

Spiritual Warfare & Moral Excellence – Part 2

The Foundation of Truth & Righteousness

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I. Introductory Remarks.

In the previous message we talked about what it means to add to our faith virtue. We found the Greek definition of virtue to be defined as a virtuous course of thought, feeling or action that leads to moral goodness. Webster's Dictionary defined it as conformity to a standard of right, a particular moral excellence: manly strength or courage and valor – purity in conduct and intention.

We talked about our need, as Christians, to strive for moral excellence in the midst of a society that is without morals and values that reflect the kingdom of God and its righteousness.

Philippians 2:15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world...

If we are to meet the challenge of becoming morally pure in a society that is morally bankrupt, we must understand and build into our lives the foundation for moral excellence.

If we are to raise godly children, who will grow up to be mature adults, abounding in moral excellence this foundation must be firmly laid in their lives.

The foundation that I am referring to is that of truth and righteousness.

Psalms 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face.

Proverbs 14:22 Do they not go astray who devise evil? but mercy and truth belong to those who devise good.

We must understand that we are in a battle for truth and righteousness. Satan is desiring to steal truth from the land, because when he does he has also stolen our virtues.

II. The Foundation Of Truth.

When Jesus was brought before Pilate, He had a very interesting conversation

with him concerning what is truth.

John 18:37-38 *Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.*

Some might think that Pilate was being facetious, but I think he was serious. Without an absolute source of truth and the absolutes that come forth from it, truth is a very nebulous thing. What constitutes truth? Power? Rome was the nation of power during this time of history, and therefore dictated what truth was.

Without the acknowledgement of God who is the source of all truth, there is no such thing as truth. Truth becomes what is right for the individual.

Judges 17:6 *In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*

Isn't this pretty much where our society is today? We no longer are being governed by the Judeo Christian values that our country grew up with. We are living in a day in which we have repudiated these values as old fashion. They are no longer relevant for our times, so they say! God has been legislated out of our school systems and others areas of our society and as a result truth and morality become whatever is right for the individual.

Because of this, today's youth are facing a crisis of truth. Truth, to them, is a matter of taste and as a result there is no standard of right and wrong. They do not have moral absolutes and core values being imbedded into their hearts. Everyone does what is right in their own sight. Therefore a foundation of truth must first be established in their lives, if we are to have any hope for moral excellence coming forth from this generation.

1. Jesus is the Source of all Truth.

John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

Jesus is the source of all truth. All truth proceeds from Him and is established upon His words and commands. He represents the absolute standard from which all measurement flows. He gives us the Holy Spirit, who leads us into all

truth.

John 16:13 *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

2. The Word of God is Truth.

John 17:17-19 *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.*

Here again, we see the truth as the foundation for our sanctification and holiness. So we see that it is this truth that comes forth from the absolute standard – Jesus Christ, that leads us into moral excellence. We see this in the following scriptures as well.

2 Timothy 3:16 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...*

1 Peter 1:22 *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart...*

Proverbs 14:22 *Do they not go astray who devise evil? but mercy and truth belong to those who devise good.*

3. What Happens When this Truth is Denied?

Our society has basically rejected the truths of Judeo/Christianity and the morals and values that came as a result. What happens when these truths and values are denied?

Isaiah 59:14 *Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.*

This shows us how much of a foundation truth is to our basic morals and values. We see this and we wonder why today's youth are growing up without values and morality? Is it their fault? We try to put the blame on them, but really the blame belongs to our generation for allowing the truth of God to be so compromised in our society.

Our whole societal system has begun to disintegrate into a cesspool of violence, blatant immorality and putrefaction. Our schools have disintegrated. Our justice system has become so corrupted that criminals go free and our political system has become so corrupted, we don't know what is right and what is wrong any more and our culture has become an abomination to God.

Proverbs 14:34 *Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.*

Before we can really make any great changes in our society, political and justice systems and culture, the foundation of truth must be restored. We must come back to the absolutes of Biblical authority, recognizing that God is the source of all truth.

Deuteronomy 32:4 *He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He.*

III. Spiritual Warfare And Truth.

We must realize the real war with Satan isn't over abortion, homosexuality, murder, drugs, gang violence, corrupted morals, etc. These are all symptoms and spoils of the war over truth. Satan's battle is with truth, because he knows he cannot stand in the midst of truth.

1. Satan Cannot Stand in the Midst of Truth.

John 8:44 *"You 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."*

- Satan questions the truth – Eve in Garden - "Has God said?" He's still doing it today.
- He distorts the truth – Jesus in the wilderness – "Turn bread into stones."

Since the whole world lies in the lap of the evil one, his lies have inundated our society and culture, which has had its affect upon our lives and our children's lives. Educators are teaching his lies as truths.

To see how far reaching Satan's lies are listen to this: Alan Bloom in his book "Closing of the American Mind" says, "almost every single student entering

Universities adheres to the concept, "All truth is relative to your situation, personal taste and cultural choice."

With the absence of truth, power is the determining factor. Each person does what is right in their own eyes. As a result our children are growing up in a society of cultural relativism.

- Each individual must decide what is right and wrong.
- You do not impose your values on others.
- You let others live out their values in tolerance.

All ideas of right and wrong are now a matter of personal taste, emotional preference or cultural choice. Eg. In the supreme court case of Planned Parenthood & the Federation of America vs. Casey the court ruled it is up to the individual to determine the concept of existence and mystery and meaning of life.

Many Americans are not prepared to recognize any moral authority aside from themselves.

I grew up in the generation of the 50's & 60's in an atmosphere that communicated absolute standards that came from the Judeo/Christian perspective. They were standards for right and wrong behavior and were accepted nationwide. Our parents, educators, church, youth leaders and other adults collaborated together to communicate a standard. This is no longer so, because truth has been assaulted by the father of lies, who has no truth in him.

2. Satan's Spoils of War.

It is time for us as the people of God to recover what was taken and to put on the armor of God with our waists girded with truth. We must allow the banner of truth according the sovereignty of God to be raised high in our communities. It is time for absolute truth to be restored: something true for all people at all places and at all times.

To see how bad the situation has become, listen to these statistics for youth who have been raised in good Christian evangelical homes. Barna Research institute did this study.

- 2 out of 3 or 66% had lied to their parents or teacher during the past six months.
- 6 out of 10 or 59% had lied to their peers in the last 3 months.
- 2 out of 3 had cheated on exams in the last 3 months.

- 1 in 5 or 20% had intentionally tried to hurt someone.
 - 1 in 4 tried to emotionally hurt someone.
 - 16% had watched a pornographic/erotic movie in past three months.
 - 5% had attempted suicide. The nationwide average is 7%.
 - 55% said they were confused about life.
 - 50% said they were stressed out.
 - 46% said they were always tired.
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- 50% of these kids said there is no such thing as objective truth.
 - 45% said everything in life is negotiable and that it is alright to do what is right in your own eyes.
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- Another study shows that of 1,000 teenagers 76% would go far enough sexually to feel experienced and not feel left out.
 - One study showed that 50% of today's sexually active 19 year old males had their first sexual experience between the ages of 11-13.
 - 87% of sexually active teens say they had sex before age 17.
 - Average age for first sex is 15 for girls and 14 for boys.
 - Religious-conscious girls are only 14% more likely to be virgins than non-religious-conscious girls.

The Barna research study concluded that the #1 problem that kids face is that of adhering to a standard of truth.

Another group of 42 Christian youth leaders from across the nation was asked what the foremost problem that youth face in today's culture is. Their conclusions were as follows:

- #1 problem was a lack of adhering to a standard of truth.
- #2 was an underlying sense of rage and anger
- #3 was the breakups of family.

What does this say about how Satan's disregard for truth has affected even godly evangelical Christians? It is time for us to gird our waists with the armor of truth.

Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness...

The next message in this series will deal with how we can impact our kids towards moral excellence and how we can preserve our children and ourselves from the destructive influences that have torn away at our society and culture.