

TRUTH

Each and every day we are engaged in a truth war. Our world has gradually replaced the absolute truths of God's Word with counterfeit ideas that subtly or directly oppose God and His Word. **If we slow down today and look at the process of how God's truth has been eroding away in our culture, what trends have you noticed?**

As minority groups have strategically manipulated their way to power, our society has gradually adopted an "anything goes" lifestyle policy. In fact, if Christians stand up for the truths defined by God in the Bible, we are branded with negative labels like "intolerant," "narrow," or "homophobic." How else could you explain the fact that 20 years ago, homosexuality was defined as a mental illness, and now it is viewed as an "alternative lifestyle?" **The truth is our society is becoming more and more intolerant of a biblical worldview.**

As we have seen a steady decline in church attendance, we are also seeing a gradual increase in people who are unfamiliar with God's truths found in the Bible. As the church became more focused on strategies to make church more consumer friendly, we have seen a rapid decline in discipleship. The priority of teaching, learning, and applying God's Word to everyday life has been replaced with studying the latest books, or watching the newest video series developed by religious writers. As Christians who stand for the truth are criticized and persecuted, we have fewer people willing to engage in the truth war. And if you don't know the truth in the first place, how in the world will the truth set you free?

If you listen to people who talk about "the truth", you may frequently find people who base "truth" on their personal experiences, or they use "the truth" to beat people up. Have you ever had somebody thump you over the head with a Bible verse? It hurts more than it helps. Or have you ever reached deep into your pocket when you needed some ammunition during an argument and pulled out a "truth" to gain the advantage over someone? We can hold people hostage with "the truth" instead of forgiving them.

But one of the distinctive truths of Christianity is that we have been graced by God. God graced us by sending Jesus to make a way for our sins to be forgiven. Grace and truth are embodied in a person and a relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Jesus is the only pathway to eternal truth. And Jesus' truth does not change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. When we invite Jesus and his life-changing truth into our hearts to make His home in us, we begin a process of learning and living in God's truth.

- What happens when we get consumed with our experiences and our experiences become the only source of "what's true" or "what's right" for us?
- What are the dangers of having "our truth" be based only on our feelings, our thinking, or our changing circumstances?
- What if we allow "our truth" to be determined by the people we hang out with?
- What is "your truth" based on?

People today are looking for truth that is lived out relationally. They will only believe something or someone is true if they see and experience it to be relationally true over the course of time. Maybe that is why Jesus said, "If you stick with this, living out what I tell you, you are my disciples for sure. Then you will experience for yourselves the truth, and the truth will free you." (John 8:31,32 MSG) We may search for the truth on the internet, in popular books, in relationships, or wherever we are, but we only find consistent, eternal truth in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and in the Bible.