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Truth or Deception? Staying Rooted in God's Word in a Misleading World

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We live in what has been termed the information age. If it is electronic and can connect to the Internet then you know that information is flowing at a rapid pace. But as fast as that information is, there are often obstacles placed before us before obtaining needed information. Popup ads, click here, don't miss this, etc. etc. I find it incredibly challenging when severe weather is in the area (the app notifies you that you need to listen to what the meteorologist has to say) but before you can listen to the potential lifesaving information you must watch a commercial or two. Unfortunately, I didn't know the tornado was about to tear my house apart because I had to watch a commercial first.

Have you ever been frustrated by obstacles when seeking urgent information? Now imagine that same frustration when searching for religious truth. Sadly, there are a lot of obstacles online that hinder us from obtaining truth. There is a lot of misinformation that gets thrown around and placed between us and the truth. We must quickly recognize untruth, push it aside and overcome it to get to the truth. It is a serious matter when that which misinformation surrounds morality and religious truth. That misinformation is more than misinformation, it is false doctrine and false doctrine leads us away from the truth and God's word. "Sanctify them in truth, Your word is truth" (John 17:17).

It is dangerous to not know the Scriptures. When we do not know the Scripture we are subject to error, being deceived, and led astray (Mark 12:24). There are a lot of people who have internet podcasts, blogs, social media posts and TikTok videos that are unlearned, unstable and twist the Scriptures to their own destruction and the destruction of others (2 Peter 3:16). When I do not know the Scriptures I am easily "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and the cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in weight to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14). Because the podcaster is cunning and crafty he/she is able to teach false doctrine and a Christian "not knowing the Scriptures" is unable to discern the error. A Christian continuously listens to the error in the podcast and the false teaching is now believed and the doctrine of Christ rejected.

So much of false teaching is not founded upon the Word of God but instead is a plea to the passions and emotions within. The appeal is made to the heart and not the head. Their arguments and reasons are designed to heighten emotions while ignoring the will of God as revealed within His word. We must remind ourselves of what Jeremiah said "O LORD, I know the way of man *is* not in himself; *it is* not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Christians bear the responsibility of knowing the Scriptures. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). We bear the responsibility of exercising ourselves within the Scriptures so as to discern good and evil. "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). What we hear must match what we read within the Scriptures (Acts 17:11). Failing to do so leads one to apostasy.

While living in the information age and soon the artificial intelligent age, it is more important than ever for Christians to know the Scriptures and efficiently and effectively recognize error and false teaching. Let us make a commitment to spend more time in God's Word ensuring that our ability to discern right from wrong is founded upon the truth instead of the lie.

Do I Cry Out for Fellowship with God?

by Russ Bowman

“My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God” (Psalm 84:2).

I don't know which of the “sons of Korah” wrote this psalm, or whether it may have been the product of a collective effort. But I would love to spend some time with him, if for no other reason than to appreciate better his heart. I am shamed by his yearning for God.

Here is a man who lived under the Mosaic covenant, most likely in the days of David's rule. There is no temple yet, though it does appear that David has in this day constructed the tabernacle in Jerusalem and that the regular worship and sacrifices are being conducted there. And though the tabernacle may have been impressive, it was still just a tent surrounded by curtained courtyards. This man understood forgiveness and atonement as they were revealed in animal sacrifices. He saw the tedious nature of God's law and the difficulty of keeping such. Worship, and daily living, involved prescribed rituals, repetitive holy days, burdensome restrictions.

He did not know Yahweh as a God Who humbled Himself to live as a man, attain a sinless life, die a horrid sacrificial death, emerge in glorious resurrection, and ascend again to heaven. He did not appreciate the love of God expressed in the offer of redemption for all mankind. He had never read of Jesus, of His benevolent miracles, of His words of hope. He did not know the parable of the prodigal son. He saw the shadow, not the reality. He did not know God as I know God.

And yet, he cried out for the fellowship with God that comes in worship. He saw God as a welcoming, providing, powerful, listening, attentive, protective, gracious, glorious Benefactor to His people. He wanted nothing more than to be in His presence.

That's the heart I want. I am impacted at times by others. I have resented opportunities to worship because someone has frustrated me, hurt me, marginalized me, dismissed me, disparaged me, discouraged me. Or simply because I wanted to be elsewhere. I have lost my focus occasionally. And my joy. God help me to recapture my longing simply to be in His presence. May I ever see Him as my sun and shield, the source of grace and glory. May I remember that the blessed man is the man who trusts in the living God. And may my heart and flesh cry out for You, O LORD of hosts.