



Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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Buy the Truth, and Sell it Not!

By

Jackie M. Stearsman

We have no greater need than the need to respect the truth. In the words of the wise man Solomon, we should "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" (Prov. 23:23).

The person of wisdom will secure "truth" no matter what the cost may be. The person of wisdom understands that truth is a precious acquisition that will never be for sale.

How much does truth mean to you? How much would you pay to secure it? Can you be persuaded to compromise it? The single most distinguishing feature of the people of God should be truth (John 17:17). Without knowing the truth and without living by truth we are no longer free (John 8:31-32).

God will always be true, it matters not how men may deceive

and/or be deceived. "... let God be true, but every man a liar; . . . (Rom. 3:4).

Truth is to be a constant component in our thoughts—"Whatsoever things are true. . . think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). The Christian is not properly armed if he is without truth (Eph. 6:14). The Lord's church is to be the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15).

In view of such truths we present the following reflections upon truth and our relationship to it.

Do We Love, Believe And Obey the Truth?

The following passage from the Apostle Paul is truly sobering. Paul states that some will "perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause 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" (2 Thess. 2:10-12). Salvation is conditional. It is

conditioned upon our love for the truth. Do we understand that God will permit us to believe a lie, and condemn us for doing so? If you doubt it, read First Kings 13 and the fate of the young prophet. If we are to be saved we must believe the truth.

Does not this passage also give us insight as to why some do not love the truth, do not believe and obey the truth? "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John 3:19-21).

Is it possible to have pleasure in wrong doing and forfeit truth? May it not be so with us.

Do We Properly Handle Truth ?

Paul admonished Timothy, "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15, ASV).

Is our approval before God

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conditioned upon our properly handling the word of truth? Sad indeed is the individual who feels no remorse when exposed for mishandling the word of truth. If we can misrepresent truth and feel no shame, how can we ever be reached with the truth?

God has always demanded that men speak His truth. Truth must oppose and expose all error (Eph. 5:11). God's words to Jeremiah come to mind. "... he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces" (Jer. 23:28-29)?

Do we realize that the word of the Lord will destroy every false position that we or others may espouse?

Do We Speak the Truth?

Paul admonishes the Ephesian brethren, and through them us, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour" (Eph. 4:25).

Do we realize that the moment we are found to be misrepresenting truth, from that point on, others can never be sure, have confidence in, what we say?

Distorting truth comes with a high price.

Does the Bible teach us that it is possible to pervert truth? "And [Paul] said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord" (Acts 13:10)? There is no other truth or gospel, "but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:7).

While flattery may work with some people it will not work with the Lord. "And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know

that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites" (Matt. 22:16-18)?

Are We Careful To Receive Truth?

"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" (1 Tim. 5:19-22).

We are not to receive unsubstantiated assertions. We must act only when truth has been sustained. We must not be partial when handling truth. We must not join forces with another before truth is established. If we are not extra cautious, we may become a partaker of the sins of deceiving parties.

The Lord has a policy that must not be forgotten. When brethren have differences of a personal nature, the differing parties should settle it. If the two are unable to settle it alone, witnesses are to be taken and confrontation of the erring party be realized. This does not mean that we take a person with us that will tell our "side" apart from the presence of the accused (even our courts permit the accused to face his accusers), but a person who has been a witness to both parties actions. When objective, established truth is rejected, then the wrong is to be publicized (Matt.

18:15-17).

If I am to know and act as truth demands, I must be willing to be certain of what I commend. It is not wise to meddle in that which is another man's business (1 Pet. 4:15). "He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears" (Prov 26:17). "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him" (Prov. 18:13). "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (Prov. 17:15).

Truth is Costly

Did not they summon false witnesses to murder the Incarnate Truth "... yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses" (Matt. 26: 60, see also John 8:40).

It has been said that, "The truth which makes men free is for the most part the truth which men prefer not to hear" (Herbert Sebastian Agar [1897-1980], U.S. writer and journalist.) *A Time for Greatness* (1942).

Samuel Johnson, the British writer, makes the following observation about truth: "Truth, Sir,

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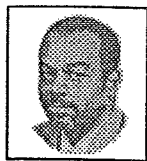
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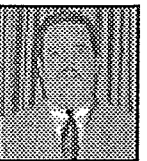
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Terry Hightower



Tom Holland



Nathan Kidwell

Monday

9:00 Male Responsibilities

9:40 Abraham

10:20 BREAK

10:50 Youth Directors

11:30 LUNCH

Potential Difficulties: No Eldership

1:30 Evangelistic Oversight

2:00 Committee/Trustee Rules, Reaffirmation

2:30 Men's Business Meetings

3:00 BREAK

3:30 Forum: Leadership Problems with No Elders

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Singing

7:00 Paul: A Reformed Leader

7:45 Essentials of Leadership

Ben Radford

V.P. Black

Jeff Clark

Bernard Smith

Dub McClish

Barry Gilreath

Bobby Green

Tom Holland

Wednesday

9:00 Caring for the Bereaved

9:40 Samuel

10:20 BREAK

10:50 Young Preachers Need Elders

11:30 LUNCH

Potential Difficulties: False Teachers

1:30 Preacher-Elders Harmony

2:00 Identifying False Teaching

2:30 Stopping False Teaching

3:00 BREAK

3:30 Forum: False Teaching

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Singing

7:00 Teaching Privately

7:45 Manipulating Leaders

Micky Bell

V.P. Black

Nathan Kidwell

Paul Ditoro

Ulyesses Richardson

Freddie Clayton

Anthony Weeks

Roy Dicks

Thursday

9:00 Joseph: Training for Leadership

9:40 Nehemiah: A Model Leader

10:20 BREAK

10:50 What Elders Should Expect

11:30 LUNCH

Potential Difficulties: Encouraging Leaders

1:30 How Do We Honor Leaders?

2:00 Do Elders Have Authority Only In Example?

2:30 Are All Elders Worthy of Honor?

3:00 BREAK

3:30 Forum: Encouraging Leaders

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Singing

7:00 Following a Leader

7:45 Leadership and the Future

Tommy Blewett

Bruce Daugherty

Timothy Kidwell

Tom Holland

B.J. Clarke

Terry M. Hightower

Neil Lopez

Tom Holland

Tuesday

9:00 Joshua: A Key to Successful Leadership

9:40 Eli

10:20 BREAK

10:50 Jeroboam: Consequences of Disobedient Leaders

11:30 LUNCH

Potential Difficulties: The Role of Women

1:30 Unauthorized Role

2:00 Unbiblical Restrictions

2:30 Commending Women

3:00 BREAK

3:30 Forum: The Role of Women

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Singing

7:00 King Saul: A Leader Like the Nations

7:45 Faithful Women Leading

David Wade

V.P. Black

Tim Shoulders

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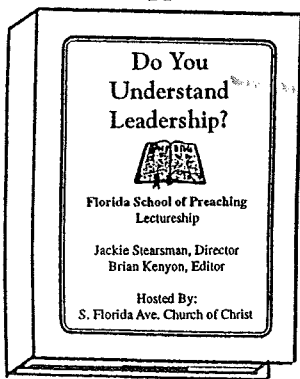
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is a cow, which will yield such people [skeptics, JMS] no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull."

In the Firm Foundation (September 2000), Alexander Campbell is quoted as follows: "The fiercer the storm the sooner it passes away. The hotter the war the sooner over; and the more ferociously the truth is opposed the sooner it triumphs over its enemies. The enemies of the truth never yet fairly met it. There is no fair play on the part of error. I have long since settled in my own mind that no errorist can either reason or act fairly: for if he did he would soon get rid of his errors. There is, therefore, no honesty but in covenant with truth. All errorists are of necessity dishonest men. They cannot help it. Were they to act honestly they could not be errorists! (Quoted in the book, Bound to Slavery, pp. 60-61)."

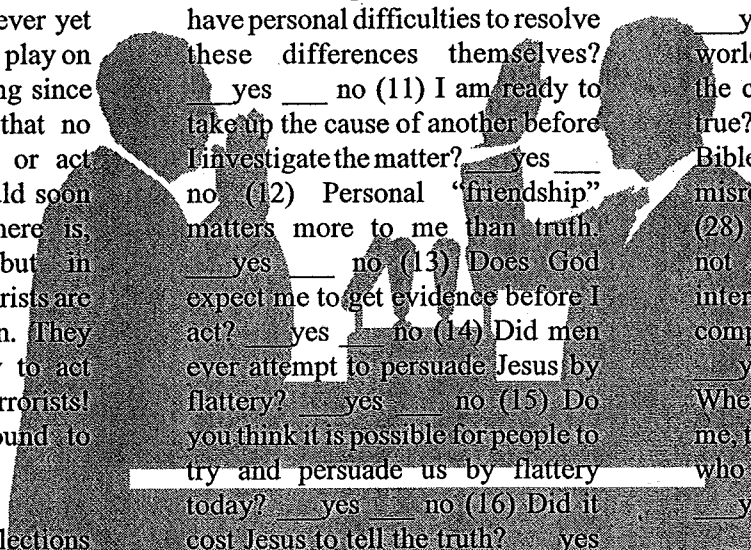
Conclusion

We close these reflections with a number of questions. Let each of us consider them prayerfully and be determined to be directed by the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. What does God's word teach, how do we read and apply it (Luke 10:26)?

(1) Is God a respecter of persons? ___yes ___ no (2) Can God lie? ___yes ___ no (3) Should we place a priority on truth? ___yes ___ no (4) Should we love truth?

___yes ___ no (5) Should we believe truth? ___yes ___ no (6) Should we obey truth? (7) Should our mind dwell on truth? ___yes ___ no (8) If we can accept falsehood as easily as truth, can we ever be sure that we have obeyed the truth? ___yes ___ no (9) If we do not place a premium on truth, can we ever expect to have peace in congregations? ___yes ___ no (10) Should we expect individuals who have personal difficulties to resolve these differences themselves? ___yes ___ no (11) I am ready to take up the cause of another before I investigate the matter? ___yes ___ no (12) Personal "friendship" matters more to me than truth. ___yes ___ no (13) Does God expect me to get evidence before I act? ___yes ___ no (14) Did men ever attempt to persuade Jesus by flattery? ___yes ___ no (15) Do you think it is possible for people to try and persuade us by flattery today? ___yes ___ no (16) Did it cost Jesus to tell the truth? ___yes ___ no (17) Do you think that it may cost us to tell the truth? ___yes ___ no (18) Does the Bible teach that some tried to pervert the truth in the first century? ___yes ___ no (19) Is it possible for persons to pervert truth today? ___yes ___ no (20) Is it possible for us to know the truth today? ___yes ___

no (21) Were Jesus and the Apostles ever misrepresented by their brethren? ___yes ___ no (22) Is it possible for brethren to misrepresent things today? ___yes ___ no (23) Are we to accept an assertion from brethren without investigating the matter for ourselves? ___yes ___ no (24) Does the majority decide what is true? ___yes ___ no (25) Does the minority decide what is true? ___yes ___ no (26) Should the world have a higher standard than the church in determining what is true? ___yes ___ no (27) Does the Bible speak favorably of those who misrepresent truth? ___yes ___ no (28) In the day of judgment, it will not matter whether I have been interested in and complied with truth? ___yes ___ no (29) When people think of me, they think of one who tells the truth? ___yes ___ no



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