

Truth or Consequences - The Conclusion

By Wayne Vasilenko

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We have had three previous studies in this series entitled "Truth or Consequences" without any direct reference to the title itself; this was by design! This in itself illustrates how many of us go through life never thinking much about the things we believe in or the decisions we make on a daily basis let alone the decisions that can affect us in the long term. We have compared truth to opinion, showing that opinion can contain some truth or none at all, while truth is always truth. Truth or Consequences is the name of a "Game Show" that started on radio in the 1940's and after eventually moving to television continued being aired thru the 1980's. The basic premise of the show was that the contestants would be asked a question, and if they failed to answer it in the allotted time they would suffer the consequences which usually involved having to perform a crazy stunt of some kind. It was all in fun but I feel there was a message in it all. Consider this... everything that we do in life has consequences. Every day we make decisions that in turn affect our lives in some way, sometimes even affecting the length of our lives. It could be as simple as the decisions we make on our drive to work... "Do I attempt to answer that text while driving, answer later, or pull over?" It's a simple decision but it can have devastating results for you and perhaps many others. So called distracted drivers kill people every day as they strain to read a text or answer one instead of paying attention to traffic. In a split second your life or someone else's can be snuffed out leaving friends, family, and perhaps children behind, all because of a simple distraction. It seems to me that we humans are very susceptible to being distracted. This is even evident within the Christian church as many are distracted by man-made rules and traditions, rather than simply sticking to the Word of God. People of different denominations argue back and forth as to whose belief system is right and whose is wrong while ignoring the fact that their bickering is turning people away from the truth! Perhaps it is they themselves that are being distracted from the very truth they seek.

"Truth... What is Truth?"

Jesus was asked this question by the man who eventually gave the order for His execution...

John 18:37-38 (New King James Version)

³⁷ Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." ³⁸ Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.

So what is this truth to which Jesus is referring? Within this series I've given illustrations as to how things pertaining to God and the Bible can be and in a lot of cases are distorted. Sometimes it is with blatant intent, sometimes because of various seemingly unrelated distractions, such as the ambient noise of life itself. At times we are pulled in so many different directions with the cares of the world it seems intentional. Two of Satan's most used tools are distraction and deception (I have brought this out in the past). If he can get your attention away from God and the Bible, there is a chance that you can be distracted long enough as to perish before you find the time to heed the Word of God. Many people claim to be too busy for God and the Bible convinced that it has no relevance to their lives. This is one of the ultimate deceptions! The truth is that God is not only concerned with your life "on the other side" as it is sometimes referred to, but He is also concerned with your life in the here and now! And God not only desires to take care of your needs, He wants to provide them in abundance.

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John 10:10 (New King James Version)

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

If Satan can get you to believe a lie, this he would prefer even more because people who believe a lie tend to spread the lie. The more people repeating the same thing be it truth or lie, the more credible it appears to outsiders! We can see this happening every day as people get swept up in the "Trending" topic of the day or week. Our streets get filled with protesters many of them having no idea what it is they are protesting! By spreading lies you would then be considered an ally to Satan and his cause thus helping to push his agenda of distraction and deception, in turn creating confusion which is the devil's playground. Unfortunately this is the state a lot of churches and religions are in as I have been trying to get you to see in this series. They are confused and misdirected because they have put the Word of God in the back seat while allowing themselves to be driven by popular opinion or useless traditions. Many are more concerned with getting people to agree with their point of view rather than with what the Word of God says. So how do we as the church fight this trend? The answer is quite simple but it comes with a price. I have asked you a few times to pause and consider how your church or religion compares to some passages out of the bible I have brought to your attention. How did that go for you? Was there any contention between what the bible says and what you've been taught? If there were points of contention then perhaps you are more religious than you thought. A huge deception that we have had to deal with is the confusion between Christianity and religion. One can be religious towards just about anything, even things not pertaining to the worship of God! In our time there are people religious (i.e. believing in and devoted to) climate change, others are religious about social issues or political beliefs. Looking back, it turns out the religious zealots during the time Jesus walked the earth were misinformed concerning the messiah they so earnestly sought. Yet they boldly stood up to the Roman Empire because they fully expected their messiah to show up with an army of angels to back them up! They were misled because they were getting partial truth rather than the whole truth... they were guided by the opinions of the Pharisees which I brought out earlier can contain partial truth. But any time a powerful group such as the Pharisees tells you something it would do you well to see if it measures up to the standard of God's Word. Many times people in high position tend to leave out details which might diminish their power or draw attention away from them.

The clock is ticking

Time... this is the only price you have to pay to find the truth. You have to take the time to check what you are being taught or told concerning the things of God against the record of His Word. Time... it is the only thing that is truly equal for everyone regardless of background, wealth, status, or religion. There are 24 hours in every day for everyone... the only variable is the number of days you have here on earth. This can be affected by you and the decisions you make. How much of your time you devote to the study of God's Word is also a choice that you alone make. Just as it was with the game "Truth or Consequences" there is a finite amount of time you have on earth to answer the question, or discover truth. Do you remember that question I asked in the beginning of this series? **"If you were standing before God and He asked you why He should let you into heaven, what would you say?"** I trust that by now some of you reading this took the time to seriously consider this question, especially those who

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took the challenge to compare what they've been taught about God and the Bible with the actual Bible. It takes a little of your time but I can promise you it will not be in vain. **Matthew 7:8 (New King James Version)** *For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, (emphasis mine) and to him who knocks it will be opened.* This verse of scripture makes it clear that if you take the time to find the truth about God you will find the truth. If you search God's Word you will find that everything in it points to Jesus coming to earth for the sole purpose of reconciling us to God. As for the Old Covenant Law, consider the following passage... **Hebrews 10:1 (New International Version)** *The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.* Many of us have been misled over the years concerning a lot of issues. No issue can be more important than our standing with the God of the universe. He is a merciful god; He knew us before we were ever born and provided a way for us to overcome the penalty for our disobedience going back to Adam. What is Truth? Truth is the Word of God. Take the time to seek out that truth... the consequences for failing to do so is an eternity without truth... an eternity without God.