

On The Frontier

"For the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel"

"THE Standard For Truth"

BY Linus A. Mathis III

There are many people who don't believe that absolute truth exists. Pontius Pilate was one such individual.

John 18:37

Pilate therefore said unto him [Jesus], 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.

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault *at all*.

Many Bible scholars contend that Pilate's question was a scornful one. But his actions seem to refute that. He appears to be, as most men are today, perplexed regarding the existence of truth. In his time (as in ours) there was a deluge of philosophy and religion. Roman mythology is still presented in our schools and many a modern man adapts his life to practice and preach "ancient" philosophies. Ahh, the wisdom of the antediluvian!!! There really is nothing new in these heady pursuits. Today's renaissance man might think there is, but that doesn't make it so.

Ecclesiastes 1:9

The thing that hath been, it is

that which shall be; and that which is done *is* that which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun.

I know! We have made discoveries and advancements. Our technology has reached extraordinary heights, but that isn't what Ecclesiastes is addressing. Man is no different today than when God first made, formed and created Adam and put him in the garden (Eden). You can put a three piece suit on him, strap him in the space shuttle, put a palm-top computer in his hand, a lap-top on his lap and a desk-top on his desk. But, he's still a man. And inside he still needs truth, for he'll always need God. He may look different on the outside because of "man-made" contrivances but "inside work" belongs to God. Incidentally, confusion can be added to the list of things not new under the sun. And that because of so many "reference" centers.

You see, Pilate was just as confused as men are today. He was to the place (as so many are) that he didn't think truth could exist. His question, "What is truth?" was a good one. Perhaps he didn't really want an answer though, because the Son of God didn't give him one. But, had he pursued his question, I have no doubt he would eventually have gotten it answered.

What then is truth? Jesus Christ gave us a simple answer as recorded in this wonderful prayer to the Father found in the gospel of John.

John 17:17

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

The Word of God is truth. Truth is not established by what men think or do. It is what God has spoken. His Word is absolute truth. What men do is, at best, nothing more than fact. And what men think is often nothing more than flawed conjecture. Truth is that which is the same yesterday, today and forever. Truth is that which is the same for you as it is for me. All of God's Word is true and all of His Word is Truth!

Psalms 119:160

Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever.

Psalms 19:7-11

The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple.

The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is thy servant

warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward.

Psalms 33:4

For the word of the LORD *is* right; and all his works *are done* in truth.

The Word is Truth, which is why it behooves everyone of us to study it diligently.

II Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

To the end that we rightly divide the word of truth we will have the True Word. This means open your Bible and start reading it. This is something many people do not do and thus they become like Pilate. Or worse, perhaps, as this record indicates.

II Timothy 3:7

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

They (those mentioned in Timothy) were busy learning. Yet, they never got to the Truth. Why? Because they never got to the Word. This certainly wasn't God's doing. They willfully decided to pursue something other than God's Word. Notice the downward trend recorded in the following verses.

II Timothy 1:15

This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

When they turned from Paul they

were turning from the Truth because he was the one teaching it.

II Timothy 2:18

Who (Hymenaeus and Philetus) concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

After turning from the one teaching the Truth the next step is error regarding the Truth.

II Timothy 3:8

Now as Jannes and Jambres (Egyptian magicians) withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

Notice the next level, resisting the Truth. Things are getting worse, aren't they?

II Timothy 4:4

And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables [*muthos* - myths, fiction, falsehoods].

Not only did they turn away their ears from the Truth but they turned to fables. You can't simply turn from the Truth and leave it at that. Oh no! Not if the Devil and your old man sin-nature have anything to say about it. What a far cry from God's desire for man.

I Timothy 2:4

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge [precise and correct knowledge] of the truth [God's Word].

Today, as in times past, people are deceived regarding the Truth. One way this can happen is via an

experience. Sometimes when a person has an experience it becomes for them a standard. This can happen as a result of anything seen, heard, felt or tasted. But usually only if the experience is such that the individual considered it to be phenomenal or supernatural. When anyone has an extraordinary episode (especially one they consider "good") they are tempted to think that it came from God. They are further tempted to relate this happening to others and fill in the "details" assigning all credit to God. This they do never checking their experience against the written Word of God. This credits much more trust to the five senses than they are due and is VERY dangerous. To say that the senses can be wrong is an understatement of immense proportion. I'll give you an example to consider.

Genesis 3:1-8

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Eve heard something that enticed her. She saw what looked good to her. It certainly was supernatural and she thought it to be pleasant. She had an experience. What she failed to do was check her senses against the Word of God. She had the Word but chose to follow her senses. The end result was that both she and her husband lost their spiritual connection with God. They were all too aware of their spiritual "nakedness" and instead of a warm intimate relationship with Him now they hid in fear. As you well know, because of this, sin and death passed upon ALL mankind. Was her experience from God? No, it was not! But she had an experience none the less. All of us are still subject to the same devilish subtlety and deceit today.

II Corinthians 11:3,4

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should

be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.

One way he (the Devil) does this is by giving bogus experiences. You can ascertain the genuine from the counterfeit only by becoming an expert in the genuine. To know if any experience you have is from God you must know His Word. Likewise with receiving another spirit, another gospel or another Jesus. You must be familiar with the real thing. **EVERYTHING** must be checked against the written Word of God.

I Timothy 4:1,2

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times [since the day of Pentecost] some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing [misleading, deceiving] spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

They're out there! Men and devil spirits looking to deceive by false doctrines and lies. That's their whole purpose in life. How are you going to know if you are hearing a devilish doctrine if you aren't familiar with the doctrine of God's Word? That also holds true for personal experiences.

II Thessalonians 2:7-13

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now

letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

This is a future event but the same principles are in order now. That is, the Devil can produce signs and lying wonders. Why he does this is to deceive. This works exceptionally well on those who are destitute of Truth. But even those of us who are instructed in the Word need to be wary of the deception of the Adversary.

Verse 13:

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Aren't we blessed that our God has made so many wonderful provisions

for us that we be not deceived. He gave us His spirit so that we can discern the spiritual nature of things. We have His Word which clearly spells out the genuine from the counterfeit. And He also gave us five ministries to keep us on the ball.

Ephesians 4:11-14

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

There is no reason to get deceived. Unless, you neglect the Word, the minister and the spirit of God within you. You are the only one who can study His Word for you. There's nothing to it but to do it.

Always remember that the **ONLY** standard for Truth is the written Word of God. Don't fall into the trap of elevating your experiences above God's Holy Word. Experiences come and go but the Word of the Lord liveth and abideth forever.

I John 4:1-6

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they

are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Add This to Your List of Responsibilities

by Sue Mathis

Each day, we as wives, mothers and housekeepers are responsible for many things. Get the kids up, make breakfast, pack lunches, make sure all the homework is done and brought to school, take care of the man of the house, etc., etc., etc.

Our lives are busy. I know mine is. There is always something to be done. But there is more to our busy lives as Christian women than we

would even think. Proverbs 31 lays out the description of a woman who has it all together. She does everything expected of her and more.

There is one verse I would like to take a closer look at. Many times it is read over and not given much thought, but it is an integral part of our lives. The verse is Proverbs 31:18b, "...Her candle goeth not out by night."

In eastern lands, each home had a small oil lamp. It was a shallow bowl filled with oil and had a wick. It was the woman's responsibility to make sure this lamp remained lit at all times. We might ask ourselves why this was so. The light of that lamp represented the presence of God in that home. An example of the light representing God's presence is clearly set forth in I Samuel 3. God called Samuel to be his man before the light if His Word went out in the temple because of the sin of Eli. In the eastern home, dire consequences came upon a woman if she were to let the candle go out. It meant she was slothful in her duties to God and her family.

Today, we don't keep an actual candle or lamp burning in our homes, but the presence of God still needs to be diligently attended to. As the woman of the home, it is still your responsibility to figuratively "keep the candle burning."

What does this mean? It means a lot of things but simply put, it means it's your job to make sure your home is a blessing. Is your husband blessed when he walks in the house? Are your children? Is your home a safe-haven for them after dealing with the world all day? If not, how can you make it so?

Keeping a clean, clutter free home is a part of it. We know that everything gives off something. Sure, none of us would hang a picture of the devil on our living room wall, but what about the things that aren't so obvious? The pile of books that you've been meaning to get rid of, the things on the walls that really don't do anything for you, the bottles of alcohol in the cupboard. Don't you think they add to the spiritual atmosphere of your home? Everything does.

As the guardian of the home (a guardian is one who watches over), it is your duty before God to make sure your home is spiritually pleasant. Maybe it's time for all of us to look about our houses with spiritual eyes and get rid of things that aren't a blessing. This is a good place to start on your quest to become a better guardian. For some, this is a major undertaking, but there are systematic ways of spiritually cleaning house. Try one room or one closet at a time. Feel the difference!

The woman described in Proverbs 31 sets an extremely high example. But it is not an impossible goal. Hard work, determination and a solid walk with God will get us all to the place where we can say, "I am the guardian of my home and I do a good job."

The Counselor's Corner

With Rev. Linus A. Mathis III

Taught By The Experts

Today's children are advantaged in ways previously undreamed of. The products they handle have been produced using the latest and most

innovative manufacturing methods. The gaming devices we buy them are so electronically advanced that twenty years ago the thought of such toys would have been in the category of science fiction. The movies and videos they view have been produced in the finest studios in the world. Computerized special effects are so well executed that even the experts are hard pressed to differentiate between reality and illusion. The actors (especially the action-hero types) are so believable in their roles you are almost certain that in real life they are just like the character they portray. Animation studios have developed their craft to such a high quality that at times the animation appears to be "live action." The voice work done for each cartoon character is beyond compare. Props, costuming, make-up, and set design have been brought to new levels of historic accuracy. The attention to detail is most impressive. Not to mention robotics, prosthetics, digitalized audio and computer enhanced graphics. And then there's the action figure sets. Nothing is missed, the realism obtained in reproducing each character is impeccable. Even the accessories are carefully made so as to be precise in every way.

No wonder today's children are so good at executing violent crimes! They've been taught by the experts. Violent video games, movies, cartoons, heros and music have been masterful educators. All this under the pretense of "entertainment!" Whether we care to admit it or not a child's mind is desensitized to human suffering by continual exposure to violence and mayhem. As a matter of fact so is an adult's. I don't wish to offend the tender sensibilities of anyone's creative energy (artist,

movie-maker or manufacturer), they most certainly are good at what they do. I doubt if there has ever been a higher level of expertise in any endeavor. But, if YOU are interested in YOUR child's maturation and behavior you might consider carefully screening any and all electronic baby-sitters. Including movies, cartoons and music.

So, rather than a gaming device, how about encouraging your child to play a musical instrument? Instead of a video how about a book. And, oh yes, you oversee the selection. Outdoor activities are something worth considering. Chores around the house (or a job if age appropriate) will definitely cure any boredom and nothing compares to helping out a neighbor. There's no shortage of community service groups either. Any good church youth ministry would be delighted to help your child with more meaningful activities. And let's not forget scouting and 4-H. Consider some of these alternatives to "modern entertainment" and you're sure to find something satisfactory and fruitful. Regardless of what activities you direct your child to, you dare not abdicate your role as parent.

Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers [parents], provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

God expects the parents to bring up the little ones and He will help you to be expert at it. He also promises great reward if you do.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Start with the basics. Simple things like love and kindness are easily taught as are respect and obedience. You as the parent have all that is needed to be a true pro. You have love for the child. With love you cannot go wrong. Love is what gives you the wherewithal to be tops in any field. Love will always see you through.

I Corinthians 13:8a Charity
[love] never faileth: . . .

A good principle to establish this month would be thankfulness. Notice, I said thankfulness. We all like to have our kids say thank you but there's a big difference between saying thank you and being thankful. Thankfulness is an attitude of heart. We should say thank you because that's polite but we also need to be thankful. Both are learned and therefore need to be taught. This will bless you, your child and God.

II John 1:4 I rejoiced greatly that
I found of thy children walking
in truth, as we have received a
commandment from the Father.

Be sure to teach them thankfulness
toward God, He's due it. Every day
and in every way!

**The attitude of gratitude
is
the best state of mind**

*-"The Counselor's Corner" also
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