

Transformed by Truth

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

When a pastor is speaking from the pulpit, bringing a message from the Bible, it is with his voice and his personality. Still, he should always trust that the Holy Spirit will take over the message, control it, and breathe life into the words through the inspiration the Word of God. Speaker and listeners alike are here for one reason: That is, to have God transform us into new dimensions of His image.

God intends to help every believer to enter into three crucial areas of self-awareness based on the Finished Work: a divine self-image, an eternal purpose, and an absolute destiny. These are extremely important issues to settle, and yet many Christians do not grasp them.

We will go after so many different goals, but as believers the first thing we need is a New Covenant self-image, which does not focus upon sin, guilt, failure, fear, or insecurity. A New Covenant self-image is solely derived from the

filling of the Holy Spirit and the Finished Work.

Once a believer begins to recognize his divine self-image, he will realize that he has an eternal purpose as the motivating divine force behind his thinking, responding, initiating, and living, and he is continually discovering new areas of transformation.

When we have a New Covenant self-image, we will become aware of our everlasting destiny. We will seek to know God more intimately. And, more than knowing what God has done, we will desire to know His character—to know who He is. As this booklet shows, knowing the character of God is the result of knowing His Word. This is how Truth will transform us from the inside out.

Chapter One

THE TRUTH ABOUT
A PERFECT PLAN

“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

When the Bible says “all scripture is given “by inspiration of God,” the word “inspiration” speaks of divine authority. Did God write the Bible through men’s individuality? No man could ever have written the Bible except for di-

vine inspiration.

With God breathing truth into men, there is tremendous divine authority. We begin to understand how to execute that authority when we are grounded in grace, mercy, and love. As a result, we have a “more sure word of prophecy,” according to 2 Peter 1:19. Every word of God is sure—absolutely trustworthy—and this is why: The Word is perfect, it is transcendent, it is didactic, and it is permanent.

A More Sure Word of Prophecy

Structurally, the Word of God is perfect. The Old Testament was preparation for the Messiah. The New Testament Gospels reveal the manifestation of truth: Jesus Christ, Immanuel—“God with us.” The Book of Acts speaks of propagation of the Gospel which proclaims the truth. The Epistles are the explanation of the truth. The Book of Revelation is the consummation, the ultimate fulfillment of the truth. That is the structural beauty of the Word of God.

The Bible is also perfect with regard to its practicality. It is the only resource in the world that provides a solution for every single problem with mankind. For every situation or problem in the world, this Book can bring a personal solu-

tion. When properly understood, loved, and responded to, it is one amazing Book.

Furthermore, the Word of God is transcendent. It goes beyond all human excellence ever known. It comes from above (John 3:27). We are to set our minds on things above because the Word of God transcends everything in the natural and supernatural realm. Whatever we face on this planet, we have access to the thoughts of the very Person who is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent through it all.

Next, the Word of God is didactic; it is instructional because its foundation is truth, therefore it is in itself ethical, moral, honest, and trustworthy. God is not a man that he can lie. The apostle Paul said, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (see Philippians 3:7-8). Everything about God's Word is didactic. And when a man is faced with truth in its purest form, when he is convicted in his heart of its value—beyond diamonds and gold—the result is nothing less than transformation.

Finally, the Word of God is permanent. "For thy word, O LORD, is for ever settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). God does not change. The truth remains long after the opinions and judgments

of men have come and gone.

God Is Speaking; Who Will Hear Him?

God said in Jeremiah 6:10, “To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.”

It is God’s desire to speak to us. That is shocking! It overwhelms me that God would desire to speak to us—and that, in fact, He *does* speak. He *has* spoken and He always will speak. Still He says, “To whom shall I speak? To whom shall I give warning?” Even if I am convicted of sin in some area of my life, I can respond to that conviction because it is a godly warning. I don’t have to hide with fear behind a mask of shame, for I am dealing with perfect love.

Is it any wonder that God approaches every facet of every life with His Word? God approaches the world, and He says, “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD” (Jeremiah 22:29). It is the only time a triple salutation is written in the Bible, revealing the urgency of the message.

He said, “O heavens, O earth, hear Me! I, God, have brought up my children. I have nour-

ished them, and they have rebelled against me; therefore, they have grieved me" (see Isaiah 1:2).

Careful study of Scripture shows the intensity of divine illumination. It is a marvelous revelation of God's urgency, compassion, sincerity, and purity in approaching individuals in the human race.

The Cry from Heaven

"Verily, verily; this is *very* important. This is extremely important. If any man hears My words and believes on Him that sent Me, that man shall never come into condemnation, but is already passed from death unto life" (see John 5:24).

Every Bible scholar (and, beyond scholars, the Holy Spirit Himself) will tell you that this is the cry of heaven. It is the cry of heaven when God speaks with that measure of urgency.

In Jeremiah 9:21-22 and Deuteronomy 6:4, for example, God addressed families. He said, "I want you to train your children. When they wake up, give them the Word. When you go on the highway, give them the Word. When you lie down, give them the Word. When you sit up with them, give them the Word. Give them the Word on purpose, several times a day." But they

disobeyed God and did not teach their children—and oh, the repercussions of such a thing.

Beginning in Jeremiah 22:1, God addressed royalty through His prophet, Jeremiah. He said to the king of Judah, “You have to hear the word of the LORD,” but the king reacted by putting Jeremiah in the dungeon.

Later, in Jeremiah 37:1-8, Jeremiah was in the dungeon, and King Zedekiah, who was experiencing raging strife and conflict in his life, said, “Bring Jeremiah to me!”

And the king said, “Will you give me a word from God?”

Jeremiah said, “Yes, I will. My people will go back into Egypt, and the Chaldeans will come in and take you into captivity.” In other words, Jeremiah said to the king, “It is too late.”

Think of the multitudes in hell. They boasted of tomorrow, but their tomorrow never came forth (Proverbs 27:1). They refused to enter into the perfect plan of God because they would not reckon on Truth. And now, it is too late.*

Even in the Christian church, people hear the Word of God again and again, but too often they never go beyond hearing. They know that they need to love and be loved, but they never receive a capacity for God’s love. They try to op-

erate through human love in their own natural capacity, because they do not have a spiritual capacity to receive the power of God's Word in the fullness of its application. Therefore, they are not transformed by the truth.

In Jeremiah 2:12, 14, 22, God addressed the nation of Israel. It was a national salutation, and He said, "Return, O Israel. Return, you backslidden people." In Jeremiah 6:16, God cried out, "Return, and walk in the old pathway, and I will give you peace...." But the end of that verse is both chilling and telling of the condition of their hearts as a nation: "...and they would not."

Israel would not hearken, and their children died in the streets. Their young men died, their women were violated, and their houses, livestock, and all their possessions were taken—all because they would not hear the truth.

Oh, if only we would realize that when we go to church, we go to hear words of life that were designed to establish us in God's perfect plan. By hearing the truth of God's Word, we begin to be transformed to His likeness.

**Be sure to read Don't Wait until It's Too Late, by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1998.*

Chapter Two

THE TRUTH ABOUT
PERFECT KNOWLEDGE

“My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

“So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;

“Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding,

“If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

“Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God” (Proverbs 2:1-5).

The Word of God says, “If you will receive the Word of the Lord (not just go to church but *receive* it), if you will treasure the commandments of God in your heart, if you will incline your ear unto wisdom and your heart to understanding, if you will cry out for discernment and lift up your voice for understanding, and if you

will search for Bible doctrine as for silver and gold and hidden treasure by going in and under until the light breaks through on every doctrine, *then....*"

There comes the beautiful word "*then.*" "Then you will know the fear of the LORD..."—the presence and consciousness of all that God is for that moment, wherever you are in time—"...and you will understand the knowledge of God," which leads to righteousness, justice, equity, and a good path (Proverbs 2:9).

Doctrine is the highway of life on the throughway of time. Oh, to know the presence of God and to understand it, day in and day out. God's commandments are to be treasured, not treated as the words of a hard taskmaster. Each one was given to reveal the heart of God in us and through us, not just toward us.

When God Pleads

Therefore, we can say that all Scripture is given with all the authority of heaven, by the inspiration of God, and God speaks. He desires to speak, and He speaks to whoever will hear Him. He said, "Hear the word of the LORD."

Sadly, the Bible says in Jeremiah 5:31 that they loved their backslidden condition, and they

would not be turned.

One of the most intense topics I have studied is about those times when God pleads. Judgment was coming from everywhere because Israel would not hear the Word of the Lord (see Jeremiah 31:29). In Ezekiel 20:36, He pleaded. In Isaiah 51:22, He pleaded the cause of His people. Again and again, God pleads with His creation.

Everywhere in churches today we can see passivity, indifference toward God and toward the preaching of His Word. Men and women come into the church and come to the services, but oh, what indifference. And here is God Almighty pleading with pastors, with leaders, with men and women who profess to know Christ. "I plead with you. One soul is worth more than all the world." That is why, as a pastor, I plead with you to get right and go all the way with God. Study the Book, for *all* Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

If we are attentive listeners, all the resources of the Word of God go into our soul. The very thoughts of God on any subject will go into our souls if we will indeed receive the Word of God with faith and meekness and if we are attentive.

But if we are inattentive, we will bypass Deity and we will play with destiny. We will

think in the jungle of human reason with disastrous results. An inattentive listener who reacts to anything he doesn't want to hear is left to reason in the jungle of the world. He is left to be religious and evangelical but with his own opinions and without doctrine (Proverbs 19:2).

It is so important that we be attentive to every single word spoken in the name of the Lord, because we have learned the fear of the Lord. We must learn how to listen in the presence of God, how to think in the presence of God, how to have victory over sin in the presence of God, how to leap into the light of God from the kingdom of darkness, all for this magnificent victory of God.

Godly Authority

Second Timothy 3:16 says that all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. So, the authority of doctrine will give a warning if we start to get off. Next, it corrects us and tells us the way to go. So when a spirit of confusion comes to distract us, there will be no question as to the right way.

Then, the Word of God gives us "instruction in righteousness." Instruction implies that there

must be a teacher, a student, and a textbook. Doctrine we receive from the Word of God provides us with instructions in righteousness, so that every individual may be thoroughly equipped and thoroughly furnished unto divine good (2 Timothy 3:17).

Truth on Trial

I will never understand why Jesus Christ had to say as He did in John 16:7, "I tell you the truth." Why did Almighty God ever have to say that? Because the people did not believe Him.

Many times, God spoke "comfortably," as in Isaiah 51:12. At other times, He spoke with a still, small voice (1 Kings 19:12). But at times, as in John 7:37-38, He stood up and spoke with a loud voice. And, in Revelation 1:15, He spoke as the voice of many waters.

But He said, "To whom can I speak, and give warning that they may hear?" The people of God hearkened not, because the Word of God was a reproach unto them. They had no delight in the truth whatsoever.

The writer of Psalm 26:11 said clearly, "As for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and have mercy unto me."

He would walk in the integrity of Redemp-

tion. Then he asked for mercy, and he said, "My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD" (Psalm 26:12). In other words, he said, "I will go to church."

Unless you are working, or sick, or on vacation, plan to be in church every time the door is open. The hour is late. Therefore, every Christian should find a way to obey God's Great Commission and God's Great Commandment to love. We obey the Word and go soul winning because the Word of God says, "Go!"

God's Word is clear, and His Word is pure. If it were not for the instructions of the Word of God in the didactical approach, we would not know about heaven. We would not know about hell, and we would not know about soul winning. That is why, if we desire wisdom, we must lend ourselves to be instructed in the Word.

The only way that we will ever understand truth is by the Holy Spirit. Not only is He our teacher, but He gives us the capacity to hear the Word through a pastor-teacher (Ephesians 4:11-12). Then He gives us understanding, and He gives us experiential power so we can be testimonies of Him, transformed by Truth.

Chapter Three

THE TRUTH ABOUT PERFECT LOVE

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (I Corinthians 2:9, 11).

Oh, the Word of God makes it all crystal clear. The natural man does not listen with attention of divine reverence because he has never known how to fear the Lord. And because the natural man does not receive the entire counsel of God’s Word, he has many unresolved conflicts in his subconscious mind. The wounds of the flesh cause him to react, and in his rebellion he resists the truth of the whole counsel of God. Eventually he enters into passivity and

Laodicean reaction. But 1 Corinthians 10:11 with Romans 15:4, says that these things were written aforetime—before the problem got out of hand—for our example and for our learning.

This is no time to speak words of vanity and words of idleness. This is no time to play with destiny. This is no time to forsake Deity. This is no time to enter into the process of precipitating disasters. This is the time to hear the Word of God.

Calvary: An Even Place

God says that we stand in an even place (Psalm 26:12). That means that regardless of who you are, we are all even before the Lord—no one has a greater advantage. Every time we gather together in an assembly and we are confessed up-to-date, we are totally even. One of the most beautiful things about the Body of Christ is that everyone is in an even place, in terms of our position and in terms of forgiveness.

Your past is irreparable, so just give it to Jesus, because He won't remember it. But do you want to know something else? Your future in Jesus Christ is irresistible, because He is going to make you perfect. And even if you have had

negative thoughts regarding things that have happened in the past, even lost opportunities—they may be turned into constructive thoughts filled with grace and mercy and love. We will redeem the time because we have been transformed by the truth that comes through the Holy Spirit.

Divine Mandates

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:14-16).

We are living in a time when churches are being persecuted. Christians are mocked and despised. Families are being demoralized by homosexuality, lesbianism, and governmental regulation. We are living in a time of immorality, of drug addiction, and of passivity and lethargy in the Church. Unless new believers are properly disciplined by the whole counsel of God, they will never be transformed by the truth. We must learn to discern the voice of the Lord from the voice that is good but not precise. We have

been called to understand the will of God for our lives (Ephesians 5:17). It is time to stand in the presence of God, as one man, not forsaking the assembly of believers.

When God says in Ephesians 5:18, "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit," He means it. It is a mandate. And in verses 19-20, we are to speak to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing to the Lord with a melody in our hearts; giving thanks always unto God the Father through Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, we are to submit one to another in the *reverence* of God, without debating, arguing, or resisting (Acts 7:23), and without quenching or grieving the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19, Ephesians 4:30). To "grieve" the Spirit means to limit God because of carelessness. God loves us with all of His heart. But when we "limit the Holy One of Israel" (Psalm 78:4), we limit His nature of love and righteousness and holiness. Still, according to Ephesians 1:4, He has chosen us in His Son, giving us special significance and a special purpose in His eyes.

Chosen and Blameless

God chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be separated unto Him, “without blame”—without emotional problems, without defect, without injuries, without reaction, without partiality, without hypocrisy, without blaming people. “Without blame” means that our subconscious and conscious mind are delivered from the effects of the Fall, so we can live in the presence of God, having a deep reverence, “...*without blame and before him in love.*” Our position is love, and our location is in Him. He instructs us in righteousness by His Word, and here we are, able to stand before the Lord, against the wiles of the devil (Romans 14:4; Ephesians 6:11).

God the Father, knowing that we would accept Jesus Christ as Savior, has placed us under the Blood of the New Covenant, having cleansed and purged us by the Blood of the Lamb. He said, “I will make you stand *even when you think you can’t.* You will stand because you are inside, hid with Christ in God” (see Colossians 3:3). If we could only comprehend what it means to be “hid”—hid with Christ in God. What a marvelous, beautiful, precious verse.

The Dimensions of Love

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

“May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Ephesians 3:17-19).

The breadth of God’s love has given us eternity without restriction and beyond measure. The length of God’s love is from eternity past, consuming everything in time and perfecting us forever in the future. The depth of His love speaks of the absolute finality of our redemption at Calvary: that moment in time at Calvary when Jesus said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Then and there, He paid it all—and that is the depth of God’s love. Lastly, the height of God’s love is far above all principalities, powers, thrones, and dominions in this life and the one to come. The height reveals Christ in His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, taking every Christian with Him, so that positionally we are seated above (Ephesians 2:6). It means that we

are far above jealousy, lust, and evil; far above reaction, fear, and guilt.

We behold the purity of His Word and the Holy Spirit, and then the Father sends His angels to minister to us. And because of our position, because God dwells in us with this kind of love, we live far above everything that is not of God.

Oh to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, and to be filled with all the fullness of God! Remember that in the times when God is silent, it does not mean that He is indifferent. Rather, it means that He wants us to draw near to Him with a fervent faith—to honor Him for who He is and for what He has done. The silence of God doesn't mean that He cares less about you. He loves you beyond measure. It only means that it is a time to walk by faith and draw near (Hebrews 10:22 and James 4:8).

The Word of God is always in the business of restoring people, of redeeming situations, and of buying back things that were lost to sin. It teaches us that we are going to face steep inclines, sharp curves, and rugged precipices, but God will make them all plain. And as we stand fast on the Word of God, we will be transformed into His likeness—transformed by truth.

CONCLUSION

According to Psalm 103:7, God revealed His ways unto Moses but His acts or deeds unto the sons of Israel. Beyond just seeing His acts and knowing about Him, God wants to show us His ways, His character. We can understand and accept things as they are when we have learned of His character and His method of doing things. Moses went through forty years of silence when he did not hear from God, then finally the burning bush. The silence did not mean rejection. It meant that his capacity for truth was being formed.

God said to Moses, “Son, I’m going to do everything I ever said I would do. You couldn’t stop Me with your unbelief. When you killed the Egyptian, I know why you did it. You loved your people, but you tried to avenge and protect them in your own strength. Now you are going to deliver your people—*My* people—and you will be the meekest man on the earth. My si-

lence, then, is preparing you to be a great deliverer."

It is in the trials and the desert places of life that we have imparted to us the character of God. Moses did not learn to serve God in the valley; rather, he learned to serve God in the desert. Do not kick against the pricks of the trials. That is where the impartation of God's character comes in. We do not tend to learn of God and learn to behave properly when things are going well, when we have our reputation and we are popular with the world. Instead, we learn to meet God as Moses did, on the backside of the desert.

Father, we thank You, we love You, and we praise You. We ask You to bless us with Your Word and its inspiration and authority. Take us into the steep inclines, the sharp curves, the dangerous precipices. The pruning knife goes in sharply but it always bears fruit if we let it (John 15). And the only reason You use it is that we might bear fruit.

Father, grant that we may see You — "Him who is invisible" — and have that self-image, that purpose, and that destiny you desire for us. We desire to be conformed to Your image, transformed by truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.