

THE TRUTH CRISIS

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(1 JOHN 4:6)

QUOTE:

“WE ARE FROM GOD, AND WHOEVER KNOWS GOD LISTENS TO US;
BUT WHOEVER IS NOT FROM GOD DOES NOT LISTEN TO US. THIS
IS HOW WE RECOGNIZE THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF
FALSEHOOD.” (AMP)

THIS VERSE ADDRESSES SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT. THE APOSTLE JOHN EXPLAINS THAT THOSE WHO POSSESS SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF GOD WILL ACCEPT THE TEACHINGS OF THE APOSTLES, WHILE THOSE WHO REJECTS GOD’S TRUTH REVEAL A DECEPTIVE SPIRIT. IT SERVES AS A TEST TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN DIVINE TRUTH AND WORLDLY DECEPTION.

KNOWING THE TRUTH OF GOD’S HOLY WORD AND BEING ABLE TO DISCERN THE SPIRIT OF FALSEHOOD, THROUGH SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT.

SO, HOW DOES ONE INCREASE SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT? FIRST, RECOGNIZING THAT GOD IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN INCREASE WISDOM, PRAY FOR IT (JAMES 1:5; PHILIPPIANS 1:9). THEN, KNOWING THE WISDOM TO DISTINGUISH GOOD FROM EVIL COMES BY TRAINING AND PRACTICE, GO TO THE HOLY BIBLE TO LEARN THE TRUTH AND, BY MEDITATION ON THE HOLY WORD, IT REINFORCES THE TRUTH.

THIS IS WHAT CHRISTIANS MUST DO TO DEVELOP SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT. WE MUST KNOW THE AUTHENTIC SO WELL THAT, WHEN THE FALSE APPEARS, WE CAN RECOGNIZE IT. BY KNOWING AND OBEYING THE WORD OF GOD, WE WILL BE “TRAINED BY CONSTANT PRACTICE TO DISTINGUISH GOOD FROM EVIL.” WE WILL KNOW GOD’S CHARACTER AND WILL. THIS IS THE HEART OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT---BEING ABLE TO DISTINGUISH THE VOICE OF THE WORLD FROM THE VOICE OF OUR ETERNAL GOD, TO HAVE A SENSE THAT “THIS IS RIGHT” OR

ALLOWS US TO “HATE WHAT IS EVIL; AND CLING TO WHAT IS GOOD” (ROMANS 12:9).

“WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT TRUTH?”

A SCRIPTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF TRUTH ENCOMPASSES MORE THAN SIMPLE HONESTY. THE BIBLE REVEALS TRUTH AS A MORAL CONCEPT ROOTED IN GOD’S CHARACTER (PSALM 43:3; 25:5; 26:3; 86:11; ISAIAH 65:16). HE IS THE “GOD OF TRUTH” (ISAIAH 65:16), AND HIS TRUTHFULNESS EMBRACES HIS STEADFASTNESS, TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND ETERNAL FAITHFULNESS (PSALM 117:2).

GOD DEMONSTRATES THAT HE IS TRUTH IN THE FAITHFULNESS AND DEPENDABILITY OF HIS WORDS, ACTIONS, AND DEALINGS: “GOD IS NOT A MAN, SO HE DOES NOT LIE. HE IS NOT HUMAN, SO HE DOES NOT CHANGE HIS MIND. HAS HE EVER SPOKEN AND FAILED TO ACT? HAS HE EVER PROMISED AND NOT CARRIED IT THROUGH? (NUMBERS 23:19; 1 SAMUEL 15:29). GOD’S WORD HOLDS TRUE, AND WE CAN TRUST EVERYTHING HE DOES (PSALM 33:4). HE IS COMPLETELY RELIABLE AND CONSISTENT IN HIS CHARACTER (DEUT. 32:4; PSALM 145:13; 2 TIMOTHY 2:13).

THE TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD ALSO HOLDS SANCTIFYING POWER FOR THE BELIEVER. IN HIS HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER, JESUS ASKED THE FATHER, “MAKE THEM HOLY BY YOUR TRUTH; TEACH THEM YOUR WORD, WHICH IS TRUTH” (JOHN 17:17). SINCE THE BIBLE IS TRUTH, CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO STUDY IT, WORKING HARD TO UNDERSTAND AND CORRECTLY APPLY IT TO THEIR LIVES (2 TIMOTHY 2:15; 3:16-17). AS WE DEEPEN OUR KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHT INTO GOD’S WORD, ITS TRUTH WILL SET US FREE. (JOHN 8:32).

FINALLY, GOD DESIRES HIS FOLLOWERS TO BE PEOPLE OF THE TRUTH (EPHESIANS 4:25). HE LOVES THOSE WHO TELL THE TRUTH AND DETESTS THOSE WHO LIE (PROVERBS 12:22; 6:16-19). THE LORD UNDERSCORES THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH BY PRESENTING US WITH “THE BELT OF TRUTH” AS THE FIRST PIECE OF OUR SPIRITUAL ARMOR (EPHESIANS 6:10-17). THE REST OF OUR ARMOR IS HELD SECURE WHEN THE TRUTH IS WRAPPED AROUND US. OTHERWISE, WE ARE

DEFENSELESS AGAINST THE LIES OF OUR ADVERSARY, THE DEVIL, WHO IS THE FATHER OF LIES (JOHN 8:44).

THE BIBLE SAYS THAT GOD DELIGHTS IN TRUTH. "THE LORD CLOSE TO ALL WHO CALL ON HIM, YES, TO ALL WHO CALL ON HIM IN TRUTH," DECLARES THE PSALMIST (PSALM 145:18). BECAUSE OF TRUTH'S HIGH VALUE, KING SOLOMON COUNSELS, "BUY THE TRUTH AND DO NOT SELL IT—WISDOM, INSTRUCTION AND INSIGHT AS WELL" (PROVERBS 23:23). GOD TAKES PLEASURE IN SEEING HIS TRUTH REFLECTED IN THE CHARACTER OF HIS CHILDREN (PSALMS 15:1-5; 51:6). GOD CALLS BELIEVERS TO WORSHIP HIM IN TRUTH (JOHN 4:24), LOVE OTHERS IN TRUTH (1 JOHN 3:18), AND ALWAYS SPEAK THE TRUTH (EPHESIANS 4:15, 25; ZECHARIAH 8:16).

FINALLY, THE GREEK WORD FOR "TRUTH" IS ALETHEIA, WHICH REFERS TO "DIVINE REVELATION" AND IS RELATED TO A WORD THAT LITERALLY MEANS "WHAT CAN'T BE HIDDEN." IT CONVEYS THE THOUGHT THAT TRUTH IS ALWAYS THERE, ALWAYS OPEN AND AVAILABLE FOR ALL TO SEE, WITH NOTHING BEING HIDDEN OR OBSCURED. THE HEBREW WORD FOR "TRUTH" IS EMETH, WHICH MEANS "FIRMNESS," "CONSTANCY" AND "DURATION." SUCH A DEFINITION IMPLIES AN EVERLASTING SUBSTANCE AND SOMETHING THAT CAN BE RELIED UPON.

FROM A PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE, THERE ARE THREE SIMPLE WAYS TO DEFINE TRUTH:

1. TRUTH IS THAT WHICH CORRESPONDS TO REALITY.
2. TRUTH IS THAT WHICH MATCHES ITS OBJECT.
3. TRUTH IS SIMPLY TELLING IT LIKE IT IS.