

12. The Fruit of the Spirit is Truth (1Q 2010—The Fruit of the Spirit)

Biblical material: 2 Chron. 25:2; Ps. 51:17; Jer. 29:13; John 7:16, 17; 14:6; 17:3; Heb. 5:14.

Quotes

- The intuition of free will gives us the truth. *Corliss Lamont*
- Truth springs from argument amongst friends. *David Hume*
- There is nothing to fear except the persistent refusal to find out the truth. *Dorothy Thompson*
- Reformers who are always compromising, have not yet grasped the idea that truth is the only safe ground to stand upon. *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*
- All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them. *Galileo*
- In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act. *George Orwell*

Questions

So what *is* truth? How do we discern the truthfulness of any proposition, or of any person? How can Jesus say he is the truth? Is it sufficient just to know the truth? Does the revelation of truth convince everyone? How does the Spirit lead us into all truth? Are we willing to accept the implications of knowing truth?

Bible discussion

2 Chron. 25:2 simply says that Amaziah did what was pleasing to God, but not completely. What does this tell us about the search for truth and our response to it? David's recognition of his brokenness is cited in Ps. 51:17—but how does this establish truth, and our desire to know it? God tells his people through Jeremiah (29:13) that they will find him if they search with all their heart. Is God and his truth reclusive, then? Jesus points to God as the source for his message and mission, and that “Anyone who wants to do the will of God will know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own.” John 7:17 NLT). But what does this mean? He is the truth (John 14:6); the only way to eternal life (John 17:3). Heb. 5:14 calls attention to recognizing what is right and what is wrong—there is a fundamental truth here.

Comment 1

The primary fruit of the Spirit is truth. The Spirit leads us into all truth, said Jesus. He is the one who witnesses to the truth. He is the inspiration of the truth as revealed in Scripture. Why this focus on truth?

Because without truth we continue to operate according to flawed premises and mistaken assumptions. We do not face reality, we create our own version of it. The fruit of the Spirit is a love for truth, whatever the painful cost at times. Jesus died because he was faithful to the truth, not willing to accept the lies of the devil and the easy way of re-creating truth in the way you would prefer it to be. God values truth so much that he was willing to die rather than compromise.

So when it comes to the Holy Spirit, he will always affirm what is true, whatever the situation. God is always gracious, to be sure, but he cannot accept any manipulation of the truth, because that leads to distorted lives.

God seeks true believers, not the miracle-awed, the glory-bedazzled, or the forcefully-persuaded. The reason for faith is vitally important. Is it because of supernatural manifestations, or compelling personal presence, or inspiring oratory?

Or is faith true because it is true of itself, even without the very presence of God himself who chooses to remain hidden as he walks beside us on the way? When Jesus spoke to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, he convinced them not by appealing to himself, but to the truth as it already had been revealed.

“What is truth?” asked Meister Eckhart. “Truth is something so noble that if God should turn aside from it, I could keep to the truth and let God go.” Not that this ever could be possible, but the sentiment reveals the importance of knowing truth, and recognizing its transforming power in our lives, and the lives of every thinking being in the universe.

Comment 2

“The right Spirit is the Spirit of truth. And more than that, when you’re led by the Spirit, there will be the fruits of the Spirit... And the first of the fruits is love. And you know how love behaves. And what’s the last of the fruits of the Spirit? Self-control. And when you go into a service and they claim that people are filled with the Holy Spirit, and there is not evidence of self-control, then it is not the right spirit. If things are not being done ‘decently and in order,’ then it is the wrong spirit. So we do have tests here.... In the Bible it says, ‘Test the Spirits,’ doesn’t it? There are many false spirits out there. Test them. And Paul is saying, ‘Test this. Is it the true Spirit, whose fruit is love, and peace, and order, and self-control? Does it make sense? Does it speak in harmony with Scripture? If not, away with it!’ And yet, he was so careful. These were babes in the truth, who thought they’d caught the Spirit.” *A. Graham Maxwell, The Picture of God in All 66, 1 & 2 Cor.*

Ellen White Comments

But the Holy Spirit will, from time to time, reveal the truth through its own chosen agencies; and no man, not even a priest or ruler, has a right to say, You shall not give publicity to your opinions, because I do not believe them. That wonderful “I” may attempt to put down the Holy Spirit’s teaching. Men may for a time attempt to smother it and kill it; but that will not make error truth, or truth error. The inventive minds of men have advanced speculative opinions in various lines, and when the Holy Spirit lets light shine into human minds, it does not respect every point of man’s application of the word. God impressed His servants to speak the truth irrespective of what men had taken for granted as truth. {TM 70}

When truth becomes an abiding principle in the life, the soul is “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” This new birth is the result of receiving Christ as the word of God. Then by the Holy Spirit divine truths are impressed upon the heart, new conceptions are awakened, and the energies hitherto dormant are aroused to cooperate with God. . . . Christ was the revealer of truth to the world. By Him the incorruptible seed--the Word of God--was sown in the hearts of men. {FLB 19}

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