



Truth

DISCOVERING TRUTH

FREDA V. CREWS

(Zechariah 8:16, 17)



The sincere searcher for truth, either directly or indirectly, asks such questions as: "What is truth? Where can I find it? How will I know when I find it?" Others, who lack sincerity in their search for truth, will settle for: "Truth is whatever is true for me."

The good news is that truth can be defined, found, and experienced. The reality is that what a person believes *does* matter.

THE TRUTH ABOUT TRUTH

What is truth? Truth and reality refer to things as they really are, no matter what people may believe. Truth cannot be altered. Postmodernism advocates that "something is true if it is true for me." Christians deny this definition because they believe in absolute truth, stating that truth is truth irrespective of people's personal experience. What people call "truth" must be measured, not against what they believe, but against *absolute truth*. God is the Absolute and is the foundation for all truth because He is truth (Deut. 32:4; John 14:6). God loves truth and hates falsehood (Prov. 12:22); He cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

Because God is truth, He holds His people to His standard of truth: "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts" (Ps. 51:6). Zechariah 8:16 instructs, "Speak each man the truth to his neighbor; give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace." People of truth exhibit behavior that matches their words. They seek to be accurate, reliable, and trustworthy.

HOW TO BE PEOPLE OF TRUTH

We can petition the God of truth to help us, "Lead me in Your truth and teach me" (Ps. 25:5). The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth (John 16:13), will lead us to the truth of God's Word and give us receptive hearts and a submissive will so we can know, be,

and do the truth. When we sincerely seek spiritual truth, the Holy Spirit, who guides us into all truth, will bear witness to truth in our spirit through the Word. We can *know* that we know the truth.

In order to be people of the truth, we must be authentic and genuine. In the corners of our very being we must be true to ourselves. Truth will not settle for anything less than honesty with ourselves and others. Truth will shine the light on the dark places in our lives so we can dust them out and clean them up.

When we know truth and are people of truth, we will behave accordingly. Truth will inspire us to live authentic lives and speak authentic words. Truth will refuse to rename sin in our own and others' lives. Truth will urge us to speak the truth in love as we seek to live in peace with each other. Truth will prompt spouses to be faithful to each other. Truth will stimulate parents to live consistent lives before their children. Truth will inspire us to pray that God's kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10).

HOW TRUTH HELPS US

Truth will prepare us to do battle with the forces of evil. Satan, the father of lies, will flee from the truth. The armor of God can protect us during the fiercest battles with the kingdom of darkness (Eph. 6:12-18). Truth must be in place before the rest of the armor will fit. Ephesians 6:14 says, "Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth. . . ."

To Lea
person

Truth plays a significant role in helping relationships. In order for us to be able to help others, we must be truthful and require truthfulness from those we are attempting to help. We must be able to speak truthfully to hurting people, for they need to learn such truths as:

1. Their relationship with God is not based on their performance, but on His grace (Eph. 2:8, 9).
2. They become persons of value and worth in a relationship with Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:4, 5).
3. They need to accept the reality of their humanness with its failures and limitations (2 Cor. 12:9).
4. Their pain can be used by God to help them grow and mature (Rom. 8:28, 29).
5. They can experience joy and freedom in their Christian lives (Gal. 5:1).

THE FREEDOM OF TRUTH

Jesus promised that the truth will free us (John 8:32). When we know the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, we will experience freedom from the deceptions of Satan that blind us spiritually and bind us emotionally. The truth in Christ can break the chains of sin, deliver those who are imprisoned by the pain of their past, and convince them that they are persons of worth—setting them free from the prison of low self-esteem.

In Christ, we are free to be all that our heavenly Father intended us to be. The *truth* in Christ gives us the freedom we need to enjoy an intimate relationship with the God of truth: “The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth” (Ps. 145:18). We can trust His truth forever: “The LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations” (Ps. 100:5).

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of truth include:

- > Psalm 119:30, 43, 142, 151, 160
- > Proverbs 8:7; 12:17; 23:23
- > John 3:21; 8:44–46; 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 18:37
- > Ephesians 1:13; 4:25

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on truth at John 8:31–36 on page 1386. See also the personality profile of Ananias on page 1424.

to anyone. How can You say, "You will be made free?"

³⁴Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵And a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever. ³⁶Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

ABRAHAM'S SEED AND SATAN'S

³⁷"I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. ³⁸I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with^a your father."

³⁹They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father."

Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. ⁴⁰But now you seek to kill Me, a Man

who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. ⁴¹You do the deeds of your father."

Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God."

⁴²Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. ⁴³Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. ⁴⁴You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. ⁴⁵But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. ⁴⁶Which of you

8:38 ^aNU-Text reads *heard from*.

KEY PASSAGE



Truth

FREE INDEED!

(8:31-36)

Prisoners yearn for freedom, as do people who are enslaved by sin. They want to be free of the sins that make their lives miserable. Jesus tells of a way to have that freedom—"know the truth."

Jesus is "the truth" (John 14:6). Truth is not an abstract concept; it's a reality. When Pilate asked, "What is truth?" (John 18:38), the Truth was standing before him. Jesus came into the world to "bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37) and He was the Truth incarnate. The truth in Jesus frees us from the consequences of sin, from self-deception, and from deception by Satan. The truth in Jesus shows us the way to eternal life with God. The truth in Jesus will indeed set us free—free from sin's death penalty and from the corrosive effects of sin in our lives.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about truth on pages 1208, 1209. See also the personality profile of Ananias on page 1424.

SOUL NOTE



Final Answer (8:32) Jesus told His followers that if they truly believed in Him as the Savior, they would know truth. Jesus is the source of truth, the perfect standard of what is right. "You shall know the truth," Jesus said, "and the truth shall make you free." When people discover the truth found in God's Word, they are set free from sin. The world shouts its lies, and some are tempted to believe them. Believers, however, can look to God's Word and discern what is true and what is not. When we know Jesus and read His Word, we know the truth. **Topic: Truth**

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BEFORE ABRAHAM
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His word. ⁵⁶You
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A MAN BORN BLIND

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³Jesus answered
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world."

⁶When He had

buried *her* by her husband. ¹¹So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

CONTINUING POWER IN THE CHURCH

¹²And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. ¹³Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. ¹⁴And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, ¹⁵so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. ¹⁶Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

IMPRISONED APOSTLES FREED

¹⁷Then the high priest rose up, and all those who *were* with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, ¹⁸and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. ¹⁹But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ²⁰"Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."

²¹And when they heard *that*, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

APOSTLES ON TRIAL AGAIN

²²But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and re-



Truth

PERSONALITY PROFILE

ANANIAS—CAUGHT IN A LIE

(ACTS 5:1-11)

Some people have trouble with the truth, whether telling little "white" lies or being almost pathological in their inability to be truthful. Christians, however, base their entire faith on the God who is truth. Their lives, therefore, should be characterized by truth. God made that very clear in an incident that occurred in the early church.

Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, were among the believers in the early church. The believers were selling land and houses in order to give the money to the apostles, who then distributed it among the needy. A man named Barnabas apparently received praise for selling some land and bringing all the money from the sale to the apostles (4:32-37). Ananias and Sapphira seem to have been motivated by that praise. So they too sold a possession and brought money to the apostles. The problem was not that they did not give all the money to the apostles. It was their prerogative to bring whatever amount they wanted to. The problem was that they claimed to have brought all the money when they had kept back some of it for themselves. In short, they lied. Ananias and Sapphira conspired together to try to foist their lie on the church leadership.

The Holy Spirit revealed their lie to Peter, however. In his lie, Ananias had "not lied to men but to God," and God cannot be fooled. He is the truth, and He always *knows* the truth. Ananias, and later his wife, paid the ultimate price for their attempted deception. God dealt harshly with this sin because dishonesty, greed, and desire for acclaim will threaten a body of believers and undermine their witness for Christ.

Are we truthful people? We should daily examine our lives, words, actions, and motives to make sure that we are truly being honest before God and before others. Truthfulness pleases God. Even if we think we can get away with a lie—God knows the truth.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about truth on pages 1208, 1209. See also the key passage note at John 8:31-36 on page 1386.

ported, ²⁵ shut sec outside^a opened t ²⁴Now wh the templ things, t would be saying,^a - prison are the people ²⁶Then and broug feared the ²⁷And wh them bein asked the command look, you l trine, and us!"

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afterward make the woman drink the water. ²⁷When he has made her drink the water, then it shall be, if she has defiled herself and behaved unfaithfully toward her husband, that the water that brings a curse will enter her and become bitter, and her belly will swell, her thigh will rot, and the woman will become a curse among her people. ²⁸But if the woman has not defiled herself, and is clean, then she shall be free and may conceive children.

²⁹This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, while under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself, ³⁰or when the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man, and he becomes jealous of his wife; then he shall stand the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute all this law upon her. ³¹Then the man shall be free from iniquity, but that woman shall bear her guilt.' "

THE LAW OF THE NAZIRITE

6 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, ³he shall separate himself from wine and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. ⁴All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.

⁵All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. ⁶All the days that he separates himself to the

LORD he shall not shall not make father or his mother, when they die God is on his tion he shall be

⁹And if anyone him, and he defile he shall shave cleansing; on the it. ¹⁰Then on the turtledoves or t priest, to the do ing; ¹¹and the pri fering and the o make atonement in regard to the his head that sa to the LORD the bring a male lam offering; but the cause his separa defiled.

¹³Now this is of the Nazirite the days of his tion are fulfil shall be broug door of the t of meeting. shall present ing to the LORD without blemis lamb in its first offering, one offering, ¹⁵a cakes of fine wafers anoint ing with their

¹⁶Then the LORD and offe

KEY PASSAGE



Jealousy

THE WEDGE OF JEALOUSY

(5:29)

The ancient Israelites had a complex ritual for dealing with jealousy. Their detailed process (Num. 5:11-31) recognized the destructive potential of a jealous husband or wife. The most important part was that they dealt with this issue before the Lord (Num. 5:30). Jealousy can destroy any relationship, and in a marriage, it can drive in a wedge of mistrust.

Protection from the wedge of jealousy begins with honesty. Each spouse should honestly consider his or her own tendency toward jealousy, answering the question, "What makes me jealous?" Each spouse should honestly tell his or her feelings. Then they can discuss what they could do for each other to alleviate those feelings. Complete honesty and trust will help to obliterate jealousy.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about jealousy on pages 1656, 1657. See also the personal-profile of Rachel and Leah on page 49.

SOUL NOTE



Speaking the Truth (6:2-21) The Nazirite vow included separation from the world and consecration to the Lord. A person could take the vow for a certain amount of time in order to focus on God. Taking this vow was very serious, and the person was expected to follow all the procedures described here. How easily people "promise" to do something, but how hard it may be to keep that promise. Vows (promises) are very important—whether they are made to God or to other people. God does not take them lightly, and neither should we (Matt. 5:37). **Topic: Truth**



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and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all to which you put your hands. ¹⁹Take heed to yourself that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land.

²⁰“When the LORD your God enlarges your border as He has promised you, and you say, ‘Let me eat meat,’ because you long to eat meat, you may eat as much meat as your heart desires. ²¹If the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, then you may slaughter from your herd and from your flock which the LORD has given you, just as I have commanded you, and you may eat within your gates as much as your heart desires. ²²Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you may eat them; the unclean and the clean alike may eat them. ²³Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life; you may not eat the life with the meat. ²⁴You shall not eat it; you shall pour it on the earth like water. ²⁵You shall not eat it, that it may go well with you and your children after you, when you do *what is right* in the sight of the LORD. ²⁶Only the holy things which you have, and your vowed offerings, you shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses. ²⁷And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the meat and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, and you shall eat the meat. ²⁸Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do *what is good and right* in the sight of the LORD your God.

BEWARE OF FALSE GODS

²⁹“When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in

their land, ³⁰take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ ³¹You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

³²“Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.

PUNISHMENT OF APOSTATES

13 “If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, ²and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—and let us serve them,’ ³you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. ⁵But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst.

⁶“If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which you have not known,

SOUL NOTE



Sticking to the Truth (13:1–5) Satan always draws people away from God, and he often works through willing people. This passage warns that if someone claims to be a prophet of God but points people toward other gods, then that person is a false prophet. Under Old Testament law, a false prophet was to be put to death.

Teaching that was obviously false was taken seriously and punished accordingly. God’s people must have discernment, refusing to listen to anyone who speaks anything different from the truth found in God’s Word. That truth will keep us from error. **Topic: Truth**

GOD'S COMMISSION TO JOSHUA

1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: ²"Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. ³Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. ⁴From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. ⁵No man shall *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. ⁶Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. ⁸This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. ⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go."

THE ORDER TO CROSS THE JORDAN

¹⁰Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, ¹¹"Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'"

¹²And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, ¹³"Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.' ¹⁴Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, ¹⁵until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He gave you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall

"Have I not commanded you?
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do not be afraid, nor be dismayed,
for the LORD your God is with
you wherever you go."
JOSHUA 1:9

return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise."

¹⁶So they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. ¹⁷Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses. ¹⁸Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, it is all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage."



SOUL NOTE

The Whole Truth (1:8, 9) Joshua faced the challenge of leading the Israelites into the Promised Land. To encourage him, God urged him to meditate day and night on the Book of the Law (Moses' writings). God promised Joshua that doing so would make him prosperous and successful. This is not a promise of earthly prosperity—although certainly following God's rules for living will have a positive effect on our lives. But living by the truth of God's Word will make us successful in God's eyes. That kind of success is eternal. **Topic: Truth**

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KEY PASSAGE

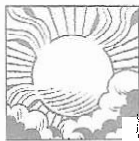
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⁸Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

⁹Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

THE ANSWERED PRAYER

¹²"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do

also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If you ask^a anything in My name, I will do it.

JESUS PROMISES ANOTHER HELPER

¹⁵"If you love Me, keep^a My commandments. ¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—¹⁷the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be

^{14:14} ^aNU-Text adds *Me*. ^{14:15} ^aNU-Text reads *you will keep*.

KEY PASSAGE



Knowing
Jesus

ONE WAY

(14:6)

Many routes and transportation options lead to a large city. Some people think it's the same way with God. "All roads," they say, all religions and belief systems, "lead to God."

"Wrong!" says Jesus.

Contrary to what many people think, Jesus taught only *one* way to gain forgiveness and eternal life, not many ways.

- "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).
- "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).
- "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:5, 6).

God provided a way for us to be saved. We can praise Jesus for being that way!

To Learn More: Turn to the article about knowing Jesus on pages 1368, 1369. See also the personality profile of Nicodemus on page 1371.

SOUL NOTE



The Only Way (14:6) Jesus claimed to be "the way, the truth, and the life."

Jesus is not one of the ways to God—He is the *only* way to God. Jesus is not one of many truths—He *is* truth. Jesus doesn't just show a way to live—He is the Giver of life, the One who gives meaning to life. If Jesus is our "way," then He is the only One who can save us and guide our lives. If Jesus is our "truth," then we study His word and live according to its truth. If Jesus is our "life," we trust that He is in control of our lives today and into eternity. **Topic: Truth**

David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, ⁹for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, *even* to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. ¹⁰Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

¹¹*This is a faithful saying:*

- For if we died with *Him*,
We shall also live with *Him*.
- ¹² If we endure,
We shall also reign with *Him*.
If we deny *Him*,
He also will deny us.
- ¹³ If we are faithless,
He remains faithful;
He cannot deny Himself.

APPROVED AND DISAPPROVED WORKERS

¹⁴Remind *them* of these things, charging *them* before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. ¹⁵Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ¹⁶But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. ¹⁷And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, ¹⁸who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. ¹⁹Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ" depart from iniquity."

2:19 ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *the Lord*.

KEY PASSAGE



Mentoring

PASS IT ON

(2:2)

God worked through the many teachers in the early church, protecting His message so that it did not get changed or garbled as it was passed from person to person, from one generation to the next. The early believers had no written New Testament, but they depended on the spoken gospel message as it was taught to them by others. The process is called mentoring, or discipling, and through it God's message is taught to people who in turn will teach others.

Although Paul was nearing the end of his earthly life, his ministry would continue because he had mentored Timothy. Eventually Timothy would die too, so he would need to commit the message "to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." In that way, the message would move across the world and across the centuries. We are believers today because faithful people have been teaching others for hundreds of years. We must mentor others so the message continues. God has given us that responsibility.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about mentoring on pages 430, 431. See also the personality profile of Elijah and Elisha on page 465.

SOUL NOTE



Truth Teaching (2:15) Paul warned Timothy that false teachers would attempt to distort the gospel message. The best weapon against false teaching is the truth of God's Word—in the hands of diligent workers who have no need to be ashamed of it or their handling of it. Believers who are "rightly dividing the word of truth" know God's Word, understand its meaning, and teach it correctly. The truth of God's Word has not changed from Timothy's day to today. We ought to diligently study the Bible so that we can know and share its truths with others correctly. **Topic: Truth**

GREETING THE ELECT LADY

The Elder,

¹To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth, ²because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:

³Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you^a from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

WALK IN CHRIST'S COMMANDMENTS

⁴I rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of your children walking in truth, as we received

commandment from the Father. ⁵And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. ⁶This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

BEWARE OF ANTICHRIST DECEIVERS

⁷For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an

³ ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *us*.

SOUL NOTE



One Truth (1-4) One truth exists, and that truth is found in Jesus Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). John wrote this letter to help believers remain in the truth and not stray into false teachings. In order to resist false notions and ideas, believers must remain grounded in God's Word. When we know the Bible, we learn the truth and will see when any teaching contradicts it. We must continue "walking in truth," for then we will be able to see what is false and steer clear of it. **Topic: Truth**

SOUL NOTE



Love Revealed (6) Loving God means obeying Him. When we love God, we desire to "walk according to His commandments," meaning that we want to obey Him. That obedience reveals our love for Him. Love for God doesn't focus merely on feelings, although those certainly are involved; it's about what we do. God's commandments are found in His Word. We obey not because we are trying to be good enough to be saved or to have a certain amount of good deeds to outweigh bad deeds. We obey because we love God and desire to please Him. **Topic: Obedience**

SOUL NOTE



True or False? (7) Jesus had warned that false teachers would arise and lead many people astray (Matt. 7:15; 24:11, 24). False teachers will teach any number of doctrines that might sound good but are contradictory to God's Word and, therefore, are lies. Believers can discern false teaching by discovering what the teacher believes about Jesus Christ. Some will teach that Jesus did not actually come in the flesh; others will teach that Jesus was merely flesh and not God. If anyone contradicts the Bible's definition of Christ being both human and divine, then that person is a false teacher. **Topic: Cults**