

C. Where the Bible Says Truth Can be Found

1. In God (The Father)
 - a. Exodus 34:6 “*The Lord... abounding in loving kindness and truth.*”
 - b. John 8:26 Jesus says, “...*He who sent Me is true...*”
 - c. Romans 3:4 “*Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar.*”
2. In Christ (The Son)
 - a. John 1:14 where it simply says Jesus is “...*full of grace and truth.*”
 - b. John 1:17 “*For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth come through Jesus Christ.*”
 - c. John 14:6 “*I am the way the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father except...*”
3. In Holy Spirit
 - a. John 14:17; 15:26 etc. where Holy Spirit is referred to as “*the Spirit of truth.*”
 - b. John 16:13 records the Holy Spirit guided the apostles “...*into all the truth...I*”
4. In Nature
 - a. Romans 1:18-20 wicked “*suppressed the truth...*” Which God had made evident “*through what has been made (created).*”
 - b. Romans 1:25 the wicked exchanged “...*truth of God for a lie.*”
5. In God’s Word
 1. John 17:17 “*Sanctify them by the truth; your Word is truth.*”
 - b. 2 Timothy 2:15 “*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*”
6. In the Church
 - 1 Timothy 3:15 “...*you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.*”

Conclusion: If we can *know* the truth, we then must declare the teachings of God’s Word as TRUTH. We must take a stand on matters of sound doctrine. Let me illustrate this and use this as a summary to this message.

Remember in the 60’s 70’s when various cereal manufacturers put “prizes” in the box to attract young consumers? Remember Captain Crunch and all the “hidden pictures” and “secret decoders”? The “hidden picture” would be drawn on the back of the box or enclosed inside. It would depict an intricately drawn scene or message. The only way to discern the “hidden message” was with a pair of colored spectacles (glasses) also buried in the bottom of the box. Once you put those magic glasses on the hidden message would clearly appear.

Here’s my point. When you and I and the next generation in this church gets equipped with the *lens of truth* our view of life will be changed. We will be able to discern the message and distinguish between right and wrong, able to identify what is absolute truths and what makes them that way.

To quote a dear brother/friend in the Lord: “We must identify the truth, and identify with the truth. We must not be afraid to call falsehood – *falsehood*. We must speak the truth – not in a harsh, arrogant way, but in love to be sure (Ephesians 4:14). But in any case, we must speak the truth. Otherwise we cannot claim to be the church of Jesus Christ, which is meant to be ‘the pillar and support of the truth.’”

Brethren, the truth is knowable and we can know the truth and it alone will make us free!

