



TRUTH

The Measurement for All Aspects of Life and Relationships

*Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me,
O Lord, the God of truth.*

—Psalm 31:5—

*Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

—John 14:6—

*But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes,
he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his
own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell
you what is yet to come.*

—John 16:13—

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

—John 17:17—

The above verses highlight *truth*, an attribute common to God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, and God’s Word. *Truth* also serves as the unerring measurement by which all aspects of life and relationships are to be understood and evaluated.

The word *truth* and its associated concepts are used throughout the world, which would seem to indicate that the definition of *truth* is well known and globally accepted. As we will see, such is not the case.

From an individual perspective, some aspects of *truth* can be objectified by our five senses. Other dimensions of *truth* are realized through experiences or by careful observations and inquiries. On the other hand, many claims of “truth” are actually false and can be communicated widely by words, both verbally and in print.

It should be evident that all dimensions of “authentic” *truth* must be grounded in foundational principles that are not self-contradictory and are applicable worldwide. For example, the basic rules of mathematics must be the same wherever math is used. Similarly, each sport must have the same set of rules if national teams are to compete against each other effectively. In chemistry, the chart of basic elements must be identical in every educational and scientific setting that focuses on that subject.

Even though people throughout the world accept foundational principles specific to math, sports, and chemistry, they do not have common, foundational *truth* related to spiritual and relational aspects of life. As a result, contradictory beliefs occur, and adherents of each

viewpoint believe they are following the “truth.” Yet, if two viewpoints contradict each other, both are not *truth*. Two contradictory viewpoints could both be in error, or one viewpoint could be correct and the other wrong; but both cannot be *truth*.

With regard to spiritual and relational issues of life, it is vital to know the foundation of *truth* that relates specifically to these matters. Reviewing the verses that began this study, the foundation of *truth* in this regard is God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, and God’s Word. *Truth* revealed through these Divine Sources is completely sufficient to deal with ALL spiritual and relational matters with no reference to or reliance on any other perceived authority.

Like an expertly cut diamond, the many facets of truth are on brilliant display. Truth’s wisdom, applicability, and value are but three of its characteristics; and, as a result, many words are needed to fully describe its many dimensions. In describing the use of the word *truth* in Scripture, the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states, “No term is more familiar and none more difficult of definition.” This observation is proven by the many words that are used to try and relate the meaning of *truth* in its varied contexts, especially in the Old Testament (see below).

In one of its major uses, *truth* describes the ideal aspects of relationships between individuals. However, ***truth reaches its pinnacle in revealing God’s very essence and associated dealings with mankind.*** *Truth* of this magnitude is perfectly revealed only by God through Jesus Christ, Scripture, and the Holy Spirit.

In spite of each person’s inherent imperfections, God has revealed ample *truth* that shows Himself as the one and only Creator, Redeemer God. In addition, He has provided *truth* that can be understood and obeyed at any stage in life and in every situation. This *truth* is completely sufficient to enable a person to receive eternal life, bring glory to the Lord, be a blessing to others, and experience personal peace and joy.

Truth provided by God is not hidden, since the Holy Spirit reveals it through the Living Word, Jesus, and the written Word, the Bible. God desires for us to grow in His *truth*. This growth is directly linked to one’s spiritual new

birth, consistent prayer, on-going reliance on the Holy Spirit, faithful study of Scripture, wholehearted obedience to God's Word, and relational ministry interdependence with others in the Body of Christ . . . all of which are motivated by a deep love for Jesus Christ.

THE OLD TESTAMENT USE OF TRUTH CARRIES A VARIETY OF MEANINGS

The primary Old Testament word for *truth* (transliterated as '*emeth* and pronounced eh'-meth) is the basis for our word "Amen." This word is translated in many ways and, according to the context, means firm, sure, reliable, verifiable, steadfast, certain, faithful, established, trustworthy, indisputable, lasting (eternal), or unchangeable. *Truth* often has "belief" associated with it in such a manner that associated action is the inevitable result. In this dimension, truth's "words" correspond exactly to truth's "actions."

Truth is in direct contrast to concealment, delusion, confusion, lying or falsehood (cheating, trickery, deception, fraud, vanity, betrayal).

When *truth* describes God acting on the basis of His promise and character, the word for *truth* is often translated "faithfulness." In this context, truth is often joined with "mercy" as in Psalm 85:10, "Love (mercy) and faithfulness (truth) meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other."

THE NEW TESTAMENT WORD FOR TRUTH IS DEFINED MORE BY WHAT IT IS NOT

In the New Testament, there is a word (transliterated and pronounced as *lanthano*) that means "to be hidden or to be a secret, to be unaware or ignorant, or to escape notice."

The New Testament word for *truth* (transliterated as *aletheia* and pronounced as al-ay'-thi-a) is understood to be the exact opposite of the word *lanthano*. New Testament *truth* emphasizes the concept of "bringing to light." As a result, *truth* in the New Testament means "without pretence, without deception, an open and verifiable certainty, excellent, real, devoid of falsehood, completely faithful, sincerity and integrity of character (not merely verbal), honest, without corruption, unconcealed, constant, upright, righteous, and based on fact."

Truth often is related more to "doing" than mere intellectual attainment and is in contrast to deception, concealment, or idolatry. *Truth* can also reveal the substance over its shadow (greater over the lesser), specifically when both aspects of *truth* were ordained by God – for example, the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ (the substance) compared to the Old Testament

sacrificial system (the shadow). *Truth* also refers to the body of Christian teaching, the Gospel message, as well as to all of Scripture.

Word studies for the above summaries were derived from:

Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, Walter Elwell (editor), Baker Books, 1996

Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 3, Colin Brown (editor), Zondervan, 1982

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Electronic Database, Biblessoft, 1996

Synonyms of the New Testament, Richard C. Trench, Eerdmans, 1975

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. 1, Gerhard Kittel (editor), Eerdmans, 1979

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, W. E. Vine, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.

I. Divine truth has a sure foundation

Truth must have an unchanging and verifiable foundation to be completely trustworthy. The foundation of divine truth is not something that God has left to chance or to the changing whims of mankind. Unalterable truth rests solely on and can be understood only through the divine Sources of Truth. God's Sources of truth will not contradict one another and will never change.

A. The Lord God is Truth

Numbers 23:19, God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

Psalm 31:5, Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.

Isaiah 65:16, Whoever invokes a blessing in the land will do so by the God of truth; he who takes an oath in the land will swear by the God of truth. For the past troubles will be forgotten and hidden from my eyes.

Titus 1:2, a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time

B. Jesus is Truth

John 1:14, The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 14:6, Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

C. God's Spirit is Truth

John 14:16-17, And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

John 15:26, When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, He will testify about me.

John 16:13, But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come.

1 John 5:6b ... And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

D. God's Word is Truth

Psalms 33:4, For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

Psalms 119:151, Yet you are near, O LORD, and all your commands are true.

Psalms 119:160, All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.

John 17:17, Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

2 Timothy 2:15, Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

II. There are blessings inherent to appropriating divine truth

A. God desires His truth to be from the "inside out"

Psalms 51:6, Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

B. A person whose joy is to follow the Lord will have an aversion to falsehood and an orientation to God's truth

Psalms 119:127-128, Because I love your commands more than gold, more than pure gold, and because I consider all your precepts right, I hate every wrong path.

Psalms 119:163, I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love Your law.

C. Truth provides many benefits for a child of God

1. The pathway of truth provides nearness to God

Psalms 145:18, The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

John 4:23-24, Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and truth.

2. Knowing and responding to the truth provides freedom, leads to godliness, and brings glory to God

John 8:31b-32, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you

will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Titus 1:1, Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness...

John 3:21, But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.

3. Relying on truth equips a believer for spiritual warfare

Ephesians 6:13-15, Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

D. God's truth is to characterize the love that believers have for one another in relationship and ministry

Ephesians 4:15, Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

1 Peter 1:22, Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

III. Satan opposes God's truth

With God establishing the foundational criteria for Truth, it is no surprise that Satan is in direct opposition to God's Truth with a system of Satanic "truth" known as falsehood.

A. Satan has none of God's truth in him, since the satanic nature is comprised of everything that is in contrast with truth. Speaking to the Pharisees, Jesus gave us a description of Satan :

John 8:44, You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

B. Satan, the god of this world, keeps unbelievers blinded from the truth revealed in Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4, And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

C. Apart from the liberating power of God's truth available only in Jesus Christ, a person cannot understand the things of God (1 Cori 2:14). As a

result, apart from Jesus, one remains entrapped in the satanic system of falsehood and illusory “truth” that deceptively promises freedom while leading to death.

Examples of those living in satanic falsehood instead of living in God’s truth:

Isaiah 28:15, You boast, “We have entered into a covenant with death, with the grave we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place.”

Jeremiahs 9:3-6, “They make ready their tongue like a bow, to shoot lies; it is not by truth that they triumph in the land. They go from one sin to another; they do not acknowledge me,” declares the LORD. “Beware of your friends; do not trust your brothers. For every brother is a deceiver, and every friend a slanderer. Friend deceives friend, and no one speaks the truth. They have taught their tongues to lie; they weary themselves with sinning. You live in the midst of deception; in their deceit they refuse to acknowledge me,” declares the LORD

Romans 1:25, They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Romans 2:8, But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

2 Timothy 4:3-4, For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

IV. There are consequences for believers who disregard God’s truth (*passages listed in this section are printed after the study’s conclusion*)

- A. When believers lie (deceptive or unfaithful in word or deed), they are copying Satan’s pattern instead of walking in the path of righteousness as revealed in God’s Word and displayed through Jesus Christ.
- B. Spiritual delusion begins to develop if a believer is unloving (review 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a), forsakes fellowship (review Hebrews 10:24-25), withdraws from interdependent relationships with other believers (review Ephesians 4:16), seeks prominence instead of servanthood (review Matthew 20:25-28), avoids ministry to and with others (review 1 Corinthians 12:4-7), hoards resources instead of sharing them (review 1 Timothy 6:17-19), or lives in any other manner that promotes self-centeredness. Spiritual delusion results in the diminishing of spiritual fullness and freedom promised to

someone walking in divine truth (review James 1:21-25).

- C. Believers who neglect prayer leave themselves open to anxiety and a corresponding lack of peace (review Philippians 4:6-7). Believers who neglect obedience to Scripture disregard the only written authority for life that claims perfection and total sufficiency (review Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17) and, as a result, invite the corrective discipline of the Lord (review Hebrews 12:4-6).
- D. When believers refuse to confess and forsake known sin, on-going spiritual growth is forfeited (review Colossians 1:9-12), available forgiveness from God is not appropriated (review 1 John 1:9), and church discipline becomes a possibility (review Matthew 18:15-17).

V. God’s truth is meant to be a part of your life

- A. Knowing the fullness of God’s truth begins by believing in Jesus Christ for salvation.

Ephesians 1:13, And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

John 3:16, For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 14:6, Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

John 18:37, “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

- B. God’s truth is available through prayer, so ask for His help.

James 1:5, If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

Psalms 25:5, guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

Psalms 86:11, Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

- C. God’s truth is revealed through His Word, so be diligent to study and apply Scripture to your life.

2 Timothy 2:15, Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- D. God's truth is demonstrated by Christ's example, so learn how He dealt with various aspects of life and follow Him.

Ephesians 4:21, Surely you heard of him (Christ) and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.

Colossians 2:3, in whom (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 2:6-7, So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

1 John 2:6, Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

1 Peter 2:21, To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

- E. God's truth is supernaturally revealed to you by the Holy Spirit, so trust Him, not yourself.

John 16:13-15, "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me (Jesus) by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."

- F. God's truth is to be accurately presented by you to others in word and deed, so demonstrate truth in daily life and relationships.

2 Corinthians 4:2, Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

- G. God's truth is foundational for the spiritual growth of each person in the Body of Christ, so live out His truth in relational ministry with fellow believers.

Ephesians 4:15, Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

1 John 3:18, Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

CONCLUSION

There are many aspects of divine truth, none of which contradict one another. Truth, as revealed in Jesus, defined in Scripture, and lived out by spiritually-

empowered followers of Christ, can be variously expressed in word and deed so that God receives glory and others receive benefits. Divine truth is the standard by which every aspect of life and relationships must be measured. The battle for truth requires a believer to "fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Timothy 6:12). This battle is the same as was stated by the Apostle Paul to Timothy almost 2,000 years ago: "guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith" (1 Timothy 6:20-21).

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NOTE: Verses below are referenced in point IV. There are consequences for believers who disregard Divine Truth

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

Hebrews 10:24-25, And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Ephesians 4:16, From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

1 Corinthians 12:4-7, There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Timothy 6:17-19, Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

James 1:21-25, Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

Philippians 4:6-7, Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 19:7-11, The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 12:4-6, In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

Colossians 1:9-12, For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

1 John 1:9, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Matthew 18:15-17, If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.