

2002 Proclaimer

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, .. to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord!" - Isa. 61:1-2

A teaching and exhortation medium by members of the Carmichael Church of Christ, meeting at 6044 Sutter Ave. Carmichael, CA 95608

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IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

by David A. Sargent

What is truth? Is truth relative? Is it that which seems right to each individual? Or, is there an objective source of truth?

What is the truth of the matter? The Scriptures warn: *"There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death"* (**Prov 14:12**). Certainly, all would agree with this statement; it is true! Sometimes a person can be sure that he is right - that he knows the truth about a given situation - yet, in the end he may find out that he is wrong. Therefore, truth cannot be established based upon what *"seems"* right to an individual.

God's word informs us that not only does a body of truth exist but also that truth may be found!

How can we find truth?

First, we must **LOOK TO** the right source. Even nature alone does not reveal truth in its entirety; nature does not tell us who God is nor does it inform us of His will for our lives. Jesus, in His prayer to His Heavenly Father, said, *"Your word is truth"* (**John 17:17**). If we will study God's word openly, honestly, and carefully, we will find that it is THE truth. God has revealed truth through His word.

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Secondly, we must LONG FOR (search for) the truth. A group of people called the Bereans provide a worthy example. *"These [the Bereans] were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word [which the Apostle Paul preached] with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).* The Bereans did not simply accept what the Apostle Paul preached without question; they examined Paul's words in light of what the Scriptures stated. We, too, must not accept someone's teaching as truth until we find that it is consistent with the Scriptures.

Thirdly, we must LOVE the truth. The Apostle Paul wrote of some who were perishing *"because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thess 2:10).* If we do not love the truth, we are susceptible to believing lies (cp. 2 Thess 2:11).

Finally, we must desire to LIVE the truth. Jesus said, *"If anyone wants to DO His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority" (John 7:17).* Only if we desire to live the truth will we ever learn the truth.

As we apply these principles to our lives, we find that in regard to our salvation from sin, we must believe in Jesus, repent of our sins, confess His name before men, and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of our sins.

Don't take my word for it! Study these Scriptures and see for yourselves: Acts 2:1-47; 8:26-40; 16:25-34; Rom 10:9-10.

Jesus said, *"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).* Have you found the truth? May God bless you in your search for truth!

David A. Sargent, Mobile, Alabama

ON BEING OFF-CENTER!

Before CD and DVD players there were records -- phonograph albums -- that were played on electric machines called turntables or record players. Depending upon your age, you may or may not know about this mode of playing music. These records, just in case you don't know about them (or remember), are disks (usually black in color) with a hole in the middle for the correct placement of the record onto the turntable. Sound is produced (and then amplified) when a needle or stylus makes contact with grooves on the surface as the record spins. Many, including this writer, have experienced hours of listening enjoyment using this apparatus.

I read about a young boy who received in the mail a record that he had ordered. When he opened the package he found that the company had failed to perforate a hole in the record. So the boy decided to make his OWN hole. It's not hard to guess what happened. The hole that the boy made was so off-center that the record swaggered and wobbled all over the turntable. And the sound? It was horrible!

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This is exactly what happens when we ignore God's design for our lives and make up our **OWN** rules. This is what the Bible calls **SIN**. **Sin operates life with SELF, NOT God, as the center.**

Just like the mis-punched hole in the record, we as descendants of Adam are also imperfect due to the introduction of sin into the world through disobedience. And when we place that which is imperfect (self) at the center, and allow our lives to revolve around ourselves - we are off balance. The result? Discord and frustration as we swagger and wobble through our self-centered lives.

In order to have the harmony and balance in our lives that we were designed by God to have, we must have **HIS will NOT OURS** at the **CENTER** of our lives. Jesus said, "Seek **FIRST** the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

Once we recognize that God **MUST** be the **CENTER** of our lives, we will understand from His Word that we were created to live in fellowship with Him. It is God's desire that we become His children. Our adoption into God's family has been made possible through Jesus Christ, God's Son. Through our faith (Hebrews 11:6), repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10), confession (Romans 10:9-10) and baptism into Christ for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38), we become children of God -- **what we were created to be.**

It is IN Christ -- IN the family of God -- where we find the TRUE center of our lives. Then, with God's help, we can make harmonious

music with our lives to the glory of God!

**SELF-centered is OFF-center!
Find your TRUE center in the middle of God's will!**

May God bless you all!

---M. Eddlemon & DAS

BE EXHORTED

Two elderly ladies had been friends for many decades. Over the years they had shared all kinds of activities and adventures. Lately, their activities had been limited to meeting a few times a week to play cards.

One day they were playing cards when one looked at the other and said, "Now don't get mad at me.....I know we've been friends for a long time - but I just can't think of your name! I've thought and thought, but I can't remember it. Please tell me what your name is."

Her friend just glared at her. For at least three minutes she just sat there with her mouth half open and glared at her. Finally she said, "How soon do you need to know"?

Isn't it good that Jesus never forgets our names? He knows WHO we are, and WHERE we are, and WHOSE we are!

"HE provides food for those who fear Him, He remembers His covenant forever." **Psalm 111:5**

"I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine"
John 10:14 ###

BUT I DIDN'T KNOW

Mike Baker Mayfield, KY

The disappointment of a lost opportunity can be a very devastating thing. This is especially true if one is not even aware at the time of the opportunity that is being missed. One of the songs that we sometimes sing is titled, "You Never Mentioned Him To Me." In this very telling song, we are encouraged to reflect on our responsibility to tell the world about Jesus Christ and the saving gospel message. Yet many will go through this life and will never hear the gospel, nor will they have a personal interest in seeking God and his forgiveness.

What, then, becomes of ones who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ? Paul says in 2 Thes. 1:7-9 that these people will suffer the vengeance of Jesus Christ and will be punished with everlasting destruction. I can imagine the myriad of excuses that will be offered up to God on that day of judgment. One leading excuse is bound to be, "But I didn't know....". That excuse, along with all of the others, will fall far short of God's expectations of us.

In the great commission of Mt. 28:19-20, Jesus tells those present to go and make disciples of all nations. Paul adds in Rom. 10:14-15, *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"*

Clearly, God expects the faithful to be able to actively take the good news of the gospel into all the world, and to help establish faith and obedience in the lives of those who are presently lost. There is no

doubt that God will not accept ignorance of the gospel as a valid excuse for disobedience or indifference.

Some stories surface from time to time about skeptics and atheists who come to realize that God exists and that some form of obedience must be sought and followed in order to be pleasing to God. But far more stories go unnoticed each day. These are the stories of those who simply say, "But I didn't know." Our present challenge is to gain the courage to speak to others about the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to boldly lead our friends and acquaintances into a correct relationship with God through Jesus. Let us not be guilty of never mentioning Him to others!

PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR:

THE SICK AND RECOVERING

Addie Alden

Peggy Alexander

Norton Dye (bypass: doing good)

Helen Gray

Willa Lockett

Clifford Marshall

Ruby & Ted Nicholson

(+ Rhonda and Norma)

Irma Rapier

Norma Romine

Tom Royston

Boots Royston

Nancy Valine

Evie Westphal

Gordon Wilson

AWAY FROM HOME:

Maxine Wilson in NY and Maryland

Sue Claiborne in Texas for about a month

ONGOING "BUSINESS" TRAVELERS:

Carol Alexander, Rick Rittenhouse, Carl Ro-
mine, Dan Singleton, Gordon Wilson

JOB SEEKER:

Jeffry Pennant
