

# What is Truth?

Truth is the opposite to a lie. It is fact or reality. It is an unchanging principle

Society is heading away from truth. Opinion is now recognized more than truth. But ideas coming from traditional Biblical values, such as beliefs about family, life and death, can no longer be tolerated.

The constitution of many 'Western' countries was founded on moral principles found in Christianity and Judaism. We call these values Judeo-Christian values. An example would be the Ten Commandments. Both Jewish and Christian faiths uphold these moral principles. Examples of governments upholding Judeo-Christian values in its foundation would be America, England and Australia. However, adherence to these values is breaking down in Western nations.

## What is the basis for Judeo-Christian values?

A belief in the God of the Bible, and that His book is our guide to Truth, for example:

- It is wrong to take another's life
- Traditional view of marriage – (It is ideal for children to have both a father and a mother.)
- Fair treatment of all individuals - (Love your neighbour as yourself)
- Freedom of religion - (God Himself has given us freedom to choose)

## The post-truth era

A Modern Philosopher has said, 'There is no truth. We should give up the search for truth because it all depends on how you see it.'

What did Jesus say?

"I am the way, the TRUTH and the life"

"You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free"

How do we know that Jesus is the Truth?

- The Bible tells us that Jesus and the Father together created the universe, (Gen 1:26)
- We can see from the order of creation that there must have been a Creator (Rom 1:20)
- Historical records (apart from the Bible) give evidence of the resurrection of Jesus, e.g., the empty tomb.
- We have an inner conscience that tells us right from wrong, (Rom 2:15)
- People who have accepted Jesus as the truth testify of personal experience.

## **What happens when people believe that truth is a matter of opinion?**

People try to pass lies as facts. Then other people start to believe their lies. Lying is no longer called lying.

*"The further a society drifts from Truth, the more it will hate those who speak it."* - George Orwell

## **Truth is the new hate speech**

People don't know what they believe. In modern society, people are too scared to challenge lies because they themselves do not know what to believe, or they are afraid to offend people with the truth.

## **How should Christians act in a post-truth era?**

We must set an example in the way we act and speak. We must know what is true and false; find out what is true before sharing it, e.g., on social media; we can ask God to show us what is true. We must stand up and fight for the truth.

Eph 6:12 For **our** struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Don't sit back and leave it to God. Fight with Him and speak out for Him.

## **Speak truth in love**

If we speak the truth without love we can come across as angry, bigoted, judgmental, harsh and unforgiving. However, if we just show love without speaking the truth, we are not standing for truth and not helping others to know the truth.

## **The West is now opposed to a belief in the true God. How did this happen?**

After World War 2, many Western nations introduced laws aimed at eliminating hatred and violence against Jews. Then nations passed laws to include other groups facing discrimination based on gender, colour and race.

More recently, more and more minority groups have convinced governments to pass more and more legislation banning discrimination against people on the grounds of race, gender, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, birth, trade and sexual orientation.

Isn't this a good thing? At first glance, YES! It sounds OK, but it's the AGENDA we have to beware of. Laws passed to protect 'human rights' can be a way of deliberately restricting freedom of religion and expression.

*Problem:* What one person sees as hateful may not be seen by another person as hateful.

Many see our traditional values as hateful. Expressing Biblical values has become known as hate speech.

Anti-discrimination law is intended to protect the right of all people to be treated equally. This is a good thing, BUT what happens when some members of the community do not like the beliefs of another group? What one group sees as being right, the other group sees as being wrong. One group may lobby the government to pass laws to keep the other quiet – to stop them from expressing what they believe.

Although everyone is crying out for tolerance, the view of some of us will not be tolerated. Our Social Media posts and You Tube clips will get taken down. In our 'inclusive' society, anyone feeling, thinking or speaking in a non-inclusive way will be excluded.

### **Examples of hate-speech**

*Value: respect for human life*

Person opposing this value: a mother of an unborn child, (even at 9 months gestation), who wants her baby destroyed.

Hate speech against this person would be any attempt to speak up for the right of the child.

*Value: traditional view of marriage and family*

Person opposing this value: One who believes in the changing of the birth gender with sex hormones; or who believes in same-sex marriage and in adoption of children by homosexuals.

Hate speech against this person would be expressing the opinion that children should be raised in a traditional family.

### **Gender education in schools**

Anti-bullying programs in schools exist only for the protection of children who want to change their gender. Children are told that they have the right to change their gender if they feel like it. There is no respect for parents who do not want their children to participate. There is also no addressing of bullying of children who might be called fat, thin, stupid or any other names.

### **Hate speech becomes hate crime**

In the West now there are laws against hate speech and against “offense”. These laws are put in place by those who want to restrict religious freedom.

### **Is it wrong to offend anyone?**

Freedom of speech should include the freedom to offend.

### **Things we shouldn't hate**

- God and Jesus
- Truth
- Righteous living
- Other people

## Things we should hate

- Violence and murder
- Stealing, greed and dishonesty in business
- Lying and deceit
- Pride
- Idolatry
- False teaching and false religions
- Sexual immorality
- All sin

## Consequences of laws against hate speech

Laws against "hate speech" mean that those who break the law are guilty of "hate crime." People who commit "hate crime" can be thrown in jail or fined. This is not imagination. It's already happening in Western nations.

## Who is most valued in our modern society?

In an anti-God society, those with anti-God beliefs will be most valued. People who believe in God and His values will not be tolerated. Their differing opinions will be called "hate speech".

Everyone should be allowed to express their beliefs freely, no matter how much we disagree with a person's beliefs, ideologies and practice.

Let's stand up for Truth. Let's speak the truth in love, even when things are difficult to say.

**Reference:** The Death of Western Christianity, Patrick Sookhdeo

## Activities

1. If you were in charge of drawing up a constitution for a new country, which values would you choose? Make a list of 5.
2. Explain the meaning of Judeo-Christian values.
3. How can we know what is true and what is false?
4. Give three examples in our post-Christian society, of values that are not founded on truth.
5. What is hate speech? Give an example.
6. What is hate crime? Give an Example.
7. What is wrong with the statement; "This is MY truth."
8. How would you respond to a person who tells you that the earth is flat?
9. What is the meaning of tolerance?
10. Give an example of lack of tolerance in our society.