

An Open Letter Regarding Truth and Error

I am writing this letter to you because I want you to be free from the error you have accepted about yourself. I know from experience how painful it is to live that way, how self-defeating it is, how weak we are as we struggle to live the way we know we should, and how unfulfilled and lonely a life it is.

I want to give you some suggestions regarding your inner evaluation of yourself and how we think. We all have a tendency not to accept fully – what God says about us. When we do that, and I'm not only talking now from the viewpoint of the Bible, but my own sad experience – we grieve the Holy Spirit of Truth and develop a way of thinking that will produce failure in some important areas of life. When we accept error about ourselves, we then develop a concept of self that we produce by how we live. It is an inexorable principle: what we believe about ourselves is like a prophecy that we are destined to fulfill!

While I am not completely out of the woods yet I know the way out. I wish I could say it is quick and easy but it is not. When we have accepted error about ourselves, that acceptance develops into a habitual way of looking at ourselves and then a habitual way of living. Error is so powerful it eventually causes us to interpret almost everything in it's light – instead of in the light of truth! The result is a form of slavery of the crudest type.

Our only hope of deliverance is found in the One Who is the Truth – and Who has brought us to Himself by His grace. While error is powerful because of the Fall, our depravity, the continual pressure of the world system, and in particular the subtle work of Satan – the Truth is more powerful because it is of God and it is His promise to work with us and to lead us into the knowledge and practice of His truth and its freedom.

However, there is no hope of deliverance if we continue to believe error and to practice it in how we think about ourselves and then in how we live.

All of us have been taught error about ourselves over a long period of time. And I believe the ultimate source of that teaching is none other than the Father of lies (John 8:44) who seeks to deceive and therefore accuse us (Revelation 12:9,10) so we will not believe the truth and escape from his slavery. He enjoys our pain and the agony his error produces.

Where we have to begin is where God starts with us – the new birth. It is vitally important to understand what happened to us then. A good passage to consider is found in I Corinthians 6:9-11.

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified (declared righteous) in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

These verses tell us that every believer has had a radical and revolutionary inner spiritual transformation. No matter how sinful we were before the new birth – we are now washed, sanctified, and justified and therefore the inheritors of the kingdom of God. We may not feel that we are – or think that we are – and we may not live that way (due to acts of failure) but that is what we are by the grace of God in the new birth.

It is at this point that the error you have received with its resultant deception will put pressure upon you, and perhaps even cause the enemy to work on you! You will have a tendency to dilute the truth of the former passage by appealing to your thoughts and feeling about yourself or to some area of life where you have failed or are now failing. Such thoughts, feelings, and failures do not mean we are not born again nor do they mean we are not washed, sanctified and justified. In fact – God has warned us that we will have such problems while this side of Heaven. He has clearly stated:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ... If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. I John 1:8,10.

It has helped me to realize that we seem to have two levels of thinking going on at the same time. The first level would be that thinking that you are using as you read these lines. The second level is how you are evaluating, mostly in a negative way, what you are reading. You may be saying to yourself "Why did he say that?" or "I wish that could be true about me," or even worse you may be thinking, "I don't think there is a way out." It may help you to read the book by David Burns, Feeling Good or the one by Aaron Beck called Cognitive Therapy.

Please monitor your thinking and learn to "catch yourself" doing negative thinking. Most of the time that second level of thinking – that we are barely aware of – will be negative and will weaken and even ruin the truth that you are trying to accept and practice.

To reject error we must identify it by evaluating it from the perspective of the Bible and then correct it. The pattern has been given to us by the Lord Jesus in His temptation. When the Tempter, Deceiver, Accuser and Liar said to Him "If You are the Son of God make these stones bread." What the Savior did is what we must do, He refused to accept the thought (error). He did not even say to Himself, "I wonder if I'm the Son of God?" or "If I'm the Son of God why am I hungry when My Father has promised to supply my need?" or "Maybe I ought to try to turn those stones into bread and then I'll know for sure I'm the Son of God" or "How is it possible – if I'm the Son of God – for the Devil to talk to me?" or "What's wrong with Me, here I'm thirty years old and have no following yet?" The Lord Jesus rejected and corrected the error by and with the truth. He said, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

It is this painful process of correcting your thinking about yourself that I am recommending to you. The enemy has a very subtle way of teaching us and backing up his teaching by pointing out our failures as well as causing emotional and even physical support for his work.

Allow me to list a few things that God states about you.

You are holy and without blame before God – Ephesians 1:4.

You have been chosen by God for adoption – Ephesians 1:5

You have been completely forgiven by God – Ephesians 1:7

You have been sealed with and by the Holy Spirit – Ephesians 1:13

You are God's inheritance – valuable to Him – Ephesians 1:18

When one is accustomed to negative thinking one will read the above statements and immediately weaken them on the basis of some question – some emotions – or in the light of some past or present failure. A common format would be, "if that's true about me then why . . . ?"

You are a believer, you have been spiritually cleansed – washed – purified, you are holy and pure, you have been adopted by God, He loves you and likes you, you are the temple of the Holy Spirit, you have in your life the power of the Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost, you have been invited to participate in the greatest plan ever devised – to live for the glory of the Lord Jesus, and the list goes on and on. You must learn to struggle – to live in harmony with what and who you really are.

Please give up your negative thinking about yourself as the sin it really is. Ask God to forgive and cleanse you. Surrender yourself to Him and ask Him to teach you how to accept and live out the truth.

Sincerely,

Victor M. Matthews