

WHAT IS TRUTH AND HOW CAN IT BE KNOWN?



A Study Compiled
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What is truth? That is a question that goes back to the very beginning of the time of mankind on the face of the earth. It is also a question that was asked by Pilate in the face of the Lord Jesus on the night of His betrayal in Jerusalem as recorded in John 18:37. It is a question that billions of people are asking today as they seek for answers in the journey of life, and unfortunately many people are not finding the answer. Because the great multitude of people cannot answer the question of “what is truth,” there are those who doubt or deny if truth can even be known.

Truth is the very basic foundation block of society without which there is great chaos as people are free to do that which is right in their own eyes. Without truth, there is also great social weakness because there is no absolute upon which to build a solid philosophy. Without truth, life itself, is unstable and flippant and ends up having no real direction or valuable objective.

Over the past years, many societies built values of truth on the divine absolutes that were found in the scripture and made clear through the Ten Commandments. But, in the last few decades, the absolutes of the Word of God have been disregarded by many and consequently there is a host of worldly doctrines that have led people into a universe of uncertainty. This uncertainty is seen in practically all secular universities and unfortunately is even creeping into religious and Christian thought in some circles.

What is truth and how can it be known? All one really needs to do in order to come up with the proper answer to that question is to study the Bible, the Word of God. The Bible is truth and is filled with examples of how truth is to be applied to everyone’s life. The Bible also teaches the danger of doubting, denying or violating truth on level of our culture.

Truth is a real entity and it can be known without any doubt. The study that lies before us clearly relates what truth is, how it can be known and why it is important for the Christian to apply it on a daily basis in every realm of his life.

Do you know the truth? Without the knowledge of truth, there can be no real understanding of God or who we are, or why we have been created, or what the universe is all about. So, let’s set our mind and heart on knowing truth and how it is necessary for a life of blessing and fulfillment with God.

I. WHAT IS TRUTH?

A. According To Current Secular Philosophy

1. Some teach that truth cannot be known because nothing is absolute.
2. Some teach that truth changes with generations, culture, time, geography, age, religion and thought.
3. Some teach that truth is what ever you want it to be.
4. Some teach that real truth cannot be found, defined or understood.

B. According to the Webster College Dictionary

1. "Truth is the actual state of a matter."
2. "Truth is conformity with fact or reality."
3. "Truth is verified or indisputable fact, proposition, or principle."
4. "Truth is actual existence."

C. According to Scripture

1. "Truth is that which is actual and true to the fact."
2. "Truth is what which is real, actual, ideal, or genuine."

D. According to the Biblical World View

1. Francis Schaeffer said: "TRUTH IS THE UNCHANGED AND UNCHANGING EXPRESSION OF WHO GOD IS; IT IS NOT OUR OWN PERSONAL AND ARBITRARY INTERPRETATION OF REALITY."
2. Drawn from the pages of scripture: "TRUTH IS THAT WHICH IS CONSTANT WITH THE MIND, WILL, CHARACTER, GLORY AND BEING OF GOD."
3. To the point: TRUTH IS THE SELF-EXPRESSION OF GOD. Therefore, without God, there is not truth to be known at all.
4. God is the author, source, determiner, governor, arbiter, ultimate standard, and final judge of all truth.
 - a. Deuteronomy 32:4
 - b. Psalm 31:5
 - c. Isaiah 65:16
 - d. John 14:6
 - e. John 15:26
5. Truth means nothing apart from God and cannot be adequately explained, recognized, understood or defined without God as the real source.
6. When the biblical definition of truth is abandoned, unrighteousness will be the unpreventable result in a person or a society.

II. CAN TRUTH REALLY BE KNOWN?

The answer to that question is a very strong "YES!" But, truth cannot be known, found, or practiced apart from God and His Word for God is the FOUNDATION OF ALL TRUTH! That is the big problem today. People are denying the very existence of God. When God is denied, forgotten, or disregarded, it is impossible to know or find the truth. When God is placed back into the equation, then truth can be clearly found and practiced for the benefit of the person and society in general. How is truth found?

- A. By the Study of the Word of God – John 17:17
- B. By the Acknowledgment of Jesus Christ – John 1:14
- C. By the Continual Commitment to the Word of God and Jesus Christ – John 8:31-36
- D. By the Teaching of the Holy Spirit – John 16:13

The true Christian must endeavor to remain in the Word of God, follow the teachings of Christ and yield to the Holy Spirit each step of the way of his life in order to know the truth. But then, the proclamation of the truth is also in the responsibility of the Christian in the world. If the true Christian does not live and proclaim the truth, the world will not know the truth!

III. THE WAR FOR TRUTH

From the very beginning of time of mankind on the face of the earth there has been a war against the truth from the pit of Hell under the direction of Satan himself! Genesis 1:1-7 is a clear illustration of that war when Satan approached Eve in the Garden of Eden under the guise of the serpent. That war began when the serpent said to Eve in verse one: “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” From that point in time, the war against truth has greatly flourished, and look where we are today! In the current contemporary society, we must understand that Satan is still the main source of this war “against” truth and will continue to strengthen his battle until he is finally defeated by Jesus Christ and cast into the eternal lake of fire. In order to be able to confront and win the war “against” truth, each Christian believer must know, understand and apply the spiritual armor that is spoken of in Ephesians 6:10-17. Apart from the personal application of that text each and every day, the war for truth will be lost. When the individual Christian loses the war “against” truth, the effect reaches into the family, the church, the community, the society, the nation and the rest of the world. Therefore each Christian must put forth every effort by the grace of God to learn as much as possible about the war “against” truth and the war “for” truth and do his part in contributing to victory. At this point it will be practical to consider the war “for” truth as it is faced in the world and in the Church of Jesus Christ.

A. The War for Truth in the World

1. The philosophy and tactic of the war “against” truth in the world these days is called “POSTMODERNISM.” The term “POSTMODERNISM” was developed in the 1980’s to describe several popular trends in architecture, art, literature, history, culture, and religion.
2. Postmodernism is marked by the tendency to dismiss the possibility of ANY SURE AND SETTLED KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH!
3. Postmodernism says that “TRUTH IS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW.” Therefore, nothing is certain, and the wise person WILL NEVER SPEAK WITH TOO MUCH CONVICTION about anything.
4. Postmodernists believe that STRONG CONVICTIONS ABOUT ANYTHING IS ARROGENT AND HOPELESSLY NAÏVE.
5. Postmodernists contend that everyone is entitled to his own truth and therefore no one or no thought or no action is wrong. Everything is right as long as the individual who is does not press his belief upon others. That is the basis of “TOLERANCE” in the secular world view today.

B. The War for Truth in the Church of Jesus Christ

1. Postmodernism in the world has forced its way into the Church of Jesus Christ and has created a monster called “THE EMERGING CHURCH.”
2. The “EMERGING CHURCH” is a SELF-CONSCIOUS EFFORT (as opposed to being a Holy Spirit effort) TO MAKE CHRISTIANITY MORE SUITABLE TO POSTMODERN CULTURE. The thinking of those involved in the “EMERGING CHURCH” is that EVERY ASPECT OF CHRISTIANITY MUST REFLECT THE THOUGHT OF POSTMODERNISM IF MODERN CULTURE IS TO BE REACHED WITH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. The real problem with that is that the Gospel is designed BY GOD to reach everyone everywhere in every age and does not need to be tweaked, added to, changed, or subtracted from to any degree. The goal of Christianity

and preaching the Gospel is not to lead people to a POSTMODERN THOUGHT, but to lead them to Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, many church leaders do not see that as an issue these days.

3. The “EMERGING CHURCH,” adopting postmodern thought, has resulted in a number of heretical viewpoints which every Christian should be concerned about. Here is a list of some of those heretical viewpoints.
 - a. The questioning of the Value of Preaching. The Bible teaches that “preaching” is the method God has chosen to reach people with the Gospel. Note: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24.
 - b. The Developing of a Dialogue form of Communication. This can be seen in various forms, but two examples include:
 - 1) Attempting to build friendly dialogue with cults and false religions.
2 Corinthians 6:14-17
 - 2) Replacing the preaching of the scripture to a discussion about the scripture.
1 Corinthians 1:18-25
 - c. The Replacing the Pastor in the local church to a “NARRATOR” in the local church. The scripture teaches that the place of the pastor in the local church is a two-fold concept:
 - 1) A Spiritual Gift – Ephesians 4:11
 - 2) A Leadership Position – 1 Timothy 3:1-7 (where the word “Bishop” is used) and 1 Peter 5:1-4 (where the word “Elder” is used). Therefore to replace the pastor with a narrator is very much a violation of the Word of God.
 - d. The Changing of “THUS SAITH THE LORD” to “WHAT DO YOU THINK?”
Colossians 2:8

NOTE: One of the basic thoughts behind the “small group movement” today is founded on the “WHAT DO YOU THINK” philosophy. The root of that is POSTMODERNISM where truth cannot be fully known. Many times people can be heard saying, “THIS VERSE MEANS TO ME THAT...” which once again is a POSTMODERN concept because the pure understanding of scripture is not drawn from WHAT THE VERSE MEANS TO ME but from WHAT THE VERSE MEANS...PERIOD!

4. The rise of Postmodernism through the “EMERGING CHURCH” has replaced TRUTH WITH UNCERTAINTY regarding some of the following fundamental truths of Scripture:
 - a. The Inspiration of Scripture
 - b. The Authority of the Word of God
 - c. The Sound Understanding of the Gospel
 - d. The Way of Salvation
 - e. The Assurance of Salvation
 - f. The Settled Confidence in the Lordship of Jesus Christ
 - g. The Exclusivity of Christ as the ONLY way of salvation.
 - h. The Place of Theology in the Christian Life
 - i. The Necessity of Sound Doctrine being the basis of Sound Living
5. The Truth has been Under Attack in Every Major Era of Church History
 - a. From the Perspective of Biblical Teaching
 - 1) Acts 20:26-31
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
 - 3) 1 Timothy 4:1-3

- 4) 1 Timothy 6:20-21
- 5) 2 Timothy 4:1-4
- 6) 2 Peter 2:1-3
- 7) Jude 1-25

b. From the Perspective of Recent Church History

- 1) The 1920's
"THE LIBERAL/FUNDAMENTALIST CONTROVERSY"
- 2) The 1940's
"THE FUNDAMENTALIST/EVANGELICAL SPLIT"
- 3) The 1950's
"THE EVANGELICAL/NEO-EVANGELICAL DIVIDE"
- 4) The 1970's
"THE NEO-EVANGELICAL/PSEUDO-EVANGELICAL DIVISION"
- 5) The 1990's
"THE EMERGING CHURCH"

NOTE: In the last 100 years the weakening of the Gospel, the questioning of the authority of the scripture and the invasion of heresy and the questioning of truth has led drastically to apostasy within in the church. Following that trend, if the Lord tarries, in another 100 years there WILL BE NO TRUTH AT ALL! CHRISTIANS MUST STAND UP AND FIGHT FOR THE TRUTH! CHRISTIANS MUST EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH! The failure to do so will lead to a "POST-CHRISTIAN ERA" which is the term used to describe the spiritual nature of Europe these days.

6. The Christian Church and the Individual Christian must not flirt with the liberal spirit of the postmodern age. We CANNOT AFFORD to be apathetic about the truth God has given us. Jesus Christ, the REAL TRUTH, died to bear witness of that truth and therefore it is our duty to know, guard, proclaim, and pass the truth on to the next generation.
7. The Church of Jesus Christ is the SUPPORT OF THE TRUTH OF GOD.
1 Timothy 3:15
8. Each Christian is an AMBASSADOR FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD.
2 Corinthians 5:20
9. Each Christian is a SOLDIER FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD.
2 Timothy 2:3,4
10. Each Christian must REPRESENT AND FIGHT FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD.
Colossians 2:8; Jude 20-23

IV. WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT FOR THE CHRISTIAN TO KNOW AND STAND FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD?

NOTE: Often the following words are mentioned by good-hearted Christian people.

"Let's not argue over what we believe. Doctrine does not matter. Let's lay aside our differences over creeds and dogma and focus on how we live. Let's just come together with each other to show the world that we love Jesus."

QUESTION: How do YOU respond to that type of talk?

Certainly this type of talk sounds generous, kind, and loving. But is it biblically correct? A comparison with that type of talk to the scripture indicates that it is NOT BIBLICALLY CORRECT. WHY?

- 1) It is a violation of the way Jesus taught that real salvation and biblical truth hinges on hearing and believing – John 5:24
- 2) Jesus never left any room for someone to imagine that His teaching is optional, just as long as the person's behavior is fine – John 8:24
- 3) What we believe, rather than what we do, is what secures us a righteous standing before God. Romans 4:5; Galatians 2:16

TRUTH IS VERY IMPORTANT TO THE TRUE CHRISTIAN

- A. Because Jesus is the Truth
– John 14:6
- B. Because Christians are a part of The Way of Truth
– 2 Peter 2:1-3
- C. Because a Relationship with Christ Results in the Truth
– John 8:31-32
- D. Because Christians are “THE PILLAR AND THE GROUND OF THE TRUTH.”
- 1 Timothy 3:15

FACT: TRUTH IS AN ESSENTIAL CONCEPT IN GENUINE CHRISTIANITY. ALL OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR EXPERIENCE WITH CHRIST FLOW FROM THE TRUTH WE BELIEVE. TAKE AWAY BIBLICAL TRUTH AND ALL YOU HAVE IS FLUCTUATING EMOTION THAT WILL LEAD TO HERESY.

CHALLENGE: EACH SINGLE CHRISTIAN AND EACH LOCAL CHURCH MUST MAKE THE TRUTH OF GOD THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY IN LIFE AND MINISTRY. TRUTH IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR. EVERY CHRISTIAN AND PARTICULARLY EVERY CHURCH LEADER WILL BE WILLING TO FIGHT FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD IF HE IS GOING TO BE FAITHFUL TO GOD AND HIS CALLING.

V. WHERE IS THE BATTLE FOR TRUTH TO BE FOUGHT?

Note Acts 20:27-31

- A. In the Heart
- B. In the Home
- C. In the Church
- D. In the Community
- E. In Society
- F. In the Nation
- G. In the World

WHERE EVER WE GO AS CHRISTIANS, THE BATTLE FOR TRUTH MUST BE FOUGHT

NOTE: SOME COMMON PLACES WHERE TRUTH HAS BEEN REPLACED WITH ERROR BECAUSE THE BATTLE FOR TRUTH HAS BEEN SURRENDERED.

- 1) In Music

- 2) In Print
- 3) In Media
- 4) In Schools of every level from pre-school to advanced education in universities both in the secular and in the spiritual
- 5) In Activities
- 6) In Relationships
- 7) In Translations of the Bible

VI. WHAT IS APOSTASY?

- A. Apostasy is the **SERIOUS, SOUL-DESTROYING ERROR THAT ARISES FROM WITHIN THE CHURCH.** 2 Thessalonians 2:3 (“Falling Away”).
- B. Apostasy speaks of “abandonment, separation and defection.” That is, it abandons the truth, separates from the truth and defects from the truth.
- C. Apostasy really is the **ABDICATION OF THE TRUTH!**

QUESTION: Can a genuine Christian fall away from the faith and become an apostate?

ANSWER: NO! However, a genuine Christian can refuse to stand for the truth and even fall into heresy at times, which will cause the next generation to be apostate. Remember: “WHAT TODAY’S GENERATION TOLERATES, TOMORROW’S GENERATION PROPOGATES”

BIBLICAL FACT: Those who depart from the truth show they never had the truth in the first place – 1 John 2:18,19.

VII. WHAT IS AN APOSTATE?

- A. The word “apostasy” basically means “NO FAITH.” An “Apostate” is one who has known the truth, given some show of affirmation to the truth, perhaps has even preached the truth, but never personally embraced the truth. That is, **HE HAS NO TRUE FAITH IN GOD!**
- B. Apostates seek to remain in the church and seek the acceptance among God’s people.
- C. Apostates undermine faith and corrupt the truth in the things they say and do.
- D. Apostates appear to be friendly, likable and holy.
- E. Apostates talk a lot about God and the Bible.
- F. Apostates start out “blazing” but die off and fade away.
- G. Apostates are very sly in their operation
- H. Apostates are spiritually blinded by their evil desires and imagine they are serving Christ.

VIII. THE TRUTH VERSUS APOSTASY CONSIDERATION

NOTE: The truth versus apostasy consideration is not difficult to understand, but it certainly is important to comprehend. Simply stated:

- A. Truth saves souls, edifies Christians and honors God.
- B. Apostasy destroys souls, tears down Christians, and dishonors God.

CHALLENGE: THE CHRISTIAN MUST STAND FOR THE TRUTH OR APOSTASY WILL PREVAIL.

IX. WHY IS APOSTASY A THREAT TO EVERY CHRISTIAN, EVERY CHURCH, AND EVERY CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATION?

- A. Apostasy begins when truth is not upheld.
- B. Apostasy will develop when Christians tolerate false teaching and practice.
- C. Apostasy that is unchallenged breeds confusion and draws more people into its shallow fold of destruction.
- D. Apostasy not resisted will spread like wild fire through churches, colleges, seminaries, mission agencies, denominations and other Christian institutions.
- E. Apostasy inoculates people against the truth.
- F. Apostasy is spiritual terrorism
- G. Apostasy is made up of Satanic Missionaries who have the mission to produce more apostates.
- H. Apostasy can be deceptive.

NOTE : Acts 8:9-25 – A very clear indication of how apostasy works, even in the midst of the truth! From this text there are many lessons to learn about apostasy.

X. WHY 21ST CENTURY CHRISTIANITY IS IN TROUBLE REGARDING THE TRUTH

Apostasy is more imminent and more dangerous than ever before because MOST CHRISTIANS SIMPLY DO NOT CARE ABOUT THE PREVALENCE OF FALSE DOCTRINE, nor do they take seriously THEIR DUTY TO FIGHT AGAINST APOSTASY! Instead, they want a friendly atmosphere of open acceptance for everyone, tolerate opposing ideas, and dialogue with apostates. This type of an attitude has led to some very serious dangerous activities within the Body of Christ. And, unfortunately, many do not even recognize those dangerous activities. 21ST Century Christianity, as a whole, is in grave trouble, and the reasons for that trouble must be identified and corrected if God is to be honored by the church. By the way, NO CHRISTIAN INDIVIDUAL, CHURCH OR CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IS EXEMPT FROM THE DANGERS!

21ST CENTURY CHRISTIANITY IS IN TROUBLE REGARDING TRUTH FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS

(This is certainly not an all-inclusive list)

- A. The Failure to stand against improper approaches and acceptance of Bible Doctrine.
- B. The Failure to Commit to the Purity of the Gospel.
- C. The Failure to Treat the Gospel as the Core and Foundation of All Truth.
- D. The Failure to Recognize the Distinctive Doctrines declared by the Protestant Reformation (even though it is recognized that Baptists are not a direct part of the Protestant movement) as being absolutely essential to authentic biblical Christianity. Those Distinctive Doctrines are “NONNEGOTIABLES” to the Christian Faith and include:
 - 1. The Absolute Authority of Scripture.
 - 2. The Perfect Sufficiency of the Word of God.
 - 3. The Sinfulness of Mankind.
 - 4. The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ.
 - 5. The Substitutionary Atonement work of Christ through His Shed Blood.
 - 6. The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

7. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
8. The Reality of Hell.
9. The Reality of Heaven.
10. The Doctrine of Justification by Faith in Jesus Christ Alone.
11. The Deity of Jesus Christ.
- E. The Failure to Deny that any Good Works of mankind have any merit before God in the Obtaining of Salvation.
- F. The Failure to Separate from Worldly Carnal Attitudes and Substitute that separation with an effort to keep in step with the Fads of Worldly Culture in order to Gain the Approval of the New Generation.
- G. The Failure to Resist the Pressure to Make Christianity seems “Contemporary” and “Sophisticated” in the World’s Eyes.

Because of the above failures, modern Christianity isn’t really Christian anymore. The typical Christian leader today is far more likely to express indignation at someone who calls for doctrinal clarity and accuracy than to firmly oppose another self-styled Christian who is actively attacking some vital biblical truth.

XI. HOW CAN THE CONCERNED CHRISTIAN SURVIVE IN AN AGE OF APOSTASY, COMPROMISE AND DEPARTURE FROM THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE?

- A. By Making Accurate Bible Study a Number One Priority.
- B. By Majoring on Developing a Knowledge of the Truth.
- C. By Mastering the Conduct of Teaching the Truth in the Home, the Church, the Community, the Society, the Nation and the World.
- D. By Marking Those People and Organizations that Promote Apostasy.
- E. By Moving Away from False Teachers and their Teaching.

XII. THE LONG BATTLE FOR TRUTH

From the beginning of time, apostasy and doctrinal error have been at war against the truth of God. This war has been headed up by Satan himself and is aimed at every true act of God and His people. Notice how that battle for truth has always been existent.

- A. The Battle for Truth in Old Testament Times
 1. Genesis 3:1-7
 2. Joshua 22:22
 3. Jeremiah 2:19
- B. The Battle for Truth in the New Testament Times
 1. John 3:19
 2. John 6:66
 3. Galatians 1:1-10; 3:1-3
 4. Jude 1-25
- C. The Battle for Truth until the End of the Age
 1. Matthew 24:11
 2. 2 Peter 3:3,4
 3. 1 Timothy 4:1,2
 4. 2 Timothy 4:1-4

Apostasy is a fact of all history and there will never be an armistice in the battle for truth until Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire forever. The greatest threats of all come FROM WITHIN THE CHURCH today. Apostates are often present in the church teaching lies, popularizing falsehoods, denying true biblical doctrine and redefining truth. False teachers are often very likable, persuasive and intelligent people. And according to Jude 4 they creep into the church unnoticed because many Christians really do not know the truth nor can they detect error. In fact, since modern Christianity has become so broad and all-embracing, many Christians today imagine there are no such things as false teachers and apostates. Then, when an effort is made to reveal error, those who are doing so are often made out to be “holier than thou” bigots who have no mercy or love. What they fail to understand is that all truth stems from God, Jesus Christ is truth and in fact, Jesus died so that the truth can be experienced by all mankind. If Jesus Christ died for and according to the truth of God, the church is the “pillar and the ground of the truth,” and the Holy Spirit is the “spirit of truth,” then every person who names the name of Christ is under the mandate to stand for and promote the truth in the face of all spiritual and doctrinal error. To fail to stand for and promote the truth is a sin that has far reaching devastating results.

XIII. WHEN IS IT TIME TO GO TO WAR FOR THE TRUTH?

- A. The Time is Now!
- B. God has given us a Mandate to do our Part in the War for Truth. Among other places that Mandate is clearly found in Jude 3 in which every Christian is commanded to “EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH.”
- C. Our task is to properly interpret, understand, publish, and defend the truth God has once and for all delivered to the saints, and if we refuse to accept that task, we will give a personal answer to God alone at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

XIV. WHAT MUST WE DO?

SIMPLY DETERMINE TO OBEY THE WORD OF GOD!

- A. Romans 16:17
- B. 2 Corinthians 6:14,15
- C. 2 Thessalonians 3:6
- D. 2 Timothy 3:5
- E. 2 John 10,11

CONCLUSION

Great effort has been taken in this study to present the treatise that false teaching, apostasy and spiritual error is every where in the world today, even in the pew and pulpit of the local church. Apart from knowing the truth and committing to proclaiming the truth, any Christian is capable of tolerating a heretical philosophy that will be propagated by others which will result in apostasy. It does not take too much effort to look around and see churches that once stood true to the Word of God, but now are nothing more than social clubs where the Word of God is not at all considered. This happened because somewhere along the line certain Christians did not consider the importance of “EARNESTLY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH.”

It also was the motive of this study to challenge every Christian to stand for and proclaim the truth of God. We all must engage in the battle for truth every day where we are. Certainly our various personalities and positions in life will determine the specifics as to how we will engage in the battle, but we all must engage. But, if we are truly living by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, He will give us the wisdom, strength and ability to stand for and proclaim the truth. All we need to do is to submit to Him and obey His leading. Doing so will bring honor to God and blessing to us.

As we come to the conclusion of this study, may it be known that what has been presented in this outline is the very tip of the iceberg. There is much more that could be studied and there is so much for us to be challenged to do for the cause of the truth. The battle for truth is deep and wide and is found in every level of life on every continent of the world. But perhaps a final note in this study that will motivate each of us to stand for the truth until Jesus returns is the very thing He said to Pilate on the night before His crucifixion.

Please note John 18:37. There we read: "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. *TO THIS END WAS I BORN, AND FOR THIS CAUSE CAME I INTO THE WORLD, THAT I SHOULD BEAR WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH.* Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Do you see it? Jesus was presenting His mission right there in the face of an ungodly ruler who had no real concept of truth. Jesus was fighting the battle for truth at the verge of His own death. He clearly stated that His purpose of coming into the world was for the sake of bearing witness of the truth! What does that mean? Well, do you remember how truth was defined under the first segment of this outline? "TRUTH IS THAT WHICH IS CONSTANT WITH THE MIND, WILL, CHARACTER, GLORY AND BEING OF GOD." In short, "TRUTH IS THE SELF-EXPRESSION OF GOD." So, what Jesus was saying is that He came into the world to present TRUTH as it is revealed in God which includes every aspect of Who God Is, What God Expects and How God Operates through His redemptive plan and purpose to glorify His Name.

Then, Jesus says, "EVERY ONE THAT IS OF THE TRUTH HEARTH MY VOICE." That is quite a statement. What He is saying is that everyone that hears, that is, agrees with what He says, appropriates the same mission "TO BEAR WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH."

Are you a Christian? Have you personally received Christ as your Savior? Then, you have a mission which is BEAR WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH in the way the Lord directs. Be faithful to your mission and thus reflect Christ in bearing witness unto the truth so that you will hear the words, "WELL DONE, THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT," when you stand before the Lord and therefore by doing so, you will ultimately bring glory, praise and honor to God, which is why we are left on earth after our salvation in the first place! Amen? Amen!

FOR FURTHER STUDY CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

- 1) Deuteronomy 32:4
- 2) Psalm 51:6
- 3) Psalm 91:4
- 4) Psalm 117:2
- 5) Psalm 119:30
- 6) Proverbs 23:23
- 7) Isaiah 59:14
- 8) Jeremiah 9:3
- 9) John 1:14
- 10) John 16:13

APPENDIX ONE

THE DISCUSSION OF SPIRITUAL ERROR, APOSTASY, HERESY AND FALSE TEACHING IN THE WORD OF GOD.

The Word of God is full of examples of and warnings against spiritual error, apostasy, heresy and false teaching. In the Old Testament, over and over again the warning from God was to avoid all forms of teaching that was contradictory to His Word. One of the problematic issues Israel faced back then was their inability to make a clean separation from the false doctrine that was around them. It has always been interesting to see how straight forward God was in speaking of those who were in spiritual error in the Old Testament. For instance, when describing such in Isaiah 32:6 we find these words: *“FOR THE VILE PERSON WILL SPEAK VILLANY, AND HIS HEART WILL WORK INIQUITY, TO PRACTISE HYPOCRISY, AND TO UTTER ERROR AGAINST THE LORD, TO MAKE EMPTY THE SOUL OF THE HUNGRY AND WILL CAUSE THE DRINK OF THE THIRSTY TO FAIL.”*

For a basic study of spiritual error and the war against the truth in the Old Testament consider the following passages:

- 1) Deuteronomy 13:5
- 2) Isaiah 9:15
- 3) Jeremiah 2:8
- 4) Ezekiel 13:2
- 5) Hosea 9:7
- 6) Micah 3:5
- 7) Zephaniah 3:5
- 8) Zechariah 13:3

In the New Testament, at least 23 of the 27 books include teaching regarding error or false doctrine. For your own study, consider the following passages:

- 1) Matthew 24:5
- 2) Mark 13:22
- 3) Luke 6:2
- 4) John 5:10
- 5) Acts 15:24
- 6) Romans 16:18
- 7) 1 Corinthians 1:11
- 8) 2 Corinthians 11:3
- 9) Galatians 1:6-9
- 10) Ephesians 4:14
- 11) Philippians _____
- 12) Colossians 2:8
- 13) 1 Thessalonians _____
- 14) 2 Thessalonians 2:2
- 15) 1 Timothy 1:7
- 16) 2 Timothy 4:3
- 17) Titus 1:11
- 18) Philemon _____
- 19) Hebrews 13:9
- 20) James 4:4
- 21) 1 Peter _____
- 22) 2 Peter 2:1
- 23) 1 John 2:22-26
- 24) 2 John 7
- 25) 3 John 9-14
- 26) Jude 1-17
- 27) Revelation 2:1-3:33

What does all of this teaching against spiritual error from the Word of God teach us? The answer is simple. SPIRITUAL ERROR, FALSE DOCTRINE, APOSTASY AND HERESY ARE FOUND IN EVERY ERA, AMONG EVERY CULTURE AND UPON EVERY CONTINENT BECAUSE SATAN IS ALIVE AND WELL AND IS CONDUCTING A VERY STRONG BATTLE TO LEAD PEOPLE AWAY FROM THE TRUTH OF GOD!

How should we apply all of this teaching against spiritual error? WE MUST MAKE STANDING AGAINST SPIRITUAL ERROR A NUMBER PRIORITY IN OUR LIFE, OUR HOME, OUR CHURCH, AND OUR SOCIETY BECAUSE WHEN TRUTH IS SET ASIDE, NOTHING ELSE WILL GO RIGHT AT ALL AND THE RESULT WILL BE SPIRITUAL BONDAGE! Without the Church of Jesus Christ guarding and proclaiming the truth, no one will. Remember, we who know Jesus Christ as our personal savior are “THE PILLAR AND THE GROUND OF THE TRUTH” according to 1 Timothy 3:15. Let us accept the challenge to know the TRUTH AND STAND AGAINST ERROR IN EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIFE FOR AS LONG AS WE LIVE!

APPENDIX TWO

WHAT LEADS TO SPIRITUAL ERROR, FALSE DOCTRINE, APOSTASY AND HERESY IN THE LIFE OF THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN AND THE CHURCH?

The Word of God warns us over and over again on how important it is to stand for the truth and speak out against error. Yet, people in every generation forsake the truth and fall for error and in doing so lead others astray and hinder the work of the Lord in practical terms. So, what is it that leads people to depart from the truth and embrace error in their lives? At least the following six concepts must be considered.

- 1) The Lack of Sound Biblical Doctrine. Over the last generation or two the concern for sound biblical doctrine has died off to the point that many Christians cannot even name the ten basic doctrines of Christianity. When a basic understanding of sound doctrine is missed, spiritual error is already engrained in the mind of the individual and the church. It is true that sound doctrine breeds sound living. However, the opposite is true as well. The lack of sound doctrine will breed the lack of sound living. **WE MUST FOCUS ON LEARNING AND UNDERSTANDING BASIC BIBLE DOCTRINE IF ERROR IS TO BE AVOIDED.**
- 2) The Practice of Extreme Tolerance. Since about the mid 1980's there has been a great push for TOLERATION. Now, the word "TOLERATION" may not sound bad, and may even be looked upon as being a great quality to practice, but the problem is how the word is used by those who have departed from the truth. The concept for those who push EXTREME TOLERANCE is that *we must recognize that no one really knows the truth and therefore everyone is right in their own eyes and consequently to be civil, we must go along with what everyone believes.* God's Word tells over and over again, as seen in the previous pages of this study, that false teaching is NOT to be tolerated to any degree. Therefore, rather than following the trend of EXTREME TOLERANCE, the person committed to the truth of the Word of God **WILL STAND FOR TRUTH IN THE FACE OF ERROR AND WILL NOT TOLERATE ONE OUNCE OF COMPROMISE TO EXIST IN HIS CIRCLE OF LIVING.**
- 3) The Refusal to Shun the World. The three supreme themes that run throughout the pages of scripture are: the glory of God, salvation, and separation from the world. In every age, God's people have been ordered to **SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD SYSTEM THAT IS IN DIRECT VIOLATION OF THE WILL AND THE WAY OF GOD!** And yet, in every age, God's people have not obeyed that basic command and instead have compromised with the world in drastic ways. Today, in some areas, many Christians and certain local churches have not only followed the ways of the world, but have adapted the ways of the world to their lifestyle, worship and service. There is no way that honors God. Just like when the old Roman Empire took on Christianity as the state religion and many pagan practices were introduced into practice, so it is that when the church today does not shun the world newer pagan practices become a part of Christian life that denies the truth and welcomes error. **WE MUST DETERMINE TO BE OBEDIENT TO GOD AND INSTEAD OF FOLLOWING THE WAYS OF THE WORLD, WE MUST STAND FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD SO THAT A CLEAR DISTINCTIVE OF SOUND**

DOCTRINE AND LIVING MAY BE PRACTICED BY ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE FOR GOD'S GLORY.

- 4) The Failure to Interpret Scripture Accurately. The basic foundation of false teaching is improper interpretation and teaching of the Word of God. Almost all avenues of false teaching and spiritual error incorporate scripture, but the scripture is either not interpreted properly or taken completely out of its proper context. Every true Christian, from the time of his new birth, is to be compelled to learn how to interpret and apply the Word of God properly so that he can effectively learn the truth and stand against error. To do so involves striving for the accurate understanding of every biblical text and translating that understanding into daily living. One reason for the improper interpretation of scripture has been the rise of many false Bible translations that take away from the truth of the Word of God. Another reason has been the lack of intense Bible study by the average Christian. Yet, another reason has been the departure from expository teaching and preaching of the Bible by pastors. If we are going to know the truth and detect error, we must know what the Bible says. EVERY CHRISTIAN MUST COMMIT TO PROPER INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURE SO THAT HE CAN ORDER HIS LIFE ACCORDINGLY.
- 5) The Neglect of Church Discipline. False teaching and living have crept into the church because it has been allowed to exist. Rather than dealing with sin and false doctrine, many churches just “wink” at it with the idea that it will eventually go away. The problem is that IT WILL NOT GO AWAY! In fact, sin and false teaching just grows like a cancer if it is not stopped. To be obedient to Christ, the church MUST practice the type of discipline that will guarantee spiritual and doctrinal purity in every aspect of life and ministry. Church discipline is not easy. In fact, church discipline is very hard. But as each of us needs to be disciplined in every other area of our life, we need to see that discipline is practiced in the church as well. LET'S COMMIT TO PROPER CHURCH DISCIPLINE SO AS TO PREVENT THE GROWTH OF ERRONEOUS LIVING AND TEACHING.
- 6) The Lack of Spiritual Maturity. The lack of spiritual growth and maturity is sad in the church of Jesus Christ today. Even though the Bible commands us all to grow in our walk with the Lord, many people who have been saved for years are still babes in Christ. That must break the heart of God! Because of the lack of spiritual growth and maturity, spiritual error is not detected, and in fact, in certain ways, is practiced. Spiritual babes only eat and drink of the milk of the Word, whereas spiritual adults partake of the meat of the Word. The more spiritual meat we eat, the more truth we will apply. TO AVOID SPIRITUAL ERROR WE ALL ARE RESPONSIBLE TO GROW IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE. LET US COMMIT TO DOING SO IN ORDER THAT TRUTH MAY PREVAIL IN US INDIVIDUALLY AS WELL AS THE CHURCH CORPORATELY.



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