

FOUR BENEFITS OF KNOWING THE TRUTH

Ephesians 4:17-24

I. Introduction:

A. (Ephesians 4:17-24 NKJV)

II. Knowledge of Truth makes one free from the bonds of ignorance.

A. The Gentiles “old man” was characterized by ignorance.

1. Ephesians 4:17-24 ... “Having their understanding darkened ...” ; “ because of the **ignorance** that is in them...”
2. Thus, “being alienated fro the life of God...”, etc.
3. But, they **learned** Christ, **heard** Him, were **taught by him**, ... thus became enlightened and put on the new man (Ephesians 4:20-23).

B. Ignorance is not bliss! What one does not know, CAN hurt YOU!

1. It promotes man-made religion.
 - a) Cf. (Romans 10:1-3 NKJV)
2. It promotes idol worship.
 - a) (Acts 17:23 NKJV)
 - b) Cf. (Romans 1:21-23 NKJV)
3. Ignorance:
 - a) Hinders “faith” – i.e. Romans 10:17
 - b) Promotes division.
 - c) Makes men susceptible to false doctrine.

d) Hinders obedience – one can't do by faith what they don't know to do!

4. The “darkness” of ignorance is only dispelled by the light of the truth.

a) (John 8:32 NKJV)

b) (2 Corinthians 4:6 NKJV)

III. Knowledge of Truth makes one free from the bonds of prejudice.

A. Note: Show the relationship between ignorance and prejudice.

1. **IGNORANCE**: (1) “Want of knowledge or perception. Sometimes includes idea of willful blindness.” ¹ (2) “destitute of knowledge or education: unaware, uninformed.” ²

2. **Examples**:

a) “The earth is flat”

b) “Malaria is caused by swamp air”

c) “Smoke makes clouds, clouds cause rain”

d) “Trees shake, which makes the wind blow, which brings in storms”

e) Thousands of examples of what acts and rituals are followed through ignorance. ³

B. Prejudice is one of the worst enemies of the cause of righteousness.

¹ W.E. Vine

² Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary

³ Some examples are given in “To Shoot Hard Labor” by Samuel Smith, pages 68-70. Also, **The Golden Bough A Study in Magic and Religion, James George Frazer**

1. Examples: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" ... Nathaniel (John 1:46 NKJV)

a) By the way ... prejudice was corrected by proper investigation... Philip said to him, "Come and see."

2. Prejudice caused the rejection of Christ by the Jews.

3. It causes the rejection of gospel truths.

4. It causes the rejection of the Lord's church (My mind is made up, don't confuse or disquiet me with facts!)"

a) "Water dogs" – you believe the power of salvation is in the water!

b) "You don't believe in the grace of God"

c) "You don't believe one is saved by faith"

d) You do believe that you are saved by works (alone)"

e) "You believe you are ALL right and everyone else is ALL wrong."

5. It causes rejection in areas of authority – for instance the church support of many institutions is based upon prejudice –

a) They (you) ... meaning conservatives (anti's) ... are

(1) Opposed to orphans...

(2) Widows...

(3) Old folks ...

(4) Recreation...etc.

(a) NO! We are opposed to the church doing anything without the proper authority!

6. TRUTH MAKES "LIKE-MINDEDNESS"

C. Examining everything in the light of truth can remove prejudice.

1. Providing we WANT it removed!

a) “I know it *says* that... I don’t accept it!”

2. Both ignorance and prejudice can be removed with the spirit of the Bereans.

a) Cf. (Acts 17:11 NKJV)

IV. Knowledge of Truth makes one free from the doctrines of men.

A. Note: Show the relationship between ignorance, prejudice, and doctrines and commandments of men.

1. Modern examples:

a) Snake Handlers & faith healing - (Mark 16:18 NKJV)

(1) Context shows to whom and with what limitations promise was given. Example: Paul the apostle—Acts 28.

b) Christians CANNOT sin vs. Not PERMITTED to sin. Cf.

(1) (1 John 3:9 NKJV)

(a) (1 John 1:8 NKJV)

(b) (1 John 1:10 NKJV)

(c) (1 John 2:1 NKJV)

B. Note: Show the great influence of man-made doctrine in the religious world ...

1. Calvinism (“one cannot fall from grace and be lost”)

a) (2 Peter 2:20-22 NKJV)

b) (Hebrews 4:1 NKJV)

(1) Why warn against the impossible?

2. Premillennialism (the return of the Lord to live and reign upon the earth for 1,000 years – depending on what ‘brand’ of Premillennialism.)

a) (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 NKJV)

b) (John 5:28 NKJV)

3. The source determines the validity of the teaching (from God or man?) – Cf. Matthew 21:23-25.

a) (Matthew 21:23-25 NKJV)

4. More people are influenced in religion by what does NOT come from God, than that which DOES come from Him.

a) i.e. Majority vs. Minority; “grace only” or “faith only”

5. The effects of man made doctrine?

a) Makes worship “vain” (futile, ineffectual).

(1) Cf. (Matthew 15:9 NKJV)

b) It **denominates** because differing groups attempt to prove differing doctrines – dishonors God and His oneness.

C. So, “Preach the word”!

1. (2 Timothy 2:2 NKJV)

2. (2 Timothy 4:2 NKJV)

3. That which comes from Divine source must be received; honored and applied above that which has its origin with uninspired men. (“Why then do you not believe him?” – Matthew 21:25)

4. We need to continually test or “prove all things.”

a) (1 Thessalonians 5:21 NKJV)

b) (2 Corinthians 13:5 NKJV)

V. Knowledge of Truth makes men free from sin.

A. Is the immediate point of our text (Ephesians 4:21-24).

B. Sin is the worst and most destructive enemy of mankind.

1. Consider its nature and its consequences!

a) Sin is transgression against God and His law according to 1 John 3:4.

b) ALL have committed sin – Roman 3:23.

c) Sin separates us from God (we are spiritually dead once we sin) – Isaiah 59:1-2

C. Only God’s truth reveals God’s way of Salvation.

1. (Romans 1:16 NKJV)

2. Therefore men need to hear, know, and obey it!

a) Cf. (John 6:45 NKJV)

3. Every case of conversion in the New Testament was a response to learning TRUTH (Acts 2; 8; 9; 16, etc.)

VI. Conclusion:

A. We must want and love the truth ... above all else and at any expense!

B. We must apply truth to everything, live it, teach it, defend it!

C. Have you listened to and obeyed the truth?