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How Do You Define the Truth?

By Tal Davis

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines the word "Truth" three ways, with several subcategories:

Definition 1

(1): the body of real things, events, and facts: ACTUALITY;

(2): the state of being the case: FACT;

(3): a: often capitalized: a transcendent fundamental or spiritual reality b: a judgment, proposition, or idea that is true or accepted as true c: the body of true statements and propositions

Definition 2

a: the property (as of a statement) of being in accord with fact or reality

b: chiefly British: TRUE SENSE

c: fidelity to an original or to a standard

Definition 3

a: sincerity in action, character, and utterance

b: archaic: FIDELITY, CONSTANCY

The dictionary also lists several synonyms for truth: facticity; factuality; sooth; trueness; and verity.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/truth>

Those are pretty straight forward ways of explaining the meaning of what most people would think is an easy term to define. Most folks would say they know what is meant by the "truth" when they hear the word. However, that does not mean they know what the truth is or is not when they hear it.

For example, when a man or woman serves on a jury, they listen the testimonies of various witnesses, and to that of someone who is accused of a crime. Often the testimonies will contradict one another so we know at least one of them is lying. The members of the jury must try and discern who is or is not telling the truth. In many cases both sides may be lying. It is not a simple process, and it is amazing how easily, even under oath, people will lie. Putting one's hand on a Bible and swearing to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" makes no difference to someone who have no respect for the truth.

The problem, however, has become more complex in our generation, because now the whole concept of "truth" has lost its meaning. As postmodern philosophy has taken hold of the mainstream of our culture, truth is no longer seen as an objective reality, but more as a subjective narrative based on one's own life perspective. In other words, everyone has their own "truth" based on their own cultural and social point of view. No one truth is absolute, and all truths are equal in their validity. This way of evaluating reality has become a standard in the halls of academia over past thirty or forty years, especially in the social sciences, ethics, the arts, and law.

One prime example of this obfuscation of the truth can be seen in the issue of sexuality and gender. Recently a woman who was nominated to a seat on a federal court was asked by a United States Senator in her confirmation hearing to define the word "woman." She was unable to give an answer. Also, not long ago, a college professor lost her tenure at a state university because she dared to say publically this statement, "There are only two sexes, male and female."

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That is a fundamentally true statement. Biologically, there are only two sexes – males who have X and Y chromosomes, and females who have two X chromosomes and no Y chromosome. That is determined when a sperm and ovum unite at conception. This is true in all mammals. (In extremely rare instances these combinations may be conflated causing a disorder called hermaphroditism.)

The point is, the truth is that only two sexes exist. However, it is now considered socially correct to separate one's biological sex from one's gender identity. That is, a person may be born a genetic male but believe he is a female, so he can do whatever necessary to change his appearance to that of female. It is considered oppressive and bigoted to not allow a "transgender" person to identify however he or she chooses, regardless of his or her biological sex. In fact, according to this perspective, there are a wide spectrum of genders. They must also be addressed by whatever pronouns they choose. This is now the accepted norm in most universities and in the media. The problem, of course, is that males identifying as females are now participating in women's sporting events. Despite their trying to look and act like women, their bodies are still physically male, which gives them a decided advantage in competition with females. Sadly, the real women are being cheated out of their hard earned victories to these pseudo-women.

This is all indicative of a decline of truth and logic in western philosophical thought. Logic says that two opposite things cannot both be true. If A is true then something contrary to A cannot be true. This is the basis of reason in the sciences and in law. Something is either true or it is not. If you say, "The moon is

a sphere." Then I cannot say, "The moon is a cube." It is either a sphere or a cube. It cannot be both. It could be neither one. But in the postmodern worldview that is only an opinion. It can be whatever you think it is. "Your truth is your truth." "My truth is my truth." Truth is totally subjective and is based essentially on what one feels, not what is an objective fact.

This also has important implications for ethics and morality. What is right or wrong is not dependent on any sort of absolute moral foundation, but boils down to what a person feels and/or what the law allows (and what they can get away with). So questions like abortion are considered by many to be morally neutral. If there is no absolute truth, then there can be no absolute standards for right and wrong.

The Bible has lot to say about truth. Truth rests on the foundation of a personal God who created the universe and established the laws of nature and morality. He alone is the source of all truth.

Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. 1 Sam. 12:24 NASB

1 LORD, who may reside in Your tent? Who may settle on Your holy hill? 2 One who walks with integrity, practices righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart. Psalm 15:1-2 NASB

13 You have a strong arm; Your hand is mighty, Your right hand is exalted. 14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before You. Psalm 89:13-14 NASB

Without God there can be no real basis for anything which is why western culture has descended to the level it has. As Naturalism has gradually taken dominance, the concept of absolute truth has collapsed. So now it is any-

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Contact Information

If you wish to contact us directly, you may do so by the following methods:

321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312

E-mail:
info@marketfaith.org
Phone: 850-383-9756

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thing goes. Everyone has their own "truth." But no one's truth is any more or less valid than anyone else's.

That's how Paul described to the Roman Christians the way societies decay into paganism and moral perversion. Notice he says that all people have an innate knowledge of the truth of God but suppress it in order to live their lives without moral guilt. It all begins with a denial of the truth. Those born since World War II have seen this played out in the United States.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible mankind, of birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures. 24 Therefore God gave them up to

vile impurity in the lusts of their hearts, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged natural relations for that which is contrary to nature, 27 and likewise the men, too, abandoned natural relations with women and burned in their desire toward one another, males with males committing shameful acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. Romans 1: 18-27 NASB

How do you define the truth? The truth is what God says it is. It is what is in His Word – the Bible. And most of all it is in the person of Jesus Christ, the Living Word, the Truth

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incarnate. Jesus declared Himself to be the final standard of all truth. He claimed to be the very embodiment of all Truth.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 NASB

31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciples; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32 NASB

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6 NASB