

Jim Martin
P.O. Box 291962
Dayton, Ohio 45429

November 2018 “TRUTH OR FICTION”

Greetings in Jesus!

One of the greatest inventions in human history is the internet. Likewise, one of the most detrimental inventions in human history is the internet. You see, the internet has connected humanity in a way never before experienced. Through the internet, people separated by thousands of miles and multiple time zones are able to communicate in mere seconds. Access to needful information is available in just a few clicks of a “mouse.” Friends and family members are able to stay up-to-date with each other.

But along with all its benefits, the internet has also opened a Pandora’s box of problems in unbelievable proportions. One of those problem areas has to do with misinformation: the overflowing abundance of alleged “facts” which are not in any way true. Another severely troublesome aspect of the internet is that it has become the world’s pulpit where everyone can present themselves as spiritual authorities concerning the Bible and doctrine.

Both of these great concerns are especially true for Facebook. One of the most astounding aspects of Facebook is how it gives us an inside look into the hearts of Christians. I never cease to be amazed at how some reveal their abundant carnality with unabashed brazenness. Posts are laced with four-letter expletives in a manner befitting someone well experienced in their proficient use. Filthy jokes and images are shared with confounding pride. Tales of the immoderate consumption of alcohol are passed along with shameless bravado. Christian men (including ministers), who have among their Facebook friends women who post shocking, near-nude photos of themselves (some women even add links with the photos to websites where they can be watched engaging in sex). It’s as though Christians who do these things are either not truly born again, or they have deluded themselves into thinking other Christians and fellow church members will not see their posts.

I use Facebook for three primary reasons: 1) to share computer tips, 2) to pass along audio and video information that may be helpful to churches, and 3) to update people about what is happening in our ministry. Others use Facebook in a positive way to share recipes, health tips, home and auto repair ideas, and more. But some people post information that is not researched or they share doctrinal “truth” that cannot be supported with scripture. Here are a few examples of “social truths” people have repeated, posted on Facebook or sent to me via email or Facebook Messenger, none of which are true:

- “Forward this post, so-and-so billionaire or his company will send you thousands of dollars.”
- “Facebook is limiting your news feeds to 26 people”
- “Win a brand-new Ford truck by sharing this post.”

- “Former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard told Muslims to adapt to Australian culture or leave the country.”
- “This picture, taken at a store, is of a large snake coiled in a gallon of milk.”

The above list could continue ad infinitum. How do I know these and numerous other such “facts” are fiction? It usually takes me less than five minutes to uncover the truth as I research what has been shared. Doing so is not difficult, yet so many people would rather pass along fiction instead of doing any research as to the truth. On very rare occasions, I have replied to certain postings with scientific facts and evidence to help clarify misleading information. Amazingly, some people have refuted me, not with true, factual, scientific data, but with even more internet radicalism, quackery, and foolishness.

Along with the social myths are those associated with doctrine and religion. Would you be shocked if you heard that some Christians believe the internet is Satanic and that using it opens a path for demons to enter your home? The internet is a tool; it can be used for good or evil, the choice is ours. Consider these “truths”, all of which are completely false:

- “Archeologists uncover Goliath’s skeleton.”
- “The head of Procter and Gamble admits the company is tied to the Church of Satan.
- “An organization started by atheist Madelyn Murray O’Hair (now deceased) is petitioning the government to ban all religious broadcasting.”
- “The Hubble telescope has discovered the opening to Heaven.”
- “Russian scientists drilling for oil accidentally drilled all the way to Hell.”
- “A supercomputer in Brussels is actually ‘the beast’ mentioned in Revelation.”
- “Certain statues open portals for demons to invade cities.” (This would imply that demons, which are spiritual beings, are incapable of doing much of anything unless they have a man-made, natural structure to facilitate their invasion of various locations. If this were true, we would have examples in either the Old or New Testaments, along with warnings not to build such structures so as to keep demons bound from their desired activities. And, yes, I am fully aware of what is recorded in Revelation.)

The oft-repeated social and religious myths can be damaging, but far more dangerous are the “internet pulpits.” For just a few dollars, anyone can create a website for their “ministry.” Through the use of cell phones, a person’s bedroom, living room, kitchen, garage, or anywhere can become their “internet sanctuary” from which they preach or write whatever they believe is true. Granted, in some cases such websites and Facebook postings are excellent sources of doctrinal truth. However, my experience has been that much of it is a mixture of truth and error. I do not believe people are purposely trying to mislead others; but they simply have not done their homework. What further amazes me are the number of Christians who “Like” or post agreements with error. All of this reminds me of what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

***For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.
(1 Corinthians 4:15)***

What was happening in the church at Corinth was a preview of what is going on today. In Corinth, numerous people were claiming to be prophets or authorities on Christianity. They would spout their theology to all who would listen, drawing followers unto themselves. This resulted in some of them being exalted into a place of leadership where they didn't belong. Subsequently, there was discord, factions and unhealthy allegiance and submission to immature Believers. In fact, the book of First Corinthians is Paul identifying and bringing correction to wrong teachings permeating that church.

The internet has made it possible for the events in Corinth to be multiplied exponentially. Facebook preachers post their sermons and, in some cases, have regularly scheduled services so people can watch live. Churches of any size can create a website and post video recordings of their services or even stream their services live. It seems as though the internet has helped some churches to experience explosive growth and their pastors to become much sought-after speakers. Again, not all doing this are preaching error. But based on my observations, far too many Christians do not take the time to confirm if what they are reading or hearing is truth.

A few years ago, a teaching began spreading throughout the Body of Christ that has led many astray. Summarized, this teaching says that First John chapter one was written to the lost, and chapters two through five were written to Christians. This is pure heresy. If you remove the verse numbers and chapter breaks, reformatting First John as a letter, it is absolutely impossible to prove that the first chapter was not written to Christians. In such a letter format, there is a beautiful, consistent flow to what John wrote. Even so, once a few pastors in mega-churches began teaching the error, Christians grabbed it like it was etched in the stones from Mount Sinai.

Another teaching that can have eternally devastating consequences has spread throughout Christianity like a deadly plague. Simply stated, it says that, "Christians do not need to repent if they sin and that there is nothing in the Bible telling Christians to repent if they sin. Furthermore, anyone who teaches that Christians need to repent if they sin is a Pharisee who is teaching legalism." Again, this is heresy and is precisely the kind of teaching Jesus warned about in Matthew 7:15-23. It is also an example of the offense Jesus spoke of in Matthew 18:1-9. People who teach this horrendous error have in no way thoroughly studied the Bible. You see, the words "repent," "repented," or "repentance" are used multiple times from Acts to Revelation in specific reference to Christians.

Some might ask, "Why are so many preachers off on their doctrine and why are so many Christians easily led astray by wrong doctrine?" The answer is really very simple: a lack of studying the Bible in context. In his second letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul wrote the following:

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

Are we to believe that the instruction to study God's Word was only for Timothy? No way! That instruction is applicable to the entire Body of Christ, especially in light of what was written in the next chapter:

¹⁶All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

We definitely need the ministries of the Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher in our lives. But we are not to blindly accept whatever they say. We are to follow the example of the people in Berea and what they did when they heard the Apostle Paul preach,

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. (Acts 17:11)

Daily they searched the scriptures. Daily! So many Christians today don't even look at their Bible during a sermon! How on Earth do those people know if what is being "read" is even *in* the Bible? This sort of blind faith is precisely the type of behavior which leads to Christians being led away from truth and developing the "itching ears" of 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

All scripture is given by God and we are to study it in context to uncover the depths of its life-changing truth. Through the fulness of its Divine revelation we become more and more conformed to the image of Christ and spiritually equipped to fulfill every aspect of God's will. Consider what is written in Proverbs 25:2,

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter.

God's Word gives us a revelation of His glory and unchanging truth. Those who are lost can only try to understand the Bible with their natural mind. But those who are born again have God's life, nature and the mind of Christ, giving them the potential to understand the critical, line-upon-line depths of what is written. As kings and priests unto God (Revelation 1:4-6), we increase in His honor as we diligently search out and study verses, chapters and subjects.

I am guessing that you have a Bible; but do you have any additional "text books" for your study of God's Word? The Strong's Concordance and the Vine's Bible Dictionary are helpful, but they are the extreme basic, elementary starting point for study; you are not getting all you need if you rely only on those two resources. Furthermore, if you rely on commentaries, you are most likely feeding on a huge mixture of truth and error. What can be immeasurably helpful are highly-detailed Hebrew and Greek lexicons which provide extensive definitions of words, their tenses, their history, their various applications and more.

Some Christians may dissent by saying they don't have the money for such materials. Consider this: People who enroll in college understand that they must purchase the text books for the classes they are taking. Students know this ahead of time and in some way or another, they prepare in advance for those expenses. I fail to believe that many Christians could not save enough money to by good, quality lexicons or lexicon software. Besides, so many of these materials are available absolutely free on the internet.

But even more than good, quality dictionaries and lexicons, you need the ministry of the Holy Spirit. All of the commentaries, lexicons and dictionaries in the world are not an equal substitute for the Holy Spirit.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. (John 16:13)

²⁷But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.
(1 John 2:27)

Through praying in tongues, the Holy Spirit becomes the greatest Bible Teacher we could ever know. As revealed in 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4 and 14, He becomes our personal tutor, explaining the mysteries of God's Word and edifying us as our spirit is praying in that supernatural language which comes only from God.

We are getting so close to the return of Jesus. Deception is increasing, and many Christians are being led away from their walk with the Lord. I implore you, do not accept as truth everything you hear taught. Get in the Bible. Use good, quality Greek and Hebrew dictionaries and lexicons. But most of all, pray, pray, pray in the Holy Spirit. Purge out the leaven of wrong doctrine and live in the glory of God's pure truth!

Your friend in Christ,

Jim

P.S. - Use the order form below to request the CD of my sermon, "Truth's Anointing Released" an excellent follow-up teaching to this letter.

- - - - -
☐ Check this box to receive a CD of the sermon, "Truth's Anointing Released"

My love gift for this month is \$_____

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Email_____

Jim Martin Ministries • PO Box 291962 • Dayton OH 45429 • www.jmmgrace.com