

Lesson 12: The fruit of the Spirit is TRUTH



*Truth, holding a mirror and a serpent (1896).
Olin Levi Warner, Library of Congress
Thomas Jefferson Building, Washington, D.C.*

What is truth?? Does truth ever change [grow], or does our understanding of truth change, or both?? What should our acceptance of truth be based on?? Is something “true” because the majority believes it to be true??

The major theories of truth:

Correspondence theory -- For the truth to correspond it must first be proved by evidence or an individual's valid opinion, which have similar meaning or context.

Coherence theory -- For coherence theories in general, truth requires a proper fit of elements within a whole system.

Constructivist theory -- Constructivism views all of our knowledge as "constructed," because it does not reflect any external "transcendent" realities (as a pure correspondence theory might hold). Rather, perceptions of truth are viewed as contingent on convention, human perception, and social experience.

Consensus theory -- Consensus theory holds that truth is whatever is agreed upon, or in some versions, might come to be agreed upon, by some specified group.

Pragmatic theory -- The three most influential forms of the pragmatic theory of truth were introduced around the turn of the 20th century by Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. Although there are wide differences in viewpoint among these and other proponents of pragmatic theory, they hold in common that truth is verified and confirmed by the results of putting one's concepts into practice.

1. the true or actual state of a matter: He tried to find out the truth.
2. conformity with fact or reality; verity: the truth of a statement.
3. a verified or indisputable fact, proposition, principle, or the like: mathematical truths.
4. the state or character of being true.
5. actuality or actual existence.
6. an obvious or accepted fact; truism; platitude.
7. honesty; integrity; truthfulness.

8. (often initial capital letter) ideal or fundamental reality apart from and transcending perceived experience: the basic truths of life.
9. agreement with a standard or original.
10. accuracy, as of position or adjustment.
11. Archaic. fidelity or constancy.

—Idiom

12. in truth, in reality; in fact; actually: In truth, moral decay hastened the decline of the Roman Empire. [ref: dictionary.com](http://ref:dictionary.com)

Those who are under the influence of the Spirit of God will not be fanatical, but calm and steadfast, free from extravagance in thought, word, or deed. Amid the confusion of delusive doctrines, the Spirit of God will be a guide and a shield to those who have not resisted the evidences of **truth**. FLB 56.5 (The Faith I Live By).

“I have yet many things to say unto you,” He continued, “but ye cannot bear them now. 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. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.” Jesus had opened before His disciples a vast tract of **truth**. But it was most difficult for them to keep His lessons distinct from the traditions and maxims of the scribes and Pharisees. They had been educated to accept the teaching of the rabbis as the voice of God, and it still held a power over their minds, and molded their sentiments. Earthly ideas, temporal things, still had a large place in their thoughts. They did not understand the spiritual nature of Christ’s kingdom, though He had so often explained it to them. Their minds had become confused. They did not comprehend the value of the scriptures Christ presented. Many of His lessons seemed almost lost upon them. Jesus saw that they did not lay hold of the real meaning of His words. He compassionately promised that the Holy Spirit should recall these sayings to their minds. And He had left unsaid many things that could not be comprehended by the disciples. These also would be opened to them by the Spirit. The Spirit was to quicken their understanding, that they might have an appreciation of heavenly things. “When He, the **Spirit of truth**, is come,” said Jesus, “He will guide you into all **truth**.” DA 670.3 (The Desire of Ages)

The Comforter is called “the **Spirit of truth**.” His work is to define and maintain the **truth**. He first dwells in the heart as the **Spirit of truth**, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the **truth**, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses **truth** upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the **Spirit of truth**, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. DA 671.1

True sanctification is a Bible doctrine. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Thessalonian church, declares: “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” And he prays: “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly” (1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:23). The Bible clearly teaches what sanctification is and how it is to be attained. The Saviour prayed for His disciples: “Sanctify them through thy **truth**: thy word is **truth**” (John 17:17, 19). And Paul teaches that believers are to be “sanctified by the Holy Ghost” (Romans 15:16). What is the work of the Holy Spirit? Jesus told His disciples: “When he, the **Spirit of truth**, is come, he will guide you into all **truth**” (John 16:13). And the psalmist says: “Thy law is the **truth**.” By the Word and the Spirit of God are opened to men the great principles of righteousness embodied in His law. And since the law of God is “holy, and just, and good,” a

transcript of the divine perfection, it follows that a character formed by obedience to that law will be holy. Christ is a perfect example of such a character. He says: "I have kept my Father's commandments." "I do always those things that please him" (John 15:10; 8:29). The followers of Christ are to become like Him—by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification. Mar 231.3 (Maranatha)

God intends that, even in this life, truth shall be ever unfolding to His people. There is only one way in which this knowledge can be obtained. We can attain to an understanding of God's word only through the illumination of that Spirit by which the word was given. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God;" "for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." And the Saviour's promise to His followers was: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.... For He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." 5T 703.2 (Testimonies for the Church Volume Five)

Multitude[s] have a wrong conception of God and his attributes, and are as truly serving a false God as were the worshipers of Baal. Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and his truth. Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human.

The prevailing spirit of our time is one of infidelity and apostasy—a spirit of avowed illumination because of a knowledge of truth, but in reality of the blindest presumption. Human theories are exalted and placed where God and his law should be. Satan tempts men and women to disobey, with the promise that in disobedience they will find liberty and freedom that will make them as gods. There is seen a spirit of opposition to the plain word of God, of idolatrous exaltation of human wisdom above divine revelation. Men have allowed their minds to become so darkened and confused by conformity to worldly customs and influences that they seem to have lost all power to discriminate between light and darkness, truth and error. So far have they departed from the right way that they hold the opinions of a few philosophers, so-called, to be more trustworthy than the truths of the Bible. The entreaties and promises of God's word, its threatenings against disobedience and idolatry—these seem powerless to melt their hearts. A faith such as actuated Paul, Peter, and John they regard as old-fashioned, mystical, and unworthy of the intelligence of modern thinkers. In the beginning, God gave his law to mankind as a means of attaining happiness and eternal life. Satan's only hope of thwarting the purpose of God is to lead men and women to disobey this law, and his constant effort has been to misrepresent its teachings and belittle its importance. His master stroke has been an attempt to change the law itself, so as to lead men to violate its precepts while professing to obey it. PK 177-8.