

Walking in the Truth | Fruit that May Abound to Your Account | Why Does the Truth Offend?

THE SOWER

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Truth in **Doctrine** Truth in **Relationship**



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Opening Letter

Truth in Doctrine

Truth in Relationship

by John W. Schoenheit

In this issue of *The Sower* we examine how truth is to be the foundation of both what we believe and how we relate to others. Although there is no way to cover the topic of truth as the foundation of doctrine and relationship in one small magazine, we can begin to show that what we believe and how we relate to others are aspects of the truth. That seems to be so fundamental we might well wonder why it needs to be stated at all, but it does need to be stated because the world does not always respond well to truth.

We know from the life of Jesus Christ and perhaps from our own experiences as well, that even when truth is presented in love it offends some people. That can be hard to handle, because we have no desire to offend anyone, and we do not enjoy conflict. The offenses and conflict that sometimes come with being open about what we believe cause some Christians to try to separate what they believe from the way they relate to others.

Having said that, it is important to also say that there are a lot of Christians who have not been sensitive to the beliefs and choices of others. If someone knows what we believe and how we live, and they differ from us, we do not have to continually bring that up to them. God respects their free will, and so should we. Jesus and the apostles lived in a pagan environment with much idolatry and sin around them. While they confronted those issues publically and privately, there is no record of them finding someone who did not believe the truth and confronting that person over and over again.

On the other hand, the biblical record makes it clear that the biblical “greats” did not set up a false dichotomy between doctrine and relationship and try to hide what they believed so that they would be “acceptable” to others. Once again, Jesus Christ is our great example. He openly revealed what he believed and stood for. Similarly, we should not set up a false dichotomy between doctrine and relationship, as if they were totally separate issues. Both right doctrine and right relationships are expressions of truth.

God has given us, His children, both the ministry of reconciling people to God, and the Word of God to do it with (2 Cor. 5:18, 19). It is our prayer that this *Sower* will help us all allow truth to be fully expressed in both our doctrine and how we relate to others.

John W. Schoenheit

Walking in the Truth

Balancing Doctrine and Practice

by Dan Gallagher

Almost ten years ago, I was with a friend who was venting his frustration and hurt over the recent loss of friends because of doctrinal differences. A few days earlier, we had finished three days of fellowship and teachings with many saints on the West Coast. Shortly after the weekend had ended, some people from his fellowship confronted him about a few statements the guest speaker had made regarding his belief that Jesus is not God,¹ which was contrary to their Trinitarian doctrine. My friend was hurt because he was very close to these people and they had now decided to no longer attend his home fellowship. As we talked, I realized that my friend had never been completely honest with his fellowship about the doctrinal differences between them. I was stunned when he announced to me that he was “no longer going to put his doctrine before relationship.” What shook me was that he was abandoning his doctrine, and also his relationship with me (and others), in favor of his relationship with them. His hurt became my pain as I saw my relationship with him coming to a fork in the road, with each of us possibly choosing different paths. I knew that I was not going to forsake my beliefs for his friendship. I also knew I needed to learn how to walk with balance in my doctrine and my relationships.

Sadly, I must admit that this is not the only time I have experienced the tension that can happen between doctrine and relationship. Shortly after going to college, I began to attend Bible study classes. I quickly saw a disparity between my Roman Catholic upbringing and what I was learning from God’s Word. Needless to say, this became quite disconcerting to my parents and some other family members as I abandoned the Catholic faith for the Protestant message. Thankfully, time has healed many of the relational wounds, some of which I had created in my youthful zeal (declaring people’s beliefs as “totally wrong” has never gone far in engendering close relationships, but then, I hadn’t learned this lesson yet). Now, after close to forty years since first accepting Christ in college, the tension between what a person believes (*doctrine*) and their relationships (*practice*) is clearer than ever to me.

I have become very aware that our closeness with others is strongly affected by our beliefs. It is normal to feel a closer bond and connection to others who have similar likes, dislikes, beliefs, and viewpoints. Clearly, the more I have in common with another, the closer we feel. And certainly we do not have to agree about everything in life to have a relationship with another person. On the contrary, it is the mature person who often has associations with a great diversity of people. Nevertheless, it does seem that the more common ground that two people share, the closer they are.

I believe that everyone is born with a heart’s desire to be connected to others. Over time some people may, to varying degrees, lose some of this desire, but this loss is usually the result of relational hurts, rather than the lack of an innate desire for connection. Being rejected by others hurts emotionally, and a great source of rejection comes from the differences between people’s religious beliefs, about which many people are very passionate (in addition to sports and politics). We can have relationships that avoid any controversial subjects or any sources of potential disagreement, but then what types of relationships would they really be? Another alternative is that we could eliminate all relationships with people who think differently from us, but then that would leave us with some pretty bland gatherings, too.

Truth should be the Foundation of our Doctrine and our Practice

The correct way to relate to others is not to forsake doctrine in favor of relationship or to put relationship before doctrine, because the root of the problem lies deeper than this. Doctrine and practice are merely expressions of truth. Truth is the fulcrum upon which all of one’s doctrine and practice balance. If I do not have

truth as the basis for my beliefs and actions, imbalance will be manifested in every aspect of my life.

God desires that our doctrine and our practice both flow from a foundation of truth. He designed all men to live with truth in their hearts. David said in Psalm 51:6 “Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.” God is true², and everything He says (His Word) is true³, and everything He does (His creation) demonstrates truth.⁴ He never intended that there be any separation between what a person knows and what he does, and in fact, the theme of doctrine and practice is repeated throughout His Word.

1 Timothy 4:16

“Watch your **life** [practice] and **doctrine** closely...”

1 Timothy 4:12

“...set an **example** [practice] for the believers in **speech** [doctrine], in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”

There was a time when gaining an understanding of the role of doctrine and practice became so important to me that I underlined every record I came across where the relationship between the two was mentioned or inferred. Here are a few more clear examples of doctrine and practice.

Philippians 1:9 and 10

(9) And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in **knowledge and depth of insight** [doctrine],

(10) so that you may be able to discern what is best and **may be pure and blameless** [practice] until the day of Christ...”

Philippians 4:9

Whatever you have **learned** or **received** or **heard** [doctrine] from me, or **seen** [practice] in me—put it into **practice**....

Ezra 7:10

For Ezra had devoted himself to the **study** [doctrine] and **observance** [practice] of the Law of the LORD...

Truth in Practice

Truth in practice is demonstrated in how we “relate” to others. Jesus declared that he was “the truth,”⁵ which among other things meant that he was right in all his doctrine *and* practice. There was no contradiction between what he said and what he did because both flowed from a heart filled with truth.⁶ He is the plumb line, so to speak, the standard for all right thinking and right behaving.

Truth in practice means that we are rightly relating to others, with God receiving our top priority. We are to love God first before all others, and then to love others as ourselves.⁷ Like Jesus, living with truth in relationship means that I am relating to the world and others the way God desires. A person of truth lives with love toward all others. We are also to have mercy, grace, and forgiveness toward others, as well as to manifest all of the fruit of the spirit.

Romans 12:9

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

The word “sincere” is the Greek word “*anupokritos*,” which literally means “to be without hypocrisy.” The word “hypocrite” is a transliteration of a Greek word used to describe an actor as he appeared on stage as a person who wore a mask and pretended he was someone different from whom he actually was. If we say that

we are truly about relationship, but then we are not truthful in those relationships, we are hypocrites.

God and Jesus Model Truth in Relationship

God made mankind to have a relationship with Him, and throughout His Word He demonstrates what it means to have truth in relationship. He placed Adam and Eve in the Garden and instructed them on how to maintain their relationship with Him. When they disobeyed (failed to walk in the truth), He drove them from the Garden. Unlike Adam and Eve, we should never put our relationships with others above our relationship with God.⁸ He has always been concerned about relationships with mankind, but those relationships are to be based upon truth.

Previously, I cited Romans 12:9, which said that our “Love must be sincere,” but this verse also says that we are to “Hate what is evil.” If my love is sincere, that is, without hypocrisy, I must also hate what is evil. Jesus demonstrated this when he boldly stood against the error of the religious establishment, when he drove the moneychangers from the temple, and when he took many other bold actions. If I am really practicing truth in my relationships, then I stand against evil just like God and Jesus do. Genuine love does not condone error or evil; rather, “Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth” (1 Cor. 13:6).

Truth in relationship helps us see things from the perspective of “life everlasting” instead of merely what “feels good” in the moment. I am only kidding myself if I say, “I am all about relationship,” but do not have this perspective. How loving are we really if we know a friend who has not heard about Christ and we remain silent, knowing that without Christ he is destined for death instead of everlasting life? Taking God’s viewpoint always keeps me grounded with truth in my relationships. Doing things God’s way always keeps me loving and living righteously.

When we speak of truth in relationship, we are not saying that we can only associate with people who believe what we do. In his book about King David (*David: A Man of Passion & Destiny*), Charles Swindoll identifies a range of relationships, which exists for everyone. First, we all have *acquaintances*. These are people whom we might only see on random occasions, like a grocery clerk. Next are our *casual friends*, those with whom we share some common interests and a loose bond. These may be friends whom we know through interest groups based upon our hobbies, our neighborhood, work place, or our religion. Then there are *close friends*, those with whom we share a more open and authentic relationship and with whom we feel a deepening bond. And finally, we may have *intimate friends*. These are the people who know the good, the bad, the ugly, and, hopefully, the glory of our lives and hearts. We should consider ourselves very blessed if we have a few intimate friends. Jesus even demonstrated this paradigm when he indicated to his closest disciples that they were no longer his servants but his friends.⁹ The point is that we can all live with truth in relationship in every level of connection and friendship described above.

We all crave intimacy, but unfortunately this hunger can lead us into ungodly and compromised relationships. There was a time when I hung out with people who were living very unrighteously. I told myself that if I maintained a close friendship with them, I could win them to Christ. I even did what they were doing to show them that Christians could be “cool,” too. It took me a while to wake up, but I finally realized that this path never works. Putting a good apple in a bowl of bad apples will never turn the bad ones good; rather, the good one always begins to rot.

The problem was that I was compromising on “truth in relationship,” and as a result, I was the one being hurt. God tells us not to be misled because, “...Bad company corrupts good character” (1 Cor. 15:33). He also says even more strongly that friendship with the world is equal to hatred toward Him, even making us enemies of God.¹⁰ The last thing anyone I know would want to be is an enemy of God, but choosing to be friends with the world is exactly that. We need to remember that living with truth in relationship will result in separation from the world. Jesus warned us that he did not come to bring peace, but a sword—and what that sword divides is people.

Matthew 10:34-36

(34) “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

(35) For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—

(36) a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’

Truth in Doctrine

Truth in doctrinal form is expressed in the Bible, God’s Word. This is not all the truth that exists, but some of what God has revealed to mankind. We know that what He has revealed is sufficient to teach us all things we need to know for “life and godliness.”¹¹ As genuine truth seekers we are always searching to understand the truth, even the truth about *why* we believe *what* we believe. Truth in doctrine is vitally important because it greatly affects how we demonstrate truth in practice.

As truth seekers we always need to be on guard so that our doctrine does not become our enemy, which happens when we become prideful or arrogant in our understanding of truth. This is evidenced when we become calcified in a position, closed-minded, or hard-headed. I often encounter people who are unwilling to even consider the possibility that they misunderstand or are wrong about something. When this happens, I immediately know that they are not genuine truth seekers, because truth seekers are never entrenched in their position for position’s sake. Rather, they are dedicated to their quest for truth, and will always change a position when the evidence indicates that they have been wrong. The Pharisees of the Bible are a great example of people stuck in a position. They were so invested in their private interpretation of Scripture that they missed seeing Jesus, the very subject of God’s Word, even though he stood right in front of them. Closed-minded people are always blind.

Every person’s beliefs are based upon presuppositions. These are assumptions often made without much awareness on our part, which we use to interpret the world (and even Scripture). They tend to cloud our outlook, resulting in false interpretations and understanding. The belief that the world was flat was a false presupposition, which led to the assumption that if the world is flat it must have an edge. Although this was a logical conclusion, the underlying presupposition was false, which resulted in a false conclusion. This also led to the false belief that man would fall off the edge if he sailed too far out to sea, and so on. Truth seekers are solid on what they believe because they have explored the assumptions upon which their reasoning is based. They know *what* they believe because they know *why* they believe it.

Truth Brings Balance

Truth in doctrine and relationship always produces balance. Error is always unbalanced and is found in the extremes. When truth is not present in relationship, it will produce people who are hardhearted, coldhearted, unforgiving, and lacking mercy; or on the other extreme, overly sentimental, enabling, undisciplined, and indecisive. Those who do not hold truth in doctrine are on one extreme, legalistic, ossified, and closed-minded, and on the other extreme, tossed to and fro with every new doctrine, whim, fancy, or fad. Holding our doctrine properly is like holding a living thing. I must properly cup my hands so that it does not merely fly away in the breeze, but at the same time, not hold it so firmly that I crush it. Truth is foundational to all healthy doctrine and practice. Truth gives us sound direction in the uncharted waters of life and anchors us through the storms of relationship.

Notes:

1. The guest speaker was a Biblical Unitarian who believed that Jesus was the only begotten Son of God, but was not God the Father. For additional information on our Biblical Unitarian beliefs visit www.BiblicalUnitarian.com
2. Jeremiah 10:10: “But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King....” John 17:3: “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”
3. Psalm 33:4: “For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.” John 17:17: “Sanctify them by

the truth; your word is truth.”

4. Romans 1:20: “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

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

6. One of the characteristics of truth is that it cannot contradict itself. For more on the characteristics of truth visit TruthOrTradition.com/characteristics

7. Matthew 22:37-39: (37) Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ (38) This is the first and greatest commandment. (39) And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

8. Matthew 22:36-40: (36) “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” (37) Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ (38) This is the first and greatest commandment. (39) And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ (40) All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

9. John 15:15: “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

10. James 4:4: “You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”

11. 2 Peter 1:3: “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”

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The Contender

Why Does the Truth Offend?

by John W. Schoenheit

There is a false belief held by some Christians, sort of a Christian myth, that if you are a good Christian you will not offend anyone. In fact, a Christian who offends people is sometimes considered to be just one more arrogant, insensitive, narrow-minded Christian, because it is thought that “true” Christians are sensitive and considerate, and never offend anyone.

To be sure, there are Christians who offend others by their tone of voice, overbearing manner, or by insistence on things that could be called “dogma” rather than truth. This article is not intended to excuse prideful Christian behavior, attitudes, or hardheartedness. History shows that there have been and still are many Christians who do not act very Christ-like. Much could be said about the great need for Christians to walk in love, have good character and demonstrate the fruit of the spirit.¹

While a lot could be written about walking in love, this article examines a different reason why people are offended by Christian activities. This article asks the question, “Why are some people offended by truth, even if it is spoken or acted out in love?” All we have to do is look at the life of Jesus Christ to realize there are plenty of people who are offended by truth even when it is lovingly presented. There are several reasons that truth is often offensive to some people.

Truth is Exclusive and Absolute

Some people are offended by truth because of its very nature—it is exclusive and it is absolute, not relative. The absolute nature of truth means that it does not depend on, nor is it changed by, people’s opinions. For example, if someone says, “There is no God,” that does not affect the existence of God. It only shows that the person is ignorant. Truth is also exclusive, meaning that it is “narrow” because it excludes anything contrary to it. Unfortunately, in the spiritual world, some people view the narrow nature of truth as “narrow mindedness.” We all recognize the narrowness of truth when it comes to the physical world. People do not put water in their gas tanks or jump from tall buildings if the elevator is full. We train our children to do what is “right” (like looking both ways before crossing a street), and not to do what is “wrong” (like running with a knife) so they will live safely in our “narrow minded” world.

Both the physical world and the spiritual world are expressions of truth and that is why they are exclusive, or narrow in nature. The Bible itself confirms that the spiritual world is very narrow, which is why God has specific commandments about what is “right” and what is “wrong.” Moreover, God expects us to learn about the spiritual world from the physical world, just as we learn about it from His Word.

Romans 1:20

For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

The Bible teaches that God’s power and His nature can be understood from the world around us. Nevertheless, many people deny spiritual truth, which is easy because doing things the wrong way spiritually usually has very delayed consequences. If we put water in our gas tanks, right away the car does not start. If a person denies Jesus Christ and tries to save himself by his own works, it will not be until the Day of Judgment that he will learn that Scripture was correct when it said, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). At the resurrection and Day of Judgment the things of God

will be clearly seen by everyone, but then it will be too late for the people who reject the truth now. It is because truth is exclusive and absolute that it is essential for each of us to work hard to discover what is and what is not true. There are great blessings for obeying the truth, and serious consequences for denying it.

The Devil's War Against God and Truth

Another reason people are offended by the truth is because the Devil has waged a war against God and truth for thousands of years. He fights this war on many fronts, and his primary weapon is lies. The Devil has been inculcating lies into the human psyche and society for so long that there are lies deeply embedded in every society on earth. The Devil resists truth everywhere, because, as Scripture says, "...for there is no truth in him...he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). The Devil and his demons work hard to deceive people and lead them away from God.

The Devil is very crafty, and adapts his methods to the culture he is trying to deceive. For example, in Western culture today, we are very scientifically minded, and there are many instruments for measuring and tracking what happens around us, so the Devil does not often come out in the open. However, in ancient cultures, and in some cultures today, that is not the case. For example, the Devil wants to continue to promote the lie that dead people are not really dead, but alive as some kind of spirit beings. Thus, one of his common lying signs is to make dead people seem alive, and he does this in various ways, from giving information via mediums in séances, to "haunting" houses, to full demonic apparitions that resemble dead people. Many people, seeing this "evidence," are turned from the clear biblical truth that the dead are dead until the Rapture or resurrection, to believing the Devil's lying sign as actually true.²

A major tactic of the Devil is to create a cultural climate in which there is a lot of disagreement over truths espoused by the Bible. That way, anyone who claims to have the truth is considered ignorant or arrogant, and is thus easily dismissed.

The Fallen Nature of Mankind

Another reason truth is often offensive to those who do not adhere to it is because people are selfish. We are flesh creatures who have a sin nature and live in a fallen world, and our flesh and sin nature combine to make us inherently selfish and self-centered. That is why we so often give in to temptation and do things that we know are not good for us, and it is also why it can seem so hard to do what is "right" all the time. Because we are self-centered, we can become offended by truth. We want to do things "our way," but the exclusive nature of truth means we have to do them "the right way." God calls our selfishness and the things we do from a selfish motivation "evil," and shows it is a reason why people do not come to Him, but are offended by the truth.

John 3:19-21

(19) This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

(20) Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

(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."

It goes against our selfish nature to always do things God's way, but God is love and everything He asks us to do is in *our* best interest.

Truth Will Always Offend Some People

The combination of the absolute nature of truth, the Devil's lies, and the fallen state of mankind combine to result in truth always being offensive to at least some people. For example, why is lying, cheating, and stealing so widespread? It is because people would rather get what they want than be self-sacrificing and truthful. There is an example that shows that people would rather get what they want than act selflessly and walk in love in the

gospel of John. Jesus was trying to teach the people that he, not manna, was the real bread that came down from heaven, and that if they would eat his flesh and drink his blood (both idioms for involvement and commitment), they would have everlasting life (John 6:53 and 54).³ This seems like a very fundamental truth, and it was spoken from Jesus' sincere and loving heart to see people live forever. Jesus was asking people to turn from their self-centered lives and follow his ways so they could live forever. How did the people respond? Scripture records what they said and did. They said, "...This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" (John 6:60). What did they do? They left, as John 6:66 records: "From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him."

When Jesus asked the people around him, including his disciples, to turn from selfishness to truth, many of them simply walked away from him. Do we honestly think it will be any different for us? But if we know that many unbelievers will be offended when we tell them they have to come to Jesus to be saved, should we just ignore the subject of salvation altogether? After all, there are so many other things to talk about; do we have to talk about God, Jesus, or everlasting life?

Why Do We Speak About Jesus?

In order to honestly answer the question about whether we have to speak to unbelievers about salvation and obeying God, we have to become clear on why Jesus, the Apostles, and so many other dedicated Christians have spoken to others about those things. God is real, even if people do not believe it; the Bible is true, even if people do not believe it; and the Day of Judgment is coming, even if people do not believe it. It is an act of love to tell people about blessings they could have now and in the future, and to warn people about a potential disaster they are unaware of. What we need to realize is that not everyone we speak to will "feel the love."

As Christians, we must face the fact that there is no way to present the truth about Jesus Christ and salvation to people without some of them being offended. Once we realize that, we have a decision to make: do we present the truth even though some will be offended?

The Stumbling Stone

While we are pondering when and how to present the spiritual truths of the Word of God to others, it helps to remember that God knew how people would respond to His loving advances. God knows the absolute nature of His truth, and that most people would reject it, and reject His Son. That is why God refers to Jesus as "...A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense."

1 Peter 2:6-8a (ESV)⁴

(6) For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

(7) So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,"

(8a) and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense."

It is a profound truth that it is God who calls His Son "a stone of stumbling and rock of offense." God Himself, who loves people much more than we could imagine, could not think of a better way to present His love, His Son, and His truth, that would not offend many of the self-centered men and women of the earth. Therefore it is safe to assume that neither you nor I are going to come up with a way to present Jesus Christ as God's plan of salvation without offending some of them. And how will they react? Many will just think we are arrogant and narrow-minded, and shun us, and others will aggressively try to curtail our Christian activities. That is what has happened to evangelically-minded Christians through the centuries—they have been restricted or forbidden to meet, to own Bibles, to preach, to witness to others, and often they have been persecuted to the extent of imprisonment, torture, and death.

Evangelism and Persecution

Just as the Bible says that unbelievers will be offended at Christ, it says that those who live godly lives, which includes lovingly reaching out to others with the truth about Christ and salvation, will be persecuted.

2 Timothy 3:12

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

This statement in 2 Timothy 3:12 is not a profound act of foretelling on Paul's part, but rather an honest evaluation of what happens when the absolute truth of God meets the self-centered hearts of fallen man. Just as a thief is angry when he is caught and strikes back if he can, many unsaved people are angry when they are presented with the truth that they must come to Jesus to be saved, and they strike back, doing things like making evangelism illegal and persecuting Christians who speak and live the truth.⁵

There are Christians who try to make Christ acceptable by not mentioning him but only doing good deeds. They say, "I let my good works do my witnessing." However, if we are honest about the subject, we can see that there are a number of problems with this approach. First, it is not really effective. There are not large numbers of people filling church pews who are there simply because they saw someone else doing good works or living a good life. No one can be saved until they make Christ Lord and believe God raised him from the dead (Rom. 10:9), and no one knows to do that unless someone else tells them. That is why there are so many commands in Scripture about speaking the Gospel to others. At some point someone must actually speak the Word to those who do not believe.

Secondly, doing good deeds is a common tenet not only of religion, but of service organizations. For example, the slogan of the Boy Scouts is "Do a good turn [deed] daily." Therefore, a Christian doing good deeds does not necessarily point an onlooker to salvation through Jesus Christ nor to the fatal consequences of rejecting him. Thirdly, why would we not speak about Jesus Christ, salvation, and everlasting life? We speak to others about what is important to us, such as things we enjoy, things that have happened to us that are noteworthy, and people who mean a lot to us, such as our children. What does it say about us, when we will not speak to others about Jesus Christ and salvation? There can only be two answers: either Jesus and salvation do not mean that much to us, or we are concerned or afraid of how the other person will respond.

We have to be very honest with ourselves when we consider why we are not mentioning Jesus and salvation to the unsaved people we know. If the voice in our head says, "I do not want to offend them," or "I do not want to 'turn them off,'" we need to be honest about the emphasis we are putting on the word, "I." Is the real reason we are not speaking about Christ a matter of protecting ourselves from being shunned, called "narrow-minded," or being otherwise persecuted? It is often not the "I" that offends people, but the "stumbling stone," Jesus Christ. People enjoy being lord of their life, and do not want to have another lord. It is loving, in fact, the pinnacle of love, to offer everlasting life to someone who is not saved. Similarly, it will be a time of great despair to be present at the Judgment and see someone get thrown into the flames if we had the chance to tell that person about Jesus but failed to do so.

Jesus Christ was loving, selfless, and giving in every way, and yet people rejected him. Jesus never told us we could get better **results** than he did. Instead, Jesus armed us with the truth by telling us how it would be when we ventured into the world to try to turn it from its selfish ways and offer it everlasting life.

Matthew 10:16-40 (NIV abridged)

I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore...Be on your guard against men...All men will hate you because of me...When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another...A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master...If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household! So do not be afraid of them...Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul...Do not suppose that

I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.

It is never our desire to offend anyone, but we must realize that truth, even if it is presented in love, will offend some people. We each have the choice to either love people enough to offer them everlasting life, knowing that we might offend them, or we can choose to simply be quiet and not risk offending anyone. Let's make the same choice Jesus did and tell people about Jesus and everlasting life, knowing we will live forever with some of them because of our efforts.

Notes:

1. For further study, visit TruthOrTradition.com/character and TruthOrTradition.com/fruit
2. For further study on death, see TruthOrTradition.com/death or our book, *Is There Death After Life?* We also have a free online audio seminar, "*Death and Resurrection to Life*," at TruthOrTradition.com/seminars
3. For documentation see our Revised English Version® of the Bible, Commentary on John 6:54 at STFonline.org/rev
4. Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are taken from The Holy Bible, *English Standard Version*™. © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved.
5. The free expression of Christian worship is outlawed in some countries today, and Christian evangelism is currently illegal in a number of countries, including many Moslem countries, communist countries, Israel and France.

**Available online at
TruthOrTradition.com/offend**

Partner Profile

Marshall & Roberta Cheek

We are so thankful to Spirit & Truth Fellowship International for the opportunity to share why we are blessed to be partners.

We coordinate a home fellowship in Santa Fe, NM. The materials we receive from this ministry fill so many needs for the people in our fellowship.

Our passion is to see people excited about God's Word and earnestly pursuing a personal relationship with God and the Lord Jesus Christ. This year our focus of teachings is on the Fundamentals of Being a Disciple. The five fundamentals are: Being in God's Word, Prayer, Giving, Fellowship, and Witnessing. We have found being Partners with Spirit & Truth supports us in several of the fundamentals.

Receiving monthly teachings and *The Sower* magazine, which are thank you gifts for being partners, makes it easy to be in God's Word. There are many ministries and teachings out there but we know of none who have a desire to teach TRUTH like this ministry. It is a breath of fresh air for us to get teachings that we know are accurate from God's Word. We are also relieved to know that when teachers in this ministry discover they are wrong in a certain area or have gained more insight, they are willing to change and move on with new information.

Of course, being partners also gives us an opportunity to give, which is another fundamental of being a disciple. We reap the benefits of giving financially, but more than the finances it is being able to give of ourselves to a ministry we believe has our best interest, and the interest of our family and home group, at heart. Money is such a small part of who we are and yet it gives this ministry an opportunity to literally get God's Word out to thousands of people via the Internet and many other ways. We count it a privilege to be a small part of the vast work that is moving God's Word over the world.

Fellowship with like-minded believers is very important to us. We've had opportunities to attend several conferences. Seeing believers from all over the country who have a heart for God, His Son Jesus, and the accuracy of His Word gives us fuel for the day-to-day ministering to others. Our teenage boys have been to the Teens & 20s Camp and have established friendships with other young believers. We are thankful they too have like-minded believers in their age group to fellowship with.

We believe one of the best tools provided by Spirit & Truth Fellowship for witnessing is the TruthOrTradition.com website. This tool has provided a practical way to introduce people to topics that may take hours to teach. There is a wealth of information and knowledge in the click of a button.

The opportunity to be involved with such an incredible ministry has had numerous blessings. We are thankful for the support for the believers on the field that the staff provides. We are looking to the hope of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, but for now, this ministry is the sweetest fellowship this side of Paradise.

God bless you,
Marshall and Roberta Cheek
Santa Fe, NM

Fuel for the Fire

Living the Truth

by Andrew Killeen

In 2005, I graduated from Babson College with a degree in business management. At the time, I lived with some friends and fellow grads in an apartment outside Boston. Among them was my friend Jon Pacor, whom I had known since our freshman year of college. Jon regularly spent time in God's Word, and I would often come home to find him sitting cross-legged on our green couch, reading from his Bible between work and band practice.

Though I had gone to church when I was young, my thoughts about God and Jesus Christ were few, and often misinformed by stereotypes. But for the grace of God, it just would not have occurred to me that Jesus Christ was in any way an avenue to the truth or the life I wanted.

Living with Jon put the Word front and center in my life. I knew and respected Jon, but also appreciated that we disagreed on many things when it came to our beliefs. Admittedly, I was confounded by Jon's heart for God. His black and white approach to the Word as the source of truth conflicted with my worldly mind, and I saw the Word as an obstacle. Still, I admired and secretly envied the stalwart nature of his faith and the power he drew from it, as I had begun to detect in my own heart at the time a certain sadness and weakness toward life's challenges.

One evening I sat pondering, "What really matters to me?" A few powerful words came to mind – *living the truth*. But I wondered, what is the truth? Book after book, I searched for signs of the truth. Anything that purported to have truth became my focus as I groped blindly for an answer my heart knew to exist. But time after time, the wisdom of the world proved to be an empty shell only pretending to have authentic truth. I knew this because I was not truly satisfied by any of it. My thirst went unquenched, until from within my own home an oasis appeared.

My roommate Jon built a web page with his band where he posted a short biography and a few of his interests. One interest was a website called TruthOrTradition.com. Curious, I clicked on the link and began reading a number of articles. Quickly, I found an article on Romans 10:9 that said, "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." I recall a change overtaking my mind as I read. Thoughts of a medieval kingdom appeared, a lordship over me to which I was beholden, the love and protection of one who is mighty to save. Intuitively, all these things felt true and made sense, and there was a visceral energy to the words. So I said it out loud: "Jesus is Lord." Intrigued, I said it again. And again.

For the next week, my thought life was peppered with the simple confession that Jesus was Lord. Whatever strength was behind those words, I wanted to know it better. It didn't occur to me then that I had somehow discovered "the truth." The sensation of faith was just so compelling I didn't look elsewhere – my search had stopped itself. I recall hoping those feelings of awe and trust I found in the Lord Jesus would never go away, and each day I was thrilled to wake up and discover they hadn't! *That* was when I knew.

For me, TruthOrTradition.com provided a quiet inroad to the ways of the Lord, a place where I could learn about God's truth as the spirit moved me. In hindsight, it feels like I read every article on the site in about a week, so thirsty was I for the truth offered by Christ. John 8:32 says, "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." On the day I confessed Jesus as my Lord, the desperation of not knowing the truth evaporated, replaced by a joyful desire to live in the truth I had found.

Not long after I discovered TruthOrTradition.com, Jon Pacor and I went to get burritos near our apartment outside Boston. On the way over, I told him about confessing Jesus as Lord. I was unsure how Jon would respond, given that I had come to Christ seemingly out of the blue. I should have known better; that Jon would immediately welcome me like a brother in Christ, as though we had shared in salvation together all along. We prayed together over burritos that night.

Looking back on the story of how I came to Christ, I see the hand of God on my life even before I knew He was there. I spent a lot of my life living outside of God, but He never failed to bless me with a wonderful family, great opportunities, and a hopeful future. And then, just as the skies started to cloud up and the world became a darker place for me, God beckoned with such emphatic singularity toward the light of truth that I had no recourse but to join Him.

It's been three years now since I confessed Jesus as my Lord, and I feel blessed to have found my way and my truth and my life in God and His Son Jesus Christ. Each day has been a step in my walk with him, an unimagined blessing that feels unreal, but at the same time more real than anything that came before. Jon Pacor and I regularly share the Word and fellowship together, and I am blessed and thankful to have him in my life. Faith is not something I could ever have planned, predicted or written for my life before I came to the Lord, but manifest in God's ways are the miraculous, and so loving is He that our wildest dreams are faint compared with the mercy of His true grace.

Teens and 20s needed!
If you would like to write a short article for Fuel for the Fire,
please contact us at STF@STFonline.org

Figures of Speech

Antanaclasis (Word Clashing)

by John W. Schoenheit

The ability to communicate with words is one thing that sets mankind apart from all other creatures. God is the Author of language, and no one has ever used language as precisely as God does in the Bible, including His use of figures of speech, of which there are more than 200 varieties in Scripture.¹ When most people say, “a figure of speech,” they are speaking in general terms of something that is not true to fact. However, genuine “figures of speech” are legitimate grammatical and lexical forms that add emphasis and feeling to what we say and write. In the Bible, God uses figures of speech to emphasize things that He wants us to see as important. Many people who read the Bible never think to ask themselves, “How do we know what God wants emphasized in His Word?” God uses figures of speech to put emphasis where He wants emphasis, so it is important that we recognize and properly interpret the figures of speech in the Bible. Knowing the figures of speech God uses in the Bible helps us to understand the true meaning of Scripture and enables us to more fully enjoy its richness.

The figure of speech we are going to study in this issue of *The Sower* is Antanaclasis, or “Word Clashing.” It occurs when the same word occurs in the same sentence, but the word has a different meaning each time it occurs. At the time of the American Revolution, Benjamin Franklin used Antanaclasis in his famous line about American unity in the face of British opposition. He said, “We must all hang together, or most assuredly, we will hang separately.” In this famous line, the word “hang” has two different meanings. When used to elicit a humorous response, many cases of Antanaclasis are puns. One has to be careful when examining puns for the possibility of the figure of speech Antanaclasis. However, just because a word is spelled the same and sounds the same, does not mean it is the same. Many puns are created from homonyms, words that are spelled the same but mean different things. A good example is “Time flies like an arrow, but fruit flies like peaches.” This is a good pun. The word “like” is an Antanaclasis, but the word “flies” is not, because it is a homonym. Examples of Antanaclasis in the Bible include:

1 Samuel 1:24 (KJV)

“...and the **child** was **young**.”

In this sentence, the Hebrew word *na'ar* (child) occurs twice. If we were to render the verse more literally, we might say, “And the child was a child.” In Hebrew, as in English, the word “child” can refer to an individual person who is young (“This child is a good student”) or it can specifically refer to the age of the individual (“I am amazed he plays the piano so well, he’s just a child”). The Antanaclasis in this verse emphasizes the young age of Samuel when his mother took him to the Tent of Meeting (Tabernacle).

Jeremiah 34:17 (KJV)

“Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming **liberty**, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a **liberty** for you, saith the LORD, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.”

The word “liberty” is used in two different ways in this verse. The Jews would not set at “liberty” the slaves they illegally owned (using “liberty” in the sense of a legal release from slavery), so God will allow “liberty” to the sword, famine and disease (using “liberty” in the sense of freedom of movement).

Matthew 8:22 (KJV)

“But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the **dead** bury their **dead**.”

The first use of “dead” refers to those who are spiritually dead while the second use of “dead” refers to those who are physically dead. Jesus used the figure Antanaclasis to emphasize that people who are spiritually dead are just as dead as those who are physically dead, because unless the person changes and becomes saved, physical death will inevitably follow spiritual death.

John 3:31 (Young’s Literal Translation)

“he who from above is coming is above all; he who is from the **earth**, from the **earth** he is, and from the **earth** he speaketh; he who from the heaven is coming is above all.”

The Antanaclasis in this verse involves the word “earth” which is used in two different ways. The verse is contrasting the one who is “from above” (Jesus Christ) with those who are “from the earth,” i.e., naturally born. The one who is “from the earth” in respect to birth, is “from the earth” in respect to his nature, and thus speaks “of the earth,” i.e., out from his earthly nature. The *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (HCSB)² picks up the sense of the Antanaclasis and translates the middle of the verse: “...The one who is from the earth is earthly and speaks in earthly terms...” The difference between “earth” and “earthly” catches the sense of the Antanaclasis, but loses the figure itself. By repeating the word “earth,” Jesus emphasizes the earth as the source of both the man himself and his nature.

Romans 12:13 and 14 (KJV)

“...**given to** hospitality. Bless them which **persecute** you: bless, and curse not.”

The figure of speech Antanaclasis can be clearly seen in the Greek, because the words “given to” and “persecute” are the same word, *dioko*. The actual meaning of *dioko* is “pursue,” or “go after,” and it has both a good side and an evil side. The good side is seen in verse 13, as in “pursue,” “go after,” and thus, “practice” hospitality, while the evil side is seen in verse 14 in those who “pursue” or “go after” us to hurt us, thus, they “persecute” us. The Antanaclasis emphasizes that while we “go after” hospitality, we must also bless those who “go after” us. For more figures of speech used in the Bible, visit TruthOrTradition.com/figures

Notes:

1. E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, reprinted 1968).
2. Scripture quotations marked HCSB are taken from the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*, Copyright ©1999, 2000, 2002, 2003 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. *Holman Christian Standard Bible*, Holman CSB, and HCSB are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

**For many more Figures of Speech visit
TruthOrTradition.com/figures**

The Vine Fruit that May Abound to Your Account by Michael L. Patten

The topic of financial giving is something I have been looking forward to writing about for a long time. There was a time in my early walk with Christ that I was hesitant to encourage people to give, but I thank my God that I got past that pratfall of Christian ministry. Actually, I now enjoy persuading or encouraging others to give their hard earned money to the furtherance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the early years of my ministry experience I had been led to believe that the tithe was an integral part of the life of faith for a follower of Christ. There was even a sense of foreboding, which had been communicated to me, if I didn't give 10 percent of my gross earnings. For a decade I lived in the vice of this so called "immutable law" and taught others to join me there. Even though I thought I was doing God's will, the truth is there was little joy in this exercise since it always seemed a little bit like a protection racket. You needed to give the proscribed amount to keep the wolf away from your door.

In 1987, my wife Mary and I, along with our fellowship, decided to research this topic for ourselves. To our amazement we saw how absolutely lacking the argument was for the tithe post-Pentecost. I was so furious that I had allowed myself to be coerced by this false teaching that I didn't give a dime to anyone for about a year. Gradually my heart softened and we decided to begin giving again, as we determined in our hearts what the amount should be.

2 Corinthians 9:7

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Since that time there has been a consistent joy in our hearts as the Father's grace in our lives has allowed us to be able to give financially to a variety of Christian organizations. However, since 2003 our giving has become invested almost exclusively in Spirit & Truth Fellowship International. I rejoice in the opportunity to explain my thinking about this decision Mary and I made six years ago.

We had been involved with three different churches in South Bend, Indiana. Each church experience had added blessing to our faith journey, as well as frustration due to a variety of issues. We had been involved with Spirit & Truth Fellowship from its inception and had supported it financially since that time in a limited way. Then, in 2003, a light bulb went on for us as a result of many things over the course of several years.

The awakening that occurred for us in 2003 was that there was nowhere else, or at least nowhere that we knew of, where there was a ministry that had the courage to speak the truth about the tithe and let the chips fall where they may. Not to mention standing for the truth of One God & One Lord, The State of the Dead, The Holy Spirit field, as well as the Sacred Secret in light of administrations in the Bible.

We decided to get back to having a fellowship in our home again and saw the value of having connection to a support structure beyond our own community. Michiana Christian Fellowship grew out of that decision and continues to be part of the Fellowship Network to this day, even though Mary and I have moved from South Bend to Bloomington, Indiana.

It has been a privilege for me over the last several months to join the staff of Spirit & Truth Fellowship and work closely with the Board of Directors of this ministry. I have been inspired once again by the organizational integrity of this ministry when it comes to money. They intentionally make the teachings available to the world without charge. This is an amazing thing in my eyes. Consequently, the Internet has allowed us to expand our outreach by providing articles, audio, and video around the world free to the end user.

This strategy requires courage since producing these products requires money, not to mention the overhead necessary to run an international ministry. I've heard Board members say when people question why we are not more focused upon selling printed material as in the past, "It's a matter of faith. If God is in this, then people who benefit from what we do will give."

That has proven to be the case as our wonderful partners and contributors have faithfully sustained this work. I have experienced the tension that often accompanies the discussion of money in church organizations among its members. But standing in faith while honoring the liberty of the individual, as this ministry does, is an experience for which I am thankful. It is a great honor for me to stand with such devoted followers of Jesus Christ who have answered this call.

To be accurate, when I said earlier that Mary and I almost exclusively invest our giving in the ministry of Spirit & Truth Fellowship, there are a few exceptions. We also happily contribute to our local fellowship, which is self-governing and self-supporting while also connected to this ministry's Fellowship Network. The third portion of our financial giving strategy is to individuals the Lord prompts us to help.

This is our strategy and it has served us well. The funny thing is that when we operated as if under the tithing, it seemed we could never get ahead. But even though our general approach to money now is no different than it was then, since 1987 we have always had our needs met, and more. I have not shared these personal money issues as a pattern for others to mimic necessarily, but rather as a testimony of God's faithfulness to me and my family.

Psalms 37:25 and 26

(25) I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.

(26) They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed.

Philippians 4:17 (KJV)

Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

Looking for Fellowship?

**If you are looking for fellowship, wanting to start a fellowship,
or want to list your fellowship with us, please contact
Mike Patten at Mike@STFonline.org**

Many people like to quote “The truth will set you free” (John 8:32), but they leave out the all-important preceding words spoken by Jesus. He 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.” When you keep the context of the verses, Jesus Christ stated that the way in which truth will set you free is through the truth of *what he taught*. His teachings are conveniently located in our Bibles! The Apostle Paul told the Thessalonians to “stand firm and **hold to the teachings** we passed on to you” (1 Thess. 2:15), which now have been passed on to *us* through the church epistles.

When learning to become a Truth Seeker, daily time studying the Bible is a course requirement. The Book of Acts explains why the Bereans were of more “noble character” than the Thessalonians:

Acts 17:11b

...for they received the message with great eagerness and **examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.**

Every time Paul taught the Word to the Bereans, they verified the truth themselves. They were not ashamed to ask, “*Why?*” or any other question. Examining the Scriptures in this manner has become a lost art. Sometimes people are afraid that the truth might challenge their lifelong traditions. It’s as if Jack Nicholson from *A Few Good Men* is yelling in their ear, “You can’t *handle* the truth!” Ironically, once we realize that the Word is truth, not only can we handle it, but it also liberates our hearts and brings us peace.

The Word of God is truth, but it will not leap off of the pages into our brains. We need to do the following:

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.**

Before I started studying the Bible, I did not “handle” the truth at all; I fumbled it. Instead of being a “workman,” I simply allowed myself to be fed the traditions of men without question. If you constantly “feed” yourself with something that is empty, you will never be satisfied.

Now that I am teaching our children, I no longer have the luxury of accepting something blindly. Sometimes I’m engaging in a tennis match of logic when I serve them a truth of the Scripture—they lob it back to me with, “WHY?” Thankfully, this forces me to work diligently, for they hold me accountable for logical answers that will satisfy their appetite for God’s Word. How can I expect my own children to consume a diet of traditions, when they are hungry for the truth?

One advantage of the constant barrage of questions from our children is that it forces me to *think*. Sometimes I rush through a biblical record, but the kids will ask me to go back and paint a clearer picture. For example, our daughter Grace wanted to know if Jesus was wearing sandals when he walked on the water. I had never given it any thought, but she was concerned about whether or not his shoes got wet. Another time when I explained that Jesus will return in the clouds, she asked exactly how we would get out of the house to meet him. These are questions that most adults do not ponder, but she was probably already working on some sort of Emergency Evacuation Plan, and she needed details for the diagram.

These countless wonderful moments with our children have allowed me to reflect more on the Scriptures and challenge my brain to work overtime. No, baby Moses did not go floating down the river like a ride at a water park, and no, Noah’s ark was not a small house boat filled with stuffed animals. Thankfully, God has unlimited patience with man.

Ephesians 6:14 exhorts believers to stand “with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist.” Notice that it does not use “suspenders,” which tend to slip off the shoulder, but a buckled belt. Whenever people eat too much, they like to loosen up their pants a little to get some breathing room. You rarely see someone wearing a belt at an all-you-can-eat buffet for just that reason. A belt is secure and difficult to remove! Just like children and their endless demand of WHY’s, we should be relentless in our pursuit of truth, and then fasten it securely with a belt to complete the full armor of God. It’s never too late to become a *truth seeker!*

**Read online at
TruthOrTradition.com/abc**

Dear Sower

YouTube Video Teachings

I have no words to describe to you how much I have gleaned from your 10 minute YouTube video teachings.

How grateful I am for your foresight and work to make this available. Also, how many multiple lives will these teachings touch? For, I so easily email them on to friends and they to their friends. Never has my life been so enriched! Thank you and God bless you!

Jetta (and Larry) Inskeep
Lima, OH

Editor's Note:

Check out our new YouTube video channel. Go online to [Youtube.com/TruthOrTradition](https://www.youtube.com/TruthOrTradition)

Website Feedback

I just wanted to say, "God Bless You" as well!

I have loved your web articles and links (TruthOrTradition.com), they have contributed so much to my reading and understanding of the Bible and I must say my mission and my ministry.

Sharon Winters, M.D.
Port Orange, FL

Editor's Note:

Check us out online and follow us on Twitter. Go online to [TruthOrTradition.com/twitter](https://www.TruthOrTradition.com/twitter)

One God & One Lord Book

What an excellent book you have sent to me, *One God & One Lord*. First time in my life that I have read and explored totally different knowledge and information. The book is no doubt great and marvelous. I have read four chapters of it so far and start believing the scripture. Thank you once again for this precious gift.

Warm regards,
Imran H.
Pakistan

Editor's Note:

Thanks to your support, we are able to send some of our books free of charge to bless people like this. To read key chapters of this book online, visit TruthOrTradition.com/ogol

The Last Two Issues

I wanted to drop a quick line to say that I have immensely enjoyed the last couple of issues of *The Sower*. They have been on the two subjects that have been on my heart for some time now; discipline and prayer. *The Sower* has addressed all of my questions and then some.

I am so very blessed by all of your hard work that goes into the magazine. So much so that I feel compelled to write and let all of you know that God has worked mightily in my life. I feel so fortunate to have the ability to know God's Word deeply and to be able to recognize God at work, thanks in no small part to your hard work.

God bless all of the staff!

In Christ,
Frank T. Kopus
West Liberty, OH

Editor's Note:

To read back issues of *The Sower* online in PDF or Flash format, visit STFonline.org/backissues

Tithing vs. Giving Article

I really, REALLY like & enjoy TruthOrTradition.com & think that it's AWESOME!

I am particularly excited about the site because it has set me free regarding tithing. I was tithing 10% and it was a burden. Now I give a set amount to my church each week that comes directly from my payroll department before I get paid. This site has also cleared up many questions I had concerning Heaven and Satan, and being slain in the spirit.

I hope to begin giving on a regular basis to your organization as it is well worth the money! Thank you for all you have done in my life and for what I can pay forward into the life of another believer.

Michelle Baraka
Woodbury, NJ

Editor's Note:

To see a list of articles on "What Does the Bible Say About..." visit TruthOrTradition.com/life

Thank You for Your Videos

Just writing to say thanks for your videos on MySpace. They are a blessing! God bless,

Lydia
Los Angeles, California

Editor's Note:

Check out our MySpace page at TruthOrTradition.com/myspace

Send us your Feedback

**Do you have questions about the Bible?
Comments about our articles, audio teachings & videos?**

**We would love to hear from you!
Email us at STF@STFonline.org**