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# Teaching Truth to the Next Generation

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# TEACHING TRUTH TO THE NEXT GENERATION

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## **A close look at 2 John outlines invaluable counsel for those who seek to impart truth to others.**

**I**f you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you are concerned about the younger generation. Your concern runs deeper than terrorism, the economy, or the next presidential election. Your concern is for the hearts and minds of young men and women who are asking even more foundational questions.

Many are asking, “What is truth?” Many others are asking, “What is true to you?” Whether modern or postmodern (and most people are a mixture of the two), a vast number of people are in agreement in either

their marginalization or complete rejection of God and His Word. They are basically self-focused, seeing truth and the decisions they face as relative. Right and wrong, good and bad, and righteousness and sin are outdated and irrelevant concepts to many.

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***Truth must first be known before anything further can occur. There is no substitute for teaching truth to the next generation. They cannot make a choice of whether or not to believe truth, whether to allow it to affect their lives, or whether they should impart it to others, unless they first know what it is.***

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focus on truth has led to a focus on hedonism; a loss of the universality of truth has led to relativism and a loss of the unity of truth has led to no unifying worldview.<sup>1</sup> George Barna discovered in a 2002 survey that only 32 percent of born-again adults were certain that absolute moral truth exists, and only nine percent of born-again teenagers believed in absolute moral truth.<sup>2</sup>

What has happened as a result of the diminished definitions of truth? Some Christians have looked at our younger generations and watched them walk away from church, often rejecting the God of the Bible and the Scriptures that claim to be truth. Others have chosen (from the best of motives, but to what end?) to alter not only the methods of delivering the truth of the Word of God, but even the truth itself, so as not to offend their listeners. Still other believers have refused to compromise the truth as found in Scripture but have limited that truth to lists of facts that can be memorized. Often this kind

of truth-teaching leads to arrogance and legalism. Is this really teaching truth?

Is the controversy about truth new in this generation? People have always been concerned about truth, and there have always been questions about what is true. Before going to battle against Syria, Ahab sought the advice of his prophets as to whether he should go. “‘Attack Ramoth Gilead and be victorious,’ they said, ‘for the Lord will give it into the king’s hand’” (1 Kings 22:12, NIV). Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, was concerned that none of the Lord’s prophets was present and requested that Ahab inquire of a prophet of the Lord. Micaiah, the prophet, quickly (and apparently, sarcastically) prophesied victory for Ahab. Ahab responded by saying, “‘How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?’” (vs. 16, NIV). Micaiah became serious and told a story of defeat for Israel and death for Ahab. Israel was de-

feated and Ahab died. The words of Micaiah were truth even though Ahab refused to believe them.

Almost 900 years later, Pontius Pilate, addressing Jesus Christ, asked, “What is truth?” (John 18:38, KJV). People today (almost 2,000 years later), including the youth, are also crying out for truth. They are searching for a worldview that provides answers to the most important questions of life. Even those who argue that there is no absolute truth, desperately hope that they are wrong.

It is the responsibility of an older generation to teach the next that which is true. What must we do today to teach future generations the absolute truth of the Word of God? Generations to come must be able to remain confident that absolute truth is provided in the Word of God. It is the responsibility of all believers, but especially those who are called and gifted to proclaim God’s Word to the next generation. What is it that we must teach them about truth?

### Teaching Them to Know the Truth

Truth must first be known before anything further can occur. There is no substitute for teaching truth to the next generation. They cannot make a choice of whether to believe truth, whether to allow it to affect their lives, or whether they should impart it to others, unless they first know what it is. How many educa-

tors today are instructing the next generation while they themselves do not have a clear concept of truth? We must have a clear understanding of truth in order to be qualified to teach truth to our people in church and in the classroom.

What is truth?

Arthur Holmes wrote, “All truth is God’s truth, no matter where it is found.”<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, not everyone believes this to be so. There are many different beliefs about truth.

Some would say that there is no such thing as absolute truth. Truth to them is relative to the person, place, time, or situation. Some would even say that truth is based on one’s feelings about an issue and that truth may change as often as one’s feelings change. Using the analogy of a building, Nancy Pearcey has explained that some have a divided concept of truth. In the lower story, we find science and reason, which are rational and verifiable, but in the upper story we have experience and private truth, which are non-rational and non-cognitive.<sup>4</sup> Many go so far as to say that there really is no truth; there are only preferences. They may even claim to be Christians but also assert that each person comes to God in his or her own way.

Much of what is written about truth today attempts to explain the differences in biblical beliefs, modern beliefs, and postmodern beliefs about truth. Modernism and post-

modernism actually have much in common in relation to truth. They both proclaim rejection of God and glorification of focus on humankind. Instead of humans looking to the God of the universe to know truth, they look into their own sin-tainted intellect and determine their own truth. Relativism, secularism, naturalism, pragmatism, and hedonism are some of the fruits of a system of truth that is derived from sinful heart and minds. In contrast, the biblical teaching about truth is God-focused with humanity dependent on God and His Word.

Philosophers who hold to the authority of the Word of God believe in the correspondence theory of truth. James Emery White explained the correspondence theory as “that which corresponds with fact and is both objective and absolute.”<sup>5</sup> Francis Schaeffer wrote, “When I say Christianity is true I mean it is true to total reality—the totality of what is, beginning with the central reality, the objective existence of the personal-infinite God. Christianity is not just a series of truths but Truth—Truth about all of reality.”<sup>6</sup>

Our purpose at this point is to look into the Scriptures and see what God says about truth. Do the words of White and Schaeffer correspond with the biblical definition of truth and, specifically, with the teaching of 2 John?

An overview of Scripture points us to both Old and New Testament usages of the word translated “truth.” The Hebrew word *’emet* is usually translated “truth” or “faithfulness.” It denotes certainty or reliability as it refers to God and His Word. Gottfried Quell wrote, “It is used absolutely to denote a reality which is to be regarded as . . . ‘firm,’ and therefore ‘solid,’ ‘valid,’ or ‘binding.’”<sup>7</sup>

“The Hebrews recognized the logical truth that others also recognized, that a true word can be relied upon because it accords with reality, and that both for a God of truth and for a man of truth, word and deed are one.”<sup>8</sup> Thus we may conclude that truth in the Old Testament was basically that which one can rely upon with confidence. In relation to God and His Word, this reliance is based in the God who is faithful in character, word, and deed.

The New Testament word for truth is *alētheia*, which is found 109 times in the New Testament, with 45 occurrences in the writings of John. Some have attempted to demonstrate a contrast between the Hebrew and Greek words, but there is not a significant difference. Of course, context must always determine the exact meaning of the word in all cases. John used this word in the sense of reality in contrast to falsehood or mere appearance.<sup>9</sup>

John Murray expressed an even

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more complete explanation of John's usage of the word *truth*. He said, "we should bear in mind that 'the true' in the usage of John is not so much the true in contrast with the false, or the real in contrast with the fictitious. It is the absolute as contrasted with the relative, the ultimate as contrasted with the derived, the eternal as contrasted with the temporal, the permanent as contrasted with the temporary, the complete in contrast with the partial, the substantial in contrast with the shadowy."<sup>10</sup> We may conclude that when God is called the true God in John 17:3 and 1 John 5:20, He is real. He is absolute, eternal, complete, and unchanging. If God is true and the source of truth, then His Word is also true.

*What is the foundation of all truth?* There are two key verses in the writings of John that point the way

to the foundation of all truth. In John 14:6, Jesus Christ told His disciples, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (NKJV). He claimed to be the truth, the living truth. As He spoke to His Father in John 17:17, He prayed, "Your Word is truth" (NKJV). Those who sit in churches and in classrooms must be taught that truth is found in God and His Word and they can know this truth. Jesus Himself is real, and His Word is the expression of reality that comes from who He is.

Second John 1-4 uses the word *alētheia* five times. Twice *love* and *truth* are used together. A third usage of *truth* speaks of truth as residing in believers. A fourth time *truth* is used, it is clear that the believers can and should live according to the truth. The final usage of *truth* is in 2 John 1, in which the addressees of the letter are called "those who know

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the truth” (NIV). John believed that it was not only possible, but also essential and normal for those who are Christians to know the truth. But the truth must not only be known by the believer, it also must be internalized and lived out in the daily course of life.

*What truth must we teach?* John wrote about the “teaching of Christ” in 2 John 9 (NIV). What was this teaching that was of such great importance? If the genitive *tou christou* is subjective, then it is referring to the teaching of Christ (Christ’s own teaching). If the genitive is objective, then John is referring to the teaching of others about Christ. Either one of these is exegetically possible. There is a third possibility, which is the most likely in this context. The noun is both subjective and objective.

Dan Wallace wrote, “In most cases, the subjective produces the objective notion.”<sup>11</sup> He continued: “If both ideas seem to fit a given passage, and do not contradict but rather complement one another,

then there is a good possibility that the genitive in question is a plenary (or full) genitive.”<sup>12</sup> Second John 9 is a prime example of a plenary genitive. With this in mind, we see that there are two groups of people mentioned: those who remain in the teaching of Christ and those who do not.

Those who are true believers will remain in the teaching that Jesus Christ verbalized when He walked upon this Earth. Jesus Christ taught much about Himself and the will of God for humankind. He taught that the greatest commandments are to love God and love others and that the whole law is encapsulated in those two commands (Matthew 22:34-40). He taught about His own deity and humanity. He taught about His coming death and resurrection.

Jesus spent much of His time during His ministry going about the land teaching people. Whether it was one person such as the woman at the well in Samaria or thousands of peo-

ple along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus was constantly teaching. “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people” (Matt. 4:23, NIV). Matthew 5:2 introduces the famous Sermon on the Mount with these words: “He began to teach them saying . . .” (NIV). The sermon ended with these concluding remarks, “He taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law” (7:29, NIV). Teaching the truth to the next generation means that we must be teaching those things that Jesus taught—and all that He taught.

The teaching of Christ also means the teaching of others about Christ. It was the teaching *of* Christ that produced the teaching *about* Christ. If what was taught by others was not in agreement with what Christ taught, then it was not true; it did not match up with reality. Men such as Paul, Peter, John, and James all taught others about Jesus Christ. It was important for the first-century believers to know what these men taught because it was true. It was also imperative that they reject the teachings of those who contradicted the teaching of Jesus Christ and the writers of the New Testament. They were not to welcome those teachers or to accept their teachings (2 John 10).

From a study of the word *didachē* (“teaching”) in the New Testament, it becomes even clearer that this word is often used to refer to the totality of the teaching of and about Jesus Christ. This would also lend support to the view that the genitive phrase “the teaching of Christ” is both subjective and objective. The teaching in 2 John may specifically point to the truth of the humanity of Christ, but it also must not be limited to one particular teaching about Christ as if other teachings are of little importance.

Rengstorf wrote concerning the use of *didachē* by the New Testament writers, “They do not mean a particular dogmatics or ethics, but His whole *didachein*, His proclamation of the will of God as regards both form and content.”<sup>13</sup>

None of the teachings of Christ or about Christ as recorded in Scripture may be ignored. If this teaching is the totality of the teaching of and about Christ, and it comes from God, who is true and whose every word is true, then the teaching is actually the truth that John has so strongly emphasized. Those who desire to teach truth must be sure that they adhere to the teaching of the Word of God. The whole counsel of God must be taught to the next generation, assuring that all of the teaching is from God and thus essential.

One more significant matter



must be addressed at this point as to what we must teach the next generation. It concerns the teachings and commandments that John addresses in his letter.

We live in a day in which many people do not want to think or learn. It seems that more and more ministries are lessening the teaching that goes forth, while increasing the opportunities for people to “have their needs met” apart from the truth of the Word. People want to be entertained so that they feel good. Christian ministries need to reach out to people where they are, but they must not sacrifice teaching for experiences. They must teach the younger generations the teachings of Christ as found in the Word of God. This does not provide a license to bore people, but it also does not dismiss the need for solid Bible teaching. The methods of instruction must continually be honed to connect most effectively with the listener, but the doctrines and stories and principles of Scripture must be consistently explained so that God might receive glory through people coming truly to know Him and experience the power of His resurrection and share in His sufferings (Phil. 3:10).

Though it may be difficult for some people to see the importance of teaching doctrine to the next generation, it is probably even more complex a task to tell people that there are commandments to be

obeyed. Some live their lives according to rules invented by legalistic leadership, while others attempt to shake off the whole authority issue by claiming that they are now under grace, not the law, and thus are not bound to obey any commands.

John addressed this issue and said that there are commandments to live by. There are certain things required of true followers of Jesus Christ. It is impossible for them to live the life that He requires until they know what He has commanded. They will not know until someone teaches them those commandments as found in the Word of God.

John made it clear that it is essential to know the teaching and the commandments of Jesus Christ. Marshall wrote, “To know the truth means to know and accept the Christian message. Such knowing goes beyond merely knowing facts or doctrines to a positive acceptance of the truth and commitment to it.”<sup>14</sup> According to 2 John 9, those who do not remain in the teaching do not have God. In other words, they are not saved or born again. Those who know the truth in verse 1 are those who have come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. They are not those who merely have their heads full of facts. Acceptance of true Christianity necessitates acceptance of truth.

Any teaching that departs from what we know about Christ in the Word will lead to ruin for all in-

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volved. We must be most wary of any such teaching. Marshall put it this way when he wrote, “Any teaching which goes beyond the plain message of Scripture should at once put us on alert lest it actually contradicts the truth revealed in Scripture.”<sup>15</sup>

We must be diligent students of the Word of God, teaching everyone the whole counsel of the Word of God. They must come to know the truth. We must teach them that the truth as found in the Word of God so that they clearly understand it, and as a result, it impacts them in life-changing ways. What does this mean for the teacher of the Word?

### Teaching Them to Believe the Truth

The truth will never be more than mere academic knowledge until the hearer chooses to believe it. It will still be fully the truth, but knowledge

alone is not the final intent of God for people. He intends that those who come to know the truth will then respond in faith to what they know.

The word for “faith” or “believe” is not found in 2 John, but the concept is. As noted above, knowing the truth in the writings of John includes accepting the message so that the person becomes committed to the truth. This is another way of saying that a person chooses to believe what he or she knows to be true. Those we teach expect reasonable explanations as to why they should believe what we teach them. If we teach them the truth of the Word of God, we should also provide sound reasons for believing what we are teaching them. Second John presents two sound reasons to believe the truth as presented by John and as found throughout the Word of God.

The first reason to believe the

***If we do not believe that God's Word is true, then our students and church members will probably detect the hypocrisy that we exhibit. We must believe that the Bible is God's Word and that it is absolutely true. We must believe that Jesus Christ the Son of God came to this Earth in flesh, died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, and rose three days later, victorious over sin and death.***

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truth is that it is from God. This is implied throughout the text and throughout the writings of John. Second John 4 talks about receiving a commandment from the Father, and this commandment was to walk in truth. Verses eight through 10 speak of the doctrine of Christ and that this doctrine, or teaching, is essential for those who claim to have the Father and the Son.

Those who do not confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh are deceivers and antichrists; they are not believers in Jesus Christ (vs. 7). Those who are taught the truth, but choose not to believe are deceived and followers of those who are antichrists. If God is who He claims to be in the Bible and if the Bible is true as it claims, then those who come to know the truth must believe the truth because it is from God. They must commit themselves to the author of truth and that which He has inspired, that is, His Word.

The second reason to believe the truth is that it is absolute. All people believe in absolute truth. Even those who assert that there is no absolute truth are making statements of absolute truth. In 2 John 1, John wrote to "those who have known the truth" (NKJV). If there is no absolute truth, then no one can claim to know it. He goes on to affirm that the truth "abides in us and will be with us forever" (vs. 2, NKJV).

He could not make this claim if truth were that which changes over time or is different for different people in different places. The truth he believed in is a truth that abides with believers forever. If God is unchanging, then His Word is unchanging and that Word is true, thus truth is unchanging. If truth is unchanging, then we can teach it to the next generation as that which is worthy of their faith.

We teach others best by a combination of verbal instruction and

lifestyle example. If we do not believe that God's Word is true, then our students and church members will probably detect the hypocrisy that we exhibit. We must believe that the Bible is God's Word and that it is absolutely true. We must believe that Jesus Christ the Son of God came to this Earth in flesh, died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, and rose three days later, victorious over sin and death. We must continue to grow in our faith in the God who is true and the Word He has given us.

### Teaching Them to Live the Truth

John taught that the truth must not only be known and believed, but it must also be lived. Truth that is not lived is really not truth that is believed. It is not truly known in any practical sense. John emphasized what it means to live the truth in his second letter. Teaching knowledge and faith in the truth should not be separated from practical living of the truth. There are three key ways that he directly addressed the issue of living the truth.

*Walking in truth.* The Greek word used for "walk" is *peripateō*. It occurs 95 times in the New Testament, about half of which are in the literal sense and half in the figurative sense. In the literal sense, it simply means to walk or walk around. In the figurative sense, it is used as a designation for conduct of life, or the way a person lives his or her life.

John uses this word to refer to the whole life of the believer. To walk in truth means to live life in such a way that it corresponds to the truth that one claims to believe. Walking in the truth takes the teachings of Scripture and lives life in such a way that what is taught is what is lived. The worldview that is derived from Scripture dictates how life should be lived; it provides a moral framework to guide all of life. The moral decisions faced by followers of Christ must be coherent with the truth that is taught in the Word of God.

Gunther Ebel compared walking in the truth to walking in the light and contrasted them both with walking in darkness. Those who walk in the truth are living in such a way that they reflect Christ, who is light.<sup>16</sup> They live lives of righteousness and holiness as prescribed in the Word of God. Their lives are not marked by darkness or sin.

Teachers of truth must teach all to live according to what the Word of God says. The chosen lifestyle of each person ought to correspond to the teaching of the Word. We must not be content merely with disseminating information, though more biblical content needs to be taught. We must teach doctrine and then demonstrate to our hearers the practical response necessary for those who walk in the truth. This means that teaching must be verbalized clearly with accurate applications

made, but it must also be modeled by teachers of truth. They must live what they claim to know and believe. Teachers of the Word cannot teach what they do not live.

*Walking according to His commandments.* Walking in truth and walking according to His commandments are basically synonymous. The commandments that come from the Father must be true because He is true and His words are true. His commands are all understood through His words to humanity. In them, He expresses His will for His people. Those who teach the Word to the next generation must make clear what God has commanded for His people. They must not fear offending their listeners by making absolute statements. Freedom in Christ has never meant that Christians are free to disobey the commands of God as found in His Word. We must teach the next generation to live lives that are consistent with what He requires.

*Walking in love.* John clearly connects truth, commandments, and love. The commandments are true because they come from God. The command that is emphasized in this passage is the command to love one another. It is not a new command; it is the command that goes back to the beginning. Whether this “beginning” goes back to Creation or to the beginning of the church age, it is clear that the command is to love. Jesus sum-

marized the commandments in the Old Testament law when He told His listeners first to love God with all that they were and then to love others as they loved themselves.

Love was a prominent theme for John in his Gospel and his letters. He wrote, “This is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another” (1 John 3:11, NKJV). “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God” (4:7, NIV).

Love is the mark of a true believer, not just to love God, but even enemies. Love was a requirement, a commandment, laid down for God’s children: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34, NIV).

Again, he wrote, “this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us” (1 John 3:23, NIV). Love for one another means striving for the highest level of love. John recorded the words of Jesus who said, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12, NIV).

There are many other Scriptures that stress the imperative nature of love, but it is clear that those who walk in truth are those who obey the Lord’s commands. Those who are obedient to Him are those who are se-

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riously committed to loving one another. Walking in truth and walking according to God's commandments will always lead to walking in love.

As we teach young men and women the truth of the Word of God, we must teach them to love others as God loves them. When they become committed to loving others in such a way (which ought to be mark of every true Christian), they will fulfill the commands of God for His people. True biblical love will never violate a command of God. This love is evident in believers' obedience to God from the heart alongside their loving behavior toward others. Second John 6 says, "This is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love" (NIV).

Those who are called to teach the Word of God to the next generation must clearly instruct their hearers

concerning all that the Bible teaches about love. The younger generation needs to understand what God's love is and how love is always obedient to God. But they must also experience the love of those who teach them. Concerning the duty of those who teach, Marshall wrote, "It is as a pastor or teacher who communicates the Word of God that he has authority to command his congregation, but this authority is complemented by the note of personal urgency which comes from his own love for those over whom he has been set."<sup>17</sup> Church members and students will learn how to love one another as they are loved by their pastors and professors.

### **Teaching Them to Remain Faithful to the Truth**

In a world in which many live for the next experience and believe that truth changes (that is, if there really

***Cults begin because someone has something new and exciting to teach, claiming it comes from God. Anything that does not correspond to the truth of the Word of God must be considered error. Teachers of the Word must not run ahead of the truth and must continually impress upon their hearers that there are false teachers, many of whom have brilliant minds, who have run ahead of the truth. Their words may sound convincing, but they do not speak truth.***

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is something called “truth”), it is no wonder that people move from church to church or from Christianity to other religions, or even completely away from all organized religion. They have been taught that commitments are not necessary unless they are of personal benefit.

Many come to the conclusion that life really has no meaning, but instead of committing suicide to end their meaningless existence, they instead choose a narcissistic and often hedonistic lifestyle, pretending that life has some purpose. We must humbly and prayerfully expend our energies to teach them to know, believe, and live the truth, but we must also teach them to remain faithful to the truth. The truth must not be cast off like worn shoes or outdated computers. This requires the development of a commitment that cannot be broken or revised.

Even Christian leaders are falling

away from the truth. Some do so morally. Others choose to believe that the simplicity of the gospel and the Christian faith are too juvenile for their advanced minds. Still others fear offending people with claims of absolute truth, and as a result, ignore basic doctrines of the faith, including the exclusivity of salvation through Jesus Christ.

John clearly stated that the believer must remain faithful to the truth for a lifetime. There are two significant ways that this is advocated in 2 John.

*Do not run ahead of the truth.* Verse nine addresses those who go ahead or run ahead of the teaching of Christ. There were false teachers in the first century who brought teachings that denied the biblical teachings about Christ and what He commanded. Second John 7 and 8 calls those who did not confess that Jesus Christ had come in human

flesh “deceivers.”

There were those who denied and taught others to deny the humanity of Christ. Denial of the humanity of Christ meant that He could not have died to pay the penalty for the sins of humankind. The false teachers who had visited the believers to whom John wrote were determined to destroy the foundations of their faith. Neither those teachers who denied the incarnation of Christ nor those who followed them had true salvation, according to verse nine. They did not have God.

To run ahead of the teaching (the truth) is a reference to the teaching of the heretics who were promoting their false teaching as that “which had enabled them to advance beyond the rudiments of the faith in which the common herd were content to ‘abide.’ John refers sarcastically to their claim. They had indeed ‘gone ahead.’ They had advanced so far that they had left God behind them! He who denies Christ thereby forfeits God.”<sup>18</sup>

We must always seek to grow in our knowledge of truth, but any time the discovery of truth goes beyond the clear teaching of Scripture, the teacher must back up and recommit to the truth as found in the Word of God. Truth does not change. We cannot become so mature that we outgrow truth.

Cults begin because someone has something new and exciting to

teach, claiming it comes from God. Anything that does not correspond to the truth of the Word of God must be considered error. Teachers of the Word must not run ahead of the truth and must continually impress upon their hearers that there are false teachers, many of whom have brilliant minds, who have run ahead of the truth. Their words may sound convincing, but they do not speak truth.

*Remain in the truth.* All must be so committed to the truth of the Word of God that they never depart from it and never cease teaching it to the next generation. In fact, they must develop followers of Christ who are in the race for life. John wrote in verse nine of those who do not remain in the teaching of Christ and those who do remain in the teaching of Christ.

The verb *menō* is found 118 times in the New Testament. Sixty-six of those usages are located in the writings of John, with 24 of them in his letters. This word means to remain, stay in a place or with someone, to continue to exist for a specific time, to live, or metaphorically to hold fast, to remain steadfast in a teaching, in fellowship with, in the married state, to stand firm, pass the test, or to live on.<sup>19</sup>

In the writings of John, *menō* expresses the closest possible relationship between Father and Son and also between Christ and the believer.



Contextually in 2 John 9, this word is used twice with reference to the teaching of Christ. It means that the believer must continue to hold fast to the truth about Jesus Christ. It is “truth that is eternal, truth that is abiding and unchanging because its source is the one true God.”<sup>20</sup>

Sinful people—all people—must not only come to know, believe, and live the truth of the gospel; they must also continue to know, believe, and live the truth. The younger generation needs more Christian leadership to model what it means to know, believe, and live the truth. They need to both hear and see those who not only start well and have seasons of powerful ministry; they need those who will teach them how to continue with Christ for a lifetime; they need to learn from those who finish well.

Those who are called, trained, and take seriously the responsibility of teaching the next generation of believers must not be ashamed of teaching that the Bible is the absolute truth of God. Refuse to compromise, explain away, or sit in judgment over the clear teaching of Scripture. Commit yourself to a continually growing understanding of the Word of God with the desire that your faith in the God who is true also continues to strengthen. Refuse to be content with mere intellectual knowledge of the things of Christ. Strive by the power of Christ to live

out the truth so that the character of Christ in you will guide your words and actions as you love God and people day by day. Maintain your commitment to truth throughout the seasons of life, both doctrinally and morally.

As you remain committed to truth in your personal walk with Christ and your influence upon people, use your teaching to impact the younger generation so that they also have a passion to know the truth of the teachings of Christ as found in the Word of God. Challenge them to believe the truth so that they commit their lives to Christ in saving faith and lifelong discipleship. Train them up to live their lives for Christ, not according to the standards of the world or even according to the ideas of religious men, but according to the teachings and commands of God. Encourage them to live humbly for Christ, depending on His grace and power to live the truth all the days of their lives, one day standing before Christ having finished well.

All who are teachers of the Word of God must see the younger generation as a great gift from God and as those who will be used by God in these days to reach the world for Christ. If you are one of those who hold up God and His Word before young men and women today, do so with confidence that it is God’s truth and there are no substitutes for it. □

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