

Rom. 14:19
So then let
us follow
after things
which make
for peace,
and things
whereby we
may edify
one another.



John 8:32
And ye shall
know the
truth and the
truth shall
make you
free.

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PERCEPTION VS. REALITY

By Jim Stauffer

Incumbent upon God's children is the responsibility to judge between perception and reality. A failure to do so would lead us to the practice of hypocrisy such as Jesus accused the Pharisees (**Mat. 23**) To put up a facade of faith in Christ would be just as hypocritical.

Christ had the ability to read the hearts of men and was thus able to call out such hypocrisy as well as His observation of their conduct compared to the Law they claimed to serve (**Mat. 13:15**).

While we are commanded to walk in the steps of Jesus (**1 Pet. 2:21-24**), we recognize we do not have the same skill set as the Son of God. While we are given the charge to judge by human conduct (**Mat. 7:6**), when to move on from teaching those who no longer have an interest, we are forbidden to judge in the sense Jesus did (**Mat. 7:1-5**). This charge is to determine by observation when a person is serious about the word of the Lord and when they are just going through the motions (**Jas. 1:22-25**).

As we attempt to teach both the lost and our brethren we must first give reverence to the word of God. Do we truly believe the Bible is His word? This Book has successfully endured the tests of time. The manuscript evidence for the Bible is superior to any piece of ancient literature extant today. Once we decide our confidence level in the Bible, we must accept it wholly or reject it. Jesus consistently claims it to be the truth. *"and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."* (**John 8:32**) He says the word of God is truth, *"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."* (**John 17:17**) Jesus by way of the Holy Spirit tells us the Holy Spirit revealed the mind of God to the apostles who then recorded it in the New Testament for us to read (**1 Cor. 2:10-13**). He also tells Pilate of His relation to the truth and that of His disciples.

"Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." (**John 18:37**)

Now, let us consider how we should respond to the word of God, the Bible. We must as disciples of Jesus accept it as truth. How does that actually work? It works like any other truth we observe. We believe the earth is round, the law of gravity, the rising and setting of the sun in the east and west, etc. We do not argue over these things. They are settled truth. Why then do we try to avoid the clear teaching of Christ and His apostles when Jesus says it is TRUTH?

Throughout the world today there are hundreds if not thousands of religious groups practicing various things they claim to be worship and service to God. Just as many of these things can easily be shown not to be authorized by the Lord or His apostles. Therefore, the perception exists they are disciples of the Lord and worshiping and serving Him faithfully. However, the reality is they are not worshiping Him because they are not worshiping Him as authorized, *"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* (**John 4:24**) They are not heeding the instruction of the apostle Paul, *"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."* (**Col. 3:17**)

It then falls the lot of those who are committed to the message of truth found in the Bible to communicate that message, not only to those who already believe it but to those who claim to be His disciples but are not practicing the words and deeds He authorized.

We have an excellent example of the proper response to such a message. When Paul moved from Thessalonica where they created a riot over the truth being taught, to the city of Berea, he found those *..who, more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."* (**Acts 17:11**)

To be noble minded is to be morally upright in your thinking. Honorable. Something we should be in regard to the message of salvation that has come from God to man by way of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Submit To One Another

Ken Weliever

Several years ago at a meeting of the American Psychological Association, Jack Lipton, a psychologist at Union College, and R. Scott Builione, a graduate student at Columbia University, presented their findings on how members of the various sections of 11 major symphony orchestras perceived each other.

The percussionists were viewed as insensitive, unintelligent, and hard-of-hearing, yet fun-loving. String players were seen as arrogant, stuffy, and unathletic. The orchestra members overwhelmingly chose “loud” as the primary adjective to describe the brass players. Woodwind players seemed to be held in the highest esteem, described as quiet and meticulous, though a bit egotistical.

Interesting findings, to say the least! One wonders, especially one with no musical ability, how fifty or so divergent personalities and perceptions, with over twenty different musical instruments, could ever come together to make such wonderful music!?

Yet the answer is simple: regardless of how those musicians view each other, they subordinate their feelings and biases to the leadership of the conductor. Under his guidance, they play beautiful music. Success in a group effort always requires mutual submission of each individual for the good of the group. This is true in business, in sports and in the Lord’s family. The Bible teaches that in our spiritual relationships we must learn to submit one to another according to the will of God.

“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” (1 Pet 5:5) “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you” (Heb 13:17) “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21).

The word “submit” according to Thayer means: 1) to arrange under, to subordinate 2) to subject, to put in subjection 3) to subject oneself, to obey 4) to submit to one’s control 5) to yield to one’s admonition or advice 6) to obey, to be subject.” He goes on to point out that it was “a Greek military term meaning “to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader.” In non-military use, it was “a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden”.

It is interesting that the admonition to “*submit to one another*” in **Ephesians 5:21** precedes Paul’s command for wives to submit to their husbands, which is followed by children obeying the parents and slaves being in submission to their Masters. It is obvious in those cases

there is a God given role in terms of authority.

But how do we submit to one another, especially a husband to a wife, or a parent to a child, or a master to a slave?

Submission has to do with meeting the needs of another. Of serving others. Of engaging in mutual ministry. It makes no difference where the authority is vested, nor does it lessen the responsibility to respect authority in a specific relationship.

Jesus has been given all authority. Yet He came to serve the needs of others. And ultimately gave Himself to die for our sins. God gave Pastors the role of authority in the local church to “*feed the flock*.” However, they are servant-leaders, meeting the needs of those entrusted to their care. God ordained the husband to be the head of the home. Yet, he lovingly serves the needs of his wife and children. In the same way, Christians must be willing to subordinate their own feelings and desires for the greater good within the Body of Christ. Colly Caldwell put this way “We must submit to our fellow Christians,” We can all learn from any fellow Christian. We can be corrected by any Christian. It is the selfish, insecure follower of Christ who cannot recognize God’s arrangements for peace and well being and who insists upon his own will.”

In a “me first” culture, this command seems outdated. Yet, when properly followed, it would solve many of our relationship conflicts in the 21st century.
~via e Preacher’s Word; Lewisville, Texas.

Tell Me About God!

When dealing with folks the question inevitably comes up in one way or another about the nature of God. I know a lot of things about a lot of subjects but I can’t answer that question by myself so I have enlisted the help of a few men who know God better than I do: Jesus, The Apostle John and the author of Hebrews.

Jesus gives us the most fundamental fact about God in **John 4:24** where He says “*God is a Spirit*”. It means that He is not part of this universe, but above and beyond it. It explains how the Laws of this World that we live and move and exist in do not apply to Him. He has no end but neither did He have a beginning (and I can’t even come close to wrapping my head around THAT!). As a Spirit no man has seen Him, **John 1:18**.

John says in **1 John 1:5** “*God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*” The brightest light we can imagine is darkness next to Him. Paul says in **1 Timothy 6:16** that God “*dwel(s) in light unapproachable*”.

John also says in **1 John 4:8** “*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*” No, not the emotional love we feel for another, but the love that He commands us to practice, agape love, absolute good will toward others, **Luke 2:14**.

Finally the Hebrew writer reveals to us that *“our God is a consuming fire”* in **Hebrews 12:29**. This is why he also said in **Hebrews 10:31** *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* (ASV) See, absolute good will expressed in an undeserved offer of pardon, when scorned, requires absolute justice.

This is the Living God!

Cleveland Reddinger

The Choices God Makes

We are taught early in life how to choose sides. Just choose the strongest, fastest, tallest, smartest, prettiest and trendiest and you can't go wrong. With a smiling face, you'll find your place among the stylish crowd. But, what if our precious standards of evaluation are wrong? What if the best choices are not the most popular or comfortable? What if success is not found in the path of the beautiful and the bright? What if our method of selection is so flawed it actually leads to our ruin? The history of human choices is not a good one. The original couple made a choice that had all the indicators of success. They choose a beautiful fruit to be smarter and stronger. How brilliant! But, it was dead wrong. Look around, our ability to make wise choices isn't much better. There is something deeply flawed with the way we decide things.

However, God doesn't evaluate things like we do. Who would choose David over Saul to be king? God did. Who would choose a life of poverty for the Christ? God did. Who would willingly choose to die on a cross? God did. Clearly, God doesn't make choices the way we do. We would do well to throw away our flawed filters of decision and pay attention to how God chooses.

A case study: God chose Jacob, not Esau.

God's choice is *explained* at the birth of these twin boys (**Gen. 25:19-26**), and later *examined* by other Biblical writers (**Mal. 1:2-3; Rom. 9:11-14; Heb. 12:15-17**). We also learn about God's choice by looking at the *families* of Jacob and Esau (**Gen. 36-50**).

Genesis sets up the study this way,

Gen. 36:1, *“This is the account of Esau.”* **Gen. 37:2** *“This is the account of Jacob.”* That similar beginning is followed by a shocking contrast!

Who God chooses is surprising! First, the family of Esau is described as large and powerful. They control twenty-seven chiefdoms and have eight kings who rule the rising power of Edom. They are literally, a royal family. Align yourself with Esau and you'll never lack food or protection (or so it seems; see Obadiah).

On the other hand, the family of Jacob is described, “This is the account of Jacob. Joseph, a young man of seventeen was tending the flocks” (**Gen. 37:2**). What? The hope of Jacob's family is pinned on a *boy!* A *shepherd* boy, from a dysfunctional family, surrounded by brothers who hate him.

Now, what family do you want your daughter to

marry into? What family do you want to be a part of your church? That's easy, Esau! Yet, the hope of humanity does not rest with the numbers and security of Esau, but in the single, rejected, but faithful son of Jacob.

Take heart! God often chooses to work through unexpected and feeble people (**1 Cor. 1:26-31**). God's work is *not* often done among the many and the mighty! It is done among the few and the faithful.

Our value is not tied to how big a church we attend, but to the God we serve. Our future does not depend on the quality of our family tree, but on the newness of our life in Christ. Our hope does not rest on our plans, but on God's providence! We don't have to be many, powerful, smart, or even perfect, God chooses to work through feeble, but faithful people.

God does not choose to remove us from pain. Esau's family had so many possessions they decided to leave the land of Canaan. They seized some land to the east and set up their own nation. On the other hand, Jacob *“lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan”* (**Gen. 37:1**). He has no nation, and before long he is nearly starving to death. Remind me, who did God choose?

Then, there is Joseph. The chosen one! Yet, his brothers hate him, toss him in a pit, and sell him into slavery. He is later lied about, thrown in prison, and forgotten for over decade. Could God choose such a path for His people?

Yes! God often chooses the most painful path. Faith is not found on the couch of convenience, but by carrying our cross (**Luke 9:23-24**). It is fleshly religion that seeks to make comfortable spectators. Discipleship calls for sacrificial service (**2 Cor. 12:15; Phil. 2:17**).

To make godly choices we cannot run from the pain. When we sacrifice our time, affection, energy and possessions to know and serve the Lord, it is the *best* choice we can make.

Our salvation is the goal of God's choice. Yes, Esau's family was attractive, but ultimately, they became corrupt, ungodly, murderers who brought death, not life (The Herodian family of the N.T.).

On the other hand, Joseph's pain worked out to the salvation of his family. Joseph summarized the purpose of God's choice in this memorable statement, *“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives”* (**Gen. 50:20**).

The ultimate purpose of God's choice is not to make things comfortable for us, but to save our souls and the souls of people around us (**1 Tim. 2:4**). So, the fundamental question behind each godly choice is, “Does this lead me closer to God and help me save more people?”

Our “decision maker” is broken! It is too corrupted by external appearances and personal comforts. It is time to ask, “What would God choose?” Then, do that.

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Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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SUZANNE WIMP - MEMORIAL SERVICE AT 11 AM NOVEMBER 23, 2019

BIBLE CLASSES

SUNDAY MORNING
STUDY OF AUTHORITY - TEACHER
BILL MILLER

WEDNESDAY EVENING
THE BOOK OF JOB - TEACHER
JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON: A
PORTRAIT OF GOD, THE RIGHTEOUS ONE



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10