

Telling Myself the Truth

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. 1Cor. 4:3-5 - The world knows this is true.
 - 1. The Ancient Greek saying “know thyself” or “gnothi seauton” (γνώθι σεαυτόν) is one of the Delphic maxims inscribed in the forecourt of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi according to Pausanias. (Wikipedia)
 - 2. Knowing ourselves is more important than knowing others. “He who knows others is wise; he who knows himself is enlightened.” (Lao Tzu)
 - 3. We cannot afford to lie to ourselves. “To know yourself, you must first sacrifice the illusion that already you do.” (Vironika Tugaleva)
 - 4. It is painful to tell ourselves the truth. “If most of us remain ignorant of ourselves, it is because self-knowledge is painful and we prefer the pleasures of illusion.” (Aldous Huxley)
- B. Nowhere is accurate self-knowledge more important than in our relationship with God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - 1. The Gospel demands repentance and repentance requires an honest, healthy conscience - Luke 13:3; 2Cor. 7:10
 - 2. Conscience depends on clear self-knowledge; con - science from Latin verb conscire; from con- ‘with’ + scire ‘know (ourselves)’.

I. KNOWING OURSELVES IS DIFFICULT

- A. In one sense, we know ourselves best. Others know our thoughts, motives, beliefs, and values only as we reveal them - 1Cor. 2:11.
 - 1. Life is too short to reveal ourselves entirely to anyone else. Hence, the information with which others judge us is incomplete and often inaccurate.
- B. While we may know ourselves best, it is also true that we are often the poorest judges of ourselves.
 - 1. We may have access to all the information from which we could make an accurate self-evaluation, but we are rarely objective about ourselves.
 - 2. That is why responsible doctors do not diagnose themselves; they understand the need to consult another doctor who will look at the facts more directly and objectively.
 - 3. In spiritual matters, there is an even greater need for us to be helped by others in understanding ourselves.
 - 4. We often make exceptions for ourselves and euphemize our own misconduct.
 - 5. Most of us have blind spots; what is clear to others can be invisible to us. We compound this problem asking help from others we believe favor us and will say the things we want to hear about ourselves.
- C. We must see ourselves as God sees us.
 - 1. God often helps us by sending others to show us that what we casually call “mistakes” are just as evil and harmful as the sins others commit.
 - 2. David and Nathan - 2Sam. 12:1-15
 - 3. Peter’s hypocrisy - Gal. 2:11-14

II. KNOWING OURSELVES THROUGH LOVE OF THE TRUTH

- A. Our salvation depends on our response to the truth.
 - 1. 2Thes. 2:9-12; Luke 8:15; John 8:32
- B. But the truth that we must love is not just doctrinal truth; it is the whole truth, including truth about ourselves and the sins we need to repent - 1John 1:8-10
 - 1. Perhaps life never makes a greater demand on our courage than when we are faced with accepting some embarrassing, unpleasant fact about what we have really done, and have already judged ourselves undeserving of the severe punishment for it - Gen. 4:3-13
 - 2. Note the great contrast in the attitudes of Acts 2:36-41 and Acts 7:54-60
- C. In order to be adequately honest with ourselves, we must want to know the truth of God's will AND the truth about ourselves more than anything else.
 - 1. The person who loves his preferred self-image more than the truth about himself will never enter the kingdom of God - Matt. 3:7-9
 - 2. Jesus' account of the Pharisee praying in the temple shows how out of touch with reality we can be when it comes to ourselves - Luke 18:9-14

III. TESTING OUR SELF-KNOWLEDGE

- A. Do we pray for help in seeing ourselves as God sees us? - Psalm 19:12
- B. Do we thank God in our prayer for friends who love our souls more than they love our relationship, who will not let us excuse or ignore our sins? - Gal. 4:16
- C. Do we pray asking to be set in circumstances that will make us see our true character? - Psalm 139:23-24; 2Cor. 13:5
- D. Do we pray for our secrets to be exposed, and are we happy for the honesty it imposes on us? - Psalm 51:6-7
- E. Do we pray for every fault which we have hidden from ourselves to be brought to the light? - John 3:19-21
- F. Do we pray for help in accepting painful truths about ourselves, so that we can change our ways? - Psalm 51:8-10
- G. These questions make us uncomfortable, but truth often has that power.

Conclusion:

- A. God knows us fully - Heb. 4:12-13
- B. God will send us brethren who will lovingly help us see what is truly going on in our lives - 2Tim. 2:24-26
- C. We must never turn away from the truth about ourselves - 2Tim. 4:3-4