

WHAT IS TRUTH? IS IT EVEN SUBJECT FOR DEBATE?

By Robert J. Tamasy

“What is truth?” This is a question countless people have asked through the ages. It has been a recurring topic for philosophers, sociologists, counselors, writers, even business and professional people. As if “truth” were an ever-changing commodity on some kind of philosophical buffet.

The quest for truth is important, whether it is during a criminal investigation, courtroom trial, or in the process of doing scientific research. Curiously, we hear people talking about “my truth,” as if what is valid for one person can be totally different for someone else. We certainly are entitled to our own opinions on various matters, but in many cases, truth is not subject to multiple choices.

Leadership consultant Tim Kight writes, “Truth exists independent of what someone ‘believes.’ If I believe the ice on the lake is thick, when in fact it is thin, my belief does not change the thickness of the ice. If I act on my (false) belief and go ice skating on the lake, I put myself at risk. If I invite others to join me, they too are in danger.”

Truth, unlike the prices for goods or services, is not something that is negotiable. We may have different viewpoints on many things, but absolute truth does exist, contrary to what some factions in society would have us believe.

A notable discussion of truth took place while Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, was questioning Jesus Christ after Jewish leaders had him arrested. He asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?... What is it you have done?” Jesus replied, “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” Then Pilate asked the famous and, seemingly, debatable question, “What is truth?” (John 18:33-38).

Why should we concern ourselves with truth in the marketplace? Isn't our everyday challenge to promote our brand, to finalize sales, and to achieve a profit so we can stay in business? Yes, that is correct – but we should not sacrifice the truth as we pursue these goals. It might be helpful to consider some of the things the Bible says about truth:

Truth proves us to be trustworthy. For some people, truth is used only when it is expedient. Honesty is important for them only if it does not interfere with “closing a deal.” However, the short-term benefits of distorting the truth often carry with them long-term

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consequences. “Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment” (Proverbs 12:19).

Truth offers security and confidence. When people demonstrate they value truth, honesty, and integrity, this enables their customers – including employees, stakeholders, and suppliers, to work with them confidently. “A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare” (Proverbs 21:6).

Truth brings freedom. One of the harsh realities of being dishonesty is the difficulty in remembering what we have said if we have been untruthful. True statements, on the other hand, are comparatively easy to remember. Honesty frees us from the fear of being caught in a lie. As Jesus told His followers, “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

© 2022. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship*; *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart*, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and *The Heart of Mentoring*, coauthored with David A. Stoddard. Bob's biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. If someone were to ask you, “What is truth?”, how would you respond? What is your definition of truth?
2. Have you ever encountered someone who said, “That might be true for you, but it is not true for me”? What did they mean when they said that? Is there validity in such a statement? Why or why not?
3. What, in your opinion, is the greatest benefit of being truthful, of always being willing to take a strong stand in defense of the truth?
4. Do you agree with Jesus' declaration, “the truth will set you free”? If so, in what ways have you found that to be...true?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:

Psalm 85:10-12; Proverbs 10:9, 11:3, 12:22, 14:5, 20:14, 29:4; John 4:23-24

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