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HOW CAN WE KNOW THE TRUTH?

With so much religious confusion today, how can we be sure we know the truth? How can we be sure we are following the truth? How can we look at some and say, "you are wrong," while telling others, "you are right"? The Bible gives us the answer. The truth can be known today! How can we know the truth? **By Studying The Bible Without Preconceived Ideas.** Paul demands that men *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth"* (II Tim. 2:15, LSB). The Ephesians knew that when they read God's word, they would *"understand my (Paul's) knowledge in the mystery of Christ"* (Eph. 3:4). Is it necessary that men adopt their traditions, feelings, and rationalizations when studying God's word? No, sir! What is needed is that people put those things away and fill their minds with the pure, unadulterated Word of God. Trouble comes

when people do not handle God's word accurately! Our understanding becomes skewed when we allow preconceived ideas to infiltrate our study of God's word. When this happens, we will not know the truth! **By Studying Methodically.** Bible study is a daily process, i.e., a discipline. Solomon said, *"And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh"* (Ecc. 12:12). God has conveyed His thoughts to us through writing we can comprehend and yet is incomprehensible in its scope! The Bible contains both the milk and meat of the word (I Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14). When people become discouraged and fall away or simply decide that they have done "enough studying," they have cut off their only source of spiritual life. Many forget that God's word will be used as the standard of judgment on the last day (I Pet. 3:16). In

12:48). To refuse the Bible is to reject the truth (Jn. 17:17). Thus, if we want to know the truth, we must know the Bible! **By Not Being Afraid To Admit Our Mistakes.** Pride will be the downfall of many (Prov. 16:18). Peter tells us that God will exalt us if we humble ourselves (I Pet. 5:5-6). Though we might misunderstand passages of Scripture, this does not mean that we have to stay ignorant. We can admit our mistakes and then continue studying and growing (II Pet. 3:18). Consider Apollos, the man who knew most but not all of God's word. He was shown that the baptism of John was no longer valid and was taught *"the way of God more accurately"* (Acts 18:24-26, LSB). As a result of two people's willingness to teach, and Apollos' willingness to learn, he traveled abroad and *"helped the brethren much"* (Acts 18:27-28). What would we think of Apollos had he refused to be corrected by those who loved him? If we are to know the truth, we must not be afraid to admit our mistakes and fix them as soon as possible. Apollos did this and became a great teacher of the faith in many places (I Cor. 3). So can we. **By Understanding That God's Silence Does Not Give Permission.** Many religious people have the mistaken idea that when God says nothing, they have the freedom to act. Under the cloak of "silence," people have justified instrumental music in worship, infant baptism,

and a host of other errors. Friends, God's silence prohibits action! It does not give permission. Moses recognized God's silence when he told those who were defiled by touching a dead body to *"Stand still, and I will hear what the LORD will command concerning you"* (Num. 9:8). These men wanted to partake of the Passover but could not because they were defiled. When they asked Moses what to do, he did not rely on God's silence as permission. He told them to *"stand still"* until God told them what was to be done! God answered them in verse eleven, and that ended the controversy. Remember, it took God's commands to settle the question. When God is silent, we stand still! In the New Testament, Peter says, *"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God"* (I Pet. 4:11). The word *"oracles"* means the "utterances of God." In other words, we speak where God speaks! Thus, justifying our actions because "God didn't say not to" is worthless! When God says nothing, we must be silent as well. The apostles reasoned in this manner when discussing whether or not the Gentiles had to be circumcised to be saved (Acts 15:7-19). When the letter was written to those in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, the apostles said, *"Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised,*

and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment" (Acts 15:24). In other words, those Gentile Christians were troubled by those who taught circumcision as necessary for salvation when the apostles had been silent about it! Seeing that the apostles were inspired to teach God's word (Jn. 16:8-13; Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15), when they were silent on a matter, it was because God was silent on the matter. Let us learn a lesson that the world has not and know that God's silence prohibits action. When God is silent, we stand still!

Conclusion. The truth can be known and understood. However, it will not be understood if we are not willing to lay aside the trappings of this life and simply come to the Lord's word as a "blank slate." Let God speak to us through His word. Accept what He says, and we will be amazed at the treasure available to us! – Jarrod Jacobs. **"Till Death Do Us Part"**. He answered, *"Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate"* (Matt. 19:4-6), When Jesus was asked about divorce, He made it clear that God's design for marriage involves one man one woman for life The

husband and wife are to leave and cleave. They move on from mom and dad to establish a new home together, as one. This is to be a blessed relationship of permanency, faithfulness, love and trust. My papaw sure understood and respected the "till death do us part" aspect of marriage. He would tell mamaw, "Momma, I ain't ever gonna leave ya. And if you leave me, I'm a goin' with ya." He was determined to not allow anything or anyone to come between them. They were married 66 years when mamaw took her final breath. My second daughter was married on Thursday (3/4/22). Wanting the best for her and her husband, I pray they will have papaw's commitment as they seek to honor God Almighty in their marriage. – David McPherson



MONTHLY CHALLENGE

DIRECTIONS: Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

1) Praying For Others Challenge

James 5:16 *"The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."* Prayer can turn night into day, and can change the worst of circumstances into amazing blessings. There are so many areas where our prayers can make a difference. We can pray for one another. "Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God," Col. 4:12. We can pray for our enemies. "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," Matt. 5:44. We can pray for those we wish to share the gospel with. "Praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word," Col. 4:3. There are so many areas where prayer is the difference maker. Devote this month to praying diligently in these specific areas and watch God clear pathways to make progress. "I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert," Is. 43:19.

2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

Titus 3:3-8

"For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men."