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| **True of False**I John 1:1-7Vine & Branch Community ChurchFeb 27, 2022  |

Last week we were unpacking 1 John 4 I said John lived, watched and observed Jesus for three years; drank wine that had been water, watched leprous skin become clean, bent legs straightened, saw food multiplied, watched Jesus walk on water, saw the dead raised, saw Christ crucified before his eyes and had lunch with him a week later. When John opens his letter in 1 John he says almost exactly those words:

*“That which was from the beginning, which* ***we have heard****, which* ***we have seen*** *with our eyes, which* ***we looked upon*** *and* ***have touched*** *with our hands, concerning the word of life – the life was made manifest, and* ***we have seen it****, and* ***testify to it****, and* ***proclaim to you*** *the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us – That which we have seen and heard we proclaim to also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us* [the God touchers]*; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things to you that our joy may be complete.* *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”*

It is an interesting way that John starts; one commentary says “*What confronts us here [at the outset] is the intensity of the author’s feelings… although the events… occurred many years earlier, the immensity of their implication … retain the power to overwhelm his thinking… this first paragraph could be described as the authors language of ecstasy*.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Johns says, “*We have heard God speak, we have seen him in the flesh with our own yes, we have touched him with our own hands, we were with him, he has given us truth, you can join us in relationship with God the Father through Jesus! It is our joy to give this message to you.”*

Then out of his ecstatic declaration John Declares, “*This is the message: God is absolute, pure truth – light – and in Him there is no darkness. And, if you are in Him, if you walk in the light… then* ***you will practice truth****.*”

The message John declares is so encompassing, that if we say we agree, if we are in fellowship with him, it changes absolutely everything about us. It changes our relationship to SIN (2:1-6), it changes our relationship to the LAW (2:1-14), it changes our relationship to POSESSIONS (2:15-17), it changes our relationship to worldly or political TEACHING (2:18-28), It changes our relationship to Habitual ongoing sin (2:28-3:10), It changes our relationship to how we act in relationships (3:11-24), and it changes our relationship to TRUTH & LOVE (4:1-21). IOW: John declares God is light, you are in HIM and that changes… EVERYTHING!

We are in our series on True vs. False. For many of us, I could walk through this passage and talk about walking in light and we would all nod our heads in agreement, “Yes we need to walk in the light.” Today, I want to really unpack what that means. What does it mean for us to ***PRACTICE TRUTH***? Not just nod in agreement with Truth but PRACTICE IT!

INTRO Video

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OmQUc6PT5M&t=2s>

I don’t know if Jordan Peterson is a Christian or not, based on other interviews I have watched, if he is not, he is really close. But what he says he has recently discovered, many people who have been Christians for years have not: God’s truth is not isolated entity we can choose to put in a corner and keep from offending other people and bring it out only when we talk about bible things. It literally the reality that holds everything together, and is the ONLY lens by which the world can be seen.

Again, Peterson says, “*So it isn’t that the Bible is true, it’s that the Bible is the precondition for the manifestation of truth. Which makes it way more true than just true. It’s a whole different kind of true. And I think that is not only literally the case, factually, I think it can’t be any other way.”*

I am not trying to get overly philosophical here, I am attempting to get us to REALLY THINK about what it means to “***practice truth***.” Think about, Jesus doesn’t just say, “I am a truth” but “I am *THE* TRUTH” and why Paul says in Colossians, *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.* ***16*** *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.* ***17*** *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”* 1:15, 16

Why am I saying all this? Because we are in living for the first time in recent of our country where falsehood, in a significant way, permeates every part of our lives and is actually encroaching on us. Its not just that truth is not being spoken, but that it actually being suppressed. And we are not just spectators, and not just being asked, but coerced to engage in all kinds of thinking, speaking or behaving that is false.

For some time, I have been considering as a shepherd (someone specifically called to steward the teaching of the apostles and spiritually care for others) and compelled to address our shrinking footprint of truth, and address what does it mean for us to “Walk in the LIGHT” and “PRACTICE TRUTH.”

This is super tricky in our culture, especially for people speaking publicly. A quick study on the internet of how pastors are addressing some of our current pressing cultural issues and they quite literally have zero room to move. Zero. Any stance in one direction or another brings piles of criticism or people leaving the church. The problem is many of these issues: Tolerance, Transgenderism, critical race theory, Black Lives Matter, mask mandates, or vaccine mandates, need be considered biblically and thinking informed by truth as God defines it.

Some to avoid all this say, in full-disclosure have thought myself, “*then just stick with Gospel issues. Don’t get distracted on the cultural issues just stick to the Gospel*.” But I am realizing that is not honest; in 1 Cor 6:11 Paul preaching the Gospel says this, *“You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”* Awesome, that is the Gospel, stick to that.

But just before that, in verse 9, Paul says, *“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?* ***Do not be deceived*** [IOW; don’t believe the false]*: Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the Kingdom of God.”*

This is not an isolated passage; we see over and over in the New Testament that **cultural issues** *are* **Gospel issues!** To ignore that, attempting to stick our heads in the sand and say, “I just need to deal with Gospel issues” is not only naive, but also not true.

There are three foundational principles I see for us as **light walkers** and **truth practicers** in the passage I want to bring to our attention. In the following two weeks it is my goal to use these key principles (and the ones from last week to help us consider walking in the light and practicing truth as it relates to relevant cultural topics.

1. People of light who practice truth bring light to darkness.

Please hear me; what I am talking about is being ***people of the light* who *practice truth***, not trying to line us up under political policies, agenda’s or about pushing against tyranny and totalitarianism (although by speaking truth and being of the light we may very well do that). When we live in fellowship with God, walk in the light, and practice truth, we will by default illuminate things that are dark and expose things that are false! That doesn’t mean we are haters, phobics, or bigots, but it probably means we are going to offend somebody at some point in time.

The emperor Nero didn’t hate Christians because they were sitting quietly in a corner quietly muttering, “Jesus died for your sins.” Nero hated Christians because by their life and their message they were illuminating things he loved as darkness, and speaking out truth which exposed his lies.

1. People of the light who practice truth bring sightedness and clarity

*“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,* ***10*** *nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.* ***11*** *And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Cor 6:9-11*

1. People of the light who practice truth will not offend God in order not to offend people

Galatians 1:10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

1. Expositors Bible Commentary, I John p. 1082 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)