

Rom. 14:19  
So then let  
us follow  
after things  
which make  
for peace,  
and things  
whereby we  
may edify  
one another.



John 8:32  
And ye shall  
know the  
truth and the  
truth shall  
make you  
free.

September  
22  
2019

## WHAT IS TRUTH?

by Jim Stauffer

This is the question Pilate asks Jesus prior to His crucifixion in **John 18:38**. His question is in response to the statement by Jesus telling him He was born to be a King and to testify to the truth and that further anyone who was of the truth would hear his voice. Throughout Scripture, Jesus identifies truth for any and all who would be His disciples. There is His plea to the Father for His disciples, *“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”* (**John 17:17**)

What then becomes essential for all who would believe in Jesus is to believe Jesus by trusting and relying upon His word.

Of course, this is where the difficulty lay. When Jesus calls on me to make sacrifices in life, I tend to forget He speaks the truth. He speaks words I must follow to be His disciple and being His disciple is necessary in order to spend eternity in heaven with Him. He tells us we must give up our ideas and plans for life and subscribe to His teachings, the truth, or we cannot be His disciple (**Mat. 16:24,25; Luke 14:26**).

So this thing called truth is a stubborn thing that is not malleable or able to be changed to fit what we think is more appropriate. Only disciples of Jesus are promised an eternal inheritance (2 Pet. 1:11). Only disciples of Jesus are called out of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son or as Peter puts it into His marvelous light (**Col. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:9**). And all of this occurs by the powerful word of God, the truth. *“It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thess. 2:14)* Are you any more interested in the truth than Pilate was? If so, you will have to change to find harmony with it because the truth never changes.

### Homosexual Conduct

Homosexual conduct is a “hot topic” in the time and place we live. Not only is the practice becoming

increasingly common, but there is a strong push for all to approve of this practice.

As with all questions of morality, though, God has the authority to determine what is right and what is wrong. God tells us the truth about morality through His written Word (**John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17**).

Instead of molding our thinking after the world’s view of right and wrong, the Holy Spirit exhorts us to let God’s Word transform our thinking (**Rom. 12:2**). God commands us to fit our beliefs to His will, instead of trying to make God’s will fit our beliefs.

Understanding God’s will related to homosexual conduct begins by recognizing what He teaches about gender. When Jesus was asked a question about divorce in **Matthew 19**, He responded by going back to God’s original design of gender and marriage. Notice **verses 4-5**: [Jesus] answered, *“Haven’t you read that He who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh?’*

God created exactly two genders. These genders are *“male and female”* (**Gen. 1:27**). God did not leave it to the man or the woman to decide what gender they’d like to be.

God did not create either the man or the woman to be superior in importance to the other. However, He did not create them to be identical. Instead, His design is for the man and woman to perfectly complement one another. The uniqueness of man and woman make them suitable for each another.

This is connected to God’s design of marriage. God-approved marriage is between husband and wife. When both the husband and the wife fulfill their complementary roles, marriage works beautifully (**Eph. 5:22-33**).

God never authorizes “husband and husband” or “wife and wife” marriages. Same sex “marriages” violate the complementary nature of man and woman that God

intends to exist in the marriage relationship.

Given this truth, homosexual conduct is sex outside of God-approved marriage. It is therefore a form of fornication (see Strong G4202 & Thayer), which is sin (**Gal. 5:19-21**).

Homosexual conduct is also condemned through passages that directly address this type of sexual sin.

Homosexual behavior has been a problem since the patriarchal dispensation. Sodom and Gomorrah were given to this sin (**Gen. 19:4-5**), and were destroyed for sins that included “going after strange flesh” (**Jude 7**). God continued to condemn homosexual conduct during the Mosaic dispensation (**Lev. 18:22**).

While this history helps us better understand how God looks at things, it must be conceded that the Law we are subject to today is the Law of Christ, which is revealed through the New Testament (**Col. 2:14-17**).

The New Testament speaks of some “*who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator*” (**Romans 1:25**). Given their determination to reject the Lord’s will, God “let them have it their way.” Notice **verses 26-27**: *For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions. For their women changed the natural function into that which is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural function of the woman, burned in their lust toward one another, men doing what is inappropriate with men, and receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error.*

These verses speak of homosexual conduct in a way that leaves no doubt it is condemned by God (also see **1 Tim. 1:10**).

Perhaps the strongest rebuke of homosexual conduct is seen in **1 Corinthians 6**. Notice **verses 9-10**: *Or don’t you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God’s kingdom? Don’t be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor extortionists, will inherit God’s kingdom.* Homosexuals are among the unrighteous who will face eternal condemnation in hell.

While sin leads to eternal punishment, God offers a means by which we can be forgiven. One thing He requires to be forgiven of *any* sin is repentance. This involves *turning away* from unrighteous behavior and turning toward God.

While some claim that homosexual behavior cannot be changed, God says otherwise. After homosexual conduct and other unrighteous acts are condemned in **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**, **verse 11** says, “*And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.*” According to our Creator, homosexuals can turn from that behavior (notice the words “*such were*”). Those in a same-sex

“marriage” can (and must) leave that relationship to be right with God. Those practicing homosexual conduct can (and must) cease that behavior to be right with God.

Perhaps the misunderstanding concerning homosexuals’ ability to change stems from a failure to distinguish between *temptation* and *sin*. **Hebrews 4:15** shows a crucial difference between the two. The **verse** speaks of Christ as the “*One who has been in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin.*”

It’s not a sin to be tempted. Rather, it’s a sin to *yield* to temptation. Some have stronger homosexual *temptations* than others, but this does not mean that some are forced to *yield* to temptation while others are not.

Notice **1 Corinthians 10:13**: *No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.* God assures that no matter what temptation one faces, he or she always has a “*way of escape.*” This is a comfort for those who want to please God.

While Christians must stand firm on these truths, we must avoid *hypocrisy* when condemning homosexual conduct.

This does not mean that we should never judge others (cf. **John 7:24**). We must be consistent, though, in identifying *all* sin as wrong. For instance, premarital sex should not be considered “less wrong” than homosexual acts. Both acts involve sex outside of God-approved marriage. Both acts are *sin*.

We must also guard against hypocrisy by watching our *attitudes* and *motives*. We must speak the truth in love (**Eph. 4:15**), genuinely desiring to help others, rather than speaking condescendingly or to “win” an argument.

The fear of hypocrisy should not discourage us from standing firm on the truth, though. We should not “water down” the truth, or be ashamed to proclaim it. God’s Word is unchanging (**1 Pet. 1:24-25**). God does not “take back” the truth simply because some attempt to discard it (cf. **Jer. 36:20-32**).

As our society pushes for all to accept homosexual conduct, we should remember God’s truth and His strength (**Rom 8:31**).

May those guilty of homosexual conduct submit to God’s terms of forgiveness (including repentance), and may we all view and respond to homosexual conduct as God desires.

**Michael Hickox; Taken from  
thesinceremilkofGod’sword.com**



## Turning To God

### Randy Harshbarger

While the problems of modern man are many (**Job 14:1**), the greater problems are those of a moral and spiritual nature. It is obvious that mankind in general does not realize this. Men are consumed with technology, politics and economic woes. To be sure, living in this world obligates us to spend some energy on the things of this life. Yet, the pursuit of the mammon of this world is vanity (**Ecclesiastes 2:16-17**). Leaving God out of one's life leaves a void that cannot be filled by striving after the wind. David said: *"Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord"* (**Psalms 4:4-5**). In this Psalm, David seeks the conversion of his enemies. It is a magnificent expression of confidence and faith in the Lord. In the midst of the troubles of this life, he provides for any man, modern or ancient, the formula that will insure spiritual success.

*"Stand in awe and sin not."* Men are prone to dwell only on the goodness, love, and mercy of God, rather than the severity of God. A God without both is not the God of the Bible (**Romans 11:22**). Instead of awe, fear, and trembling, we speak of joy, happiness, and peace. We must **wake up** to the seriousness of sin. As we live before God we must take sin seriously (**Romans 7:13**). Before God in His infinite holiness, we are *"undone"* (**Isaiah 6:1-5**). Sin is not simply a moral error, or an inherited legacy from our parents, or a part of our "animal nature." Sin is a violation of the law of Almighty God. Let us wake up that fact!

*"Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still."* When we compare ourselves with others we always look better than perhaps we really are (**2 Cor. 10:12**). We must turn away from others as we take spiritual inventory. An honest inward self examination is needed as we endeavor to walk in the light of the Lord (**Isaiah 2:5**). Some men do not love the light of God's word and turn away; in doing so they are never going to be able to cleanse the guilty conscience. To *"know thyself"* demands an uncompromising inward look at the kind of heart we have. We must be willing to make any needed sacrifice in order to please God (**Mark 9:43**). It is the image of the Lord we are striving for, not our own or that of some other (**2 Corinthians 3:18**). The effort must be made to draw our hearts away from earthly affections as we put our spiritual condition on trial (**2 Corinthians 13:5**). Let us *"be still"* (slow down) long enough for serious reflection about our standing before God.

*"Offer the sacrifices of righteousness."* The only sacrifices accepted by the Lord are those authorized by Him. The holiness of God along with our undone condition without Him, demands that we turn to heaven above as our only hope. Reflection on the Lord will turn us in the right way (**Psalms 119:59-60**). David manifested the right kind of heart (**Psalms 51:17**) in his repentance.

As we repent and turn from our sins, the Lord promised to forgive (**1 John 1:7**). We look not to self, but to the great sacrifice of God's Son (**Hebrews 9:13-14**).

*"And put your trust in Jehovah."* Who else can we trust (**Philippians 4:6-7**)? We trust the Lord to receive, forgive, and bless us (**Matthew 11:28-30**). We trust God as He reveals His promises through His Son (**John 14:8-9**). We trust Him by our willingness to do exactly as He commands. We must do what is good (**Rom.12:1-2**) and turn from what is wrong (**Ephesians 4:22-24**).

To do what David did, necessitates a conscious decision on our part. To do what David did is an act of the will. We must choose the way the Lord provides. We must wake up spiritually. We must look inwardly often. We must realize that the Lord is our only hope. Only then will we find the healing and redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Let us press on (**Philippians 3:14**), accepting the challenges of life. With the Lord's help we can live for Him now and for eternity.

## Remember to Get the Context!

Every politician, when confronted by his own words, will say "I was quoted out of context!" It's just a reflex comment, so much so that it has become almost meaningless. The unfortunate truth is there are many times when they are abused in that manner but the defense is used so much that people discount the genuine importance that context plays in genuine, honest communication, like the Bible.

The preacher in Zelienople, PA, (whose wife's fried egg sandwiches on Sunday nights helped me remain faithful to the Lord as a new Christian many years ago, Hi Linda!) always used to say about **Romans 8:1**, *"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* that the word *"Therefore"* is a signal to look back at the verses just written to remind ourselves what the 'therefore' is there for. Truer words were never spoken! It is also an easily memorized way of reminding us to "Get the context of a statement right!!" Why? Because sometimes the context can profoundly alter the message of the words, as in **1 Kings 22**. Micaiah speaks to the King saying *"Go up and succeed, and the LORD will give it into the hand of the king."* And the King reacted angrily. Why? The context indicates that there was something in the delivery of the words that conveyed sarcasm to the King. He also followed the sarcasm up with a prophecy of the King's death in battle with the blunt statement, *"If you indeed return safely the LORD has not spoken by me."*

Context which changes the meaning of a statement like Micaiah's is crystal clear and needs no extended explanation. Generally it adds depth and clarity to the words.

**Cleveland Reddinger**

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

## **HOURS OF WORSHIP**

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

**We conduct in home Bible Studies**

**We offer Correspondence Courses**

## **OUR ADDRESS IS:**

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

**Check out the following websites:**

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist

lenexachurchofchrist.org

**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**

**Elders: Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer**

**Deacons: Bill Miller**

**Brandon Jimison**

**Casey Dent**

**Joe Hurd**

### **NEWS AND NOTES:**

PLEASE REMEMBER JAN PATRICK, STEPHEN KIMKER, STEVE AND SUZANNE WIMP, AND ALMA BAUMGARTNER, LINDIA JACKSON, TRUDY MULLEN, RON DALY AND TOM HOLLAND.

### **BIBLE CLASSES**

SUNDAY MORNING

STUDY OF AUTHORITY

TEACHER - BILL MILLER

WEDNESDAY EVENING

1&2 TIMOTHY

TEACHER - JIM STAUFFER

### **SUNDAY SERMON:**

WITH ALL LONG-SUFFERING AND TEACHING



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10