



Managing GOD's Money

Theme for August: Choices

Life is about choices. Often unconsciously we choose between important matters such as working rather than loafing, eating instead of starving, sleeping rather than staying awake. Nobody tells us which to choose because these responses either are inherent or come by experience. Not so with other choices where ignorance and cowardice often hold us back.

This month we will look at some choices that result from inaction:



Heaven or Hell: Doing nothing is a powerful decision
Truth or Tolerance: The high ground or the easy way out
Success or Failure: How high must I reach
Christianity or Religion: The Person or the rules

Topic for August 8-14: Truth or Tolerance



**Ephesians 4:1-6
(NAS95S)**

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

In earlier Ephesians' chapters, Apostle Paul addressed the believers' richness in Messiah. Here he turns to believers' walk in Messiah. Believers, he says, must walk *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love*. These words apply to all contacts with people—at home, in the office, or elsewhere. They apply even to persons we dislike who have hurt us.

Paul's message means we should show selfless love to everyone. Followers of Jesus must love everybody as themselves, not with a condescending attitude, but always with the love of Jesus.

Jesus is *truth* and inspired all Scripture, which contains all

truth. To show *tolerance* to one another in love, we must know Jesus as personal Lord and Savior, know His Word; and use it for *teaching, rebuking, correcting, training in righteousness*—**2 Timothy 3:16**.

Truth is freedom. As we accept the basic, unchanging truths in the Bible, we need to realize they are essential to preserving society's moral fabric. That's why we mustn't succumb to pressures to accept unscriptural, irreverent behaviors in the name of *tolerance*. We must get to know and follow truth and be free.

To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said, *If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the*

truth, and the truth will set you free. — John 8:31-32.

Many folks ostracize believers who champion truth. Even when they do so in love, folks call them bigots or other derogatory names. Still, many believers succumb to pressure to be tolerant according to the world's definition.

Tolerance practiced by the world rejects Jesus—rejects truth and embraces political correctness: Christmas becomes the *holiday season*, and Jesus is only one *way* instead of the only *way* to God.

According to the world, we must throw out truth and accept everything vocal, organized minority groups foist on us. Truth becomes irrelevant, and tolerance for other people's views, decides policies, practices, and the law. This moral relativism opposes Jesus' teachings, and goes against Apostle Paul's plea to the Ephesians in **Ephesians 4:6** Apostle Paul reminds us there is *one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all*. Paul also penned these words in **Philippians 2:10-11**:

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.



Memory Verse

Judges 21:25

In those days Israel had no king; every- one did as he saw fit.

Current trends suggest governments will start jailing those who defend particular truths, even if they do so lovely and compassionately. Nevertheless, this must not deter believers in Jesus from remaining steadfast. We must stand firm for truth and never discriminate against folks who choose lifestyles or have beliefs contrary to Jesus' teachings. We must show His love even when we disagree with people's lifestyles and beliefs.

Let's learn from Jesus. Continually He upheld truth as He showed grace, mercy, and love. His talk with the woman at the well (**John 4:5-42**) is one example; the Bible records several more. Before entering the Temple to expel merchants, Jesus did not perform a social audit to understand buyers and sellers' backgrounds. Neither did He ask whether His planned actions would offend anyone. He merely walked in,

overturned tables, and drove out folks who were not using the Temple as intended:

"It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'" **Matthew 21:13.**

Equally, in the Good Samaritan parable, the Samaritan did not stop to evaluate prevailing prejudice by Jews against his people. He merely did onto this Jewish person, as he would like others do to him. He chose truth—the high ground. We read in **Luke 10:30-34**:

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest... passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite ... passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, ...took pity on him...bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he ... took him to an inn and took care of him.

On several occasions, folks accused Jesus of being with the wrong crowd (**Mark 2:16-17**); however, that didn't change His ministry's focus. Many criticized Him for healing in the wrong places, at the wrong times, but again, He did what was right (**Matthew 12:1-12**). Jesus was **politically incorrect**

according to today's standards because He chose truth always and did not follow popular opinion.

A key issue that fosters the drift away from truth is weak leadership. In **1 Timothy chapter 3**, we read about church leaders' qualifications. All churches would do well to follow these guidelines; sadly, many ignore them. They do not understand their non-biblical counsel's effects on society and on families who continue to fall apart.

A biblically focused leader helps to frame opinions by educating followers about their decisions' full implications. In love, humility, and grace, they take clear, firm stands on issues, based on truth.

The spate of crimes by corporate leaders show the prevalence of moral relativism in society. **Proverbs 29:18** tells us where there is no vision the people perish. Pray for leaders to rise up with godly vision to stem the tide to people doing what is right in their own eyes.

Meanwhile, let's not despair; let's keep following Jesus. He will judge each person for his or her own actions. As well, let's not become *Bible-Thumping*, Pharisaical, and obnoxious about issues. Simply seek God's direction

as we frame our responses to all matters in love. We must use facts when they are available, apply the unchanging principles in the Bible consistently, be predictable, transparent, and glorify Messiah Jesus always.

Tolerance as practiced today creates absurdities that lead to a waste of time, talents, and money. People reject traditional values to be tolerant. Though Bible principles are the foundation of most modern societies, many Governments oppose those that are unpopular. So, pressure to follow the masses and be tolerant rises. Folks continue to turn away from truth and focus on themselves.

Application



John 8:31-32

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

Morally weak, ignorant leaders continue to emerge and insist on tolerance. Until the Lord returns, moral relativism will assure society's downward spiral into decay and depravity. Meanwhile, will believers stand for truth, or will we compromise and be tolerant because we fear the intolerant label?

Truth costs. Will these costs deter us? It did not deter Stephen, even as they stoned him to death – **Acts 7:59-60**.

This week, let's try to learn from the past. In **Judges 2:7-10, 2:14-18, 10:7-16**, we see our loving, merciful God's heart. Continually He gave His people, Israel, another chance though each time they rejected Him—He is doing the same today. But the time is coming when it will be too late.

Don't delay; decide today if you will take the high ground on moral issues and stand for truth like Joseph. He didn't succumb to Potiphar wife's seductive advances (**Genesis 39:4-21**). Instead, he went to prison; but God upheld him.

Will you conform to the masses, become tolerant, and reject truth? It's your choice. Only if you surrender your life to Jesus will you know truth and know how to carry it out in love.



Daily Reflections



August 8:
Ephesians 4:1-6
Proverbs 29:18

August 9:
Matthew 21:11-14;
Philippians 2:10-11
Genesis 39:4-21

August 10:
Luke 10:30-34;
Acts 7:59-60

August 11:
Matthew 12:1-12

August 12:
1 Timothy 3

August 13:
Judges 2:7-10;
14-18;
Judges 10:7-16

August 14:
Judges 21:25;
Genesis 39:4-21

Considering the month's theme, and the period's topic, daily reflect on verses on the left. These questions might help your reflections:

1. Who is talking to whom, about what, and in what context?
2. How do these verses apply to me today?
3. What lessons from these verses can I start today?

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