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At Christ's Table - ACTpublications

*"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."*

1 Corinthians 2:13

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In his second letter to the Thessalonians the apostle Paul described “the mystery of lawlessness”, “the man of lawlessness”, “the lawless one”, “the one whose presence is in accord with the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-10a)

He then went on to describe a particular type of people ...

“<sup>10b</sup>Those who perish, because **they did not accept the love of the truth** so as to be saved. <sup>11</sup>For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that **they will believe what is false**, <sup>12</sup>in order that they all may be judged *who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness.*” 2 Thessalonians 2:10b-12

## *Two Types of People*

More and more, it seems to me that the whole of the human race can be separated into just two types of people “*the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’*” – that is, those who *have* “the love of THE truth”, and those that *have not* “the love of THE truth”.

The Greek word translated “truth” is *aletheia*.<sup>1</sup> “In ancient Greek culture, [225](#) (*alétheia*) was synonymous for “reality” as the opposite of *illusion*.”<sup>2</sup> “THE Truth” is divine truth - truth which has been God-given – not truth which has been put forth by human beings.

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<sup>1</sup> Strong’s # G225

<sup>2</sup> Gary Hill and Archer L. Gleason, *Emphatic Language Pointer System* (Synonym Glossary, Discovery Bible, NASB New Testament) Moody Press (1987)

Further, “THE truth” is the Self-revelation of God in and through the Living Word (Jesus Christ) and the inspired written words of God. (Scripture is the only God-given source which defines the true Christ of God). This is “THE truth” someone *has or does not have*. (Cf. “What do you have that you did not receive? 1 Corinthians 4:7)

I have capitalized the word “the” only to point out that in the Greek texts translated “who did not accept the love of **the** truth”, and also, “who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness”, before the word “truth”, we find ὁ, ἡ, τό<sup>3</sup> which is **the definite article – “the”**. This refers to the one truth which is God-given mentioned above – not just any concept human beings may consider as “truth”, which Scripture refers to in this way: “philosophy and empty deception in accordance with human tradition, in accordance with [the elementary principles of the world](#), rather than in accordance with Christ.” (Colossians 2:8)

In contrast, there is no definite article in the Greek text for “they will believe what is false” or “they will believe a lie”. In other words, this is not referring to one specific lie – they will believe a sundry lies – *choosing to believe any lie which appeals to them*. It’s my observation that what appeals to people is most often influenced by their educational experience. And by “educational

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<sup>3</sup> Strong’s # G3588

experience” I do mean “schooling”, but I also mean “education” in a fuller sense of the word – that is, all the things which shape our worldview - including the influences of parents, family, friends, secular and religious cultures and, in this case, probably the strongest influence - the various forms of media. Without a conviction-conversion experience of repentance-regeneration ministered by the Spirit of Truth, along with a subsequent “renewing of the mind” (Romans 12:2), and transformation into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18), we are all largely the product of what we have been taught. But again, there are only two types of people in the world – those who are obtaining a biblical worldview, and those who remain “spiritually blind” in the worldview of “the god of this world”. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

## *Different Worldviews*

I have written elsewhere on the subject of [“Worldview”](#). Suffice to say here that a **“worldview”** is a way of perceiving reality - addressing the questions: *“What is real? How do I understand reality? What do I perceive when I look out at the world? What are the implications of what I perceive?”* Our worldview influences how we perceive **everything** in life. Therefore *“there is all the difference in the world”* between how those who *have* “the love of THE truth”, and those who *have not* “the love of THE truth”. It is not just a

matter of people having different opinions on a matter. An “opinion” is *an arrived at conclusion*. A worldview is *a perspective* (which leads to conclusions). In other words, **the starting point is different**. Even the very definitions of the issues are usually different. This makes operative communication of ideas nearly impossible - *“Two ships passing in the night”*.<sup>4</sup> The “disconnect” is stark and uncanny, because **it involves the influence of spirit beings of a much higher life form than human beings** – namely, either the Most High God or “the Devil ... a murderer from the beginning (who) **does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him**. When he tells a lie, he speaks in character, because **he is a liar and the father of lies.**” (John 8:44) This obviously results in perspectives which are essentially and fundamentally different from the perspectives grounded in the divine truth of a Biblical Worldview.

## *Heart & Mind*

People who do not have “the love of THE truth” do not have an intelligence problem – they are often quite intelligent. Jesus

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<sup>4</sup> *“Ships that pass in the night, and speak each other in passing,  
Only a signal shown and a distant voice in the darkness;  
So on the ocean of life, we pass and speak one another,  
Only a look and a voice; then darkness again and a silence.”* Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “The Theologian’s Tale: Elizabeth” (from *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, 1863)

explained, they cannot understand “THE truth” because **they have a heart problem:**

“<sup>13</sup>Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, **they do not hear or understand.** <sup>14</sup>In them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled: ‘You will be ever hearing but **never understanding**; you will be ever seeing but **never perceiving.** <sup>15</sup>For this people’s **heart** has grown callous; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, **understand with their hearts**, and turn, and I would heal them.” Matthew 13:13-15; Cf. Isaiah 6:9-11

They lack understanding of “THE truth” because they need spiritual regeneration - a “new spirit” and a “new heart”. (Ezekiel 36:26) Observing the blindness can be astonishing – even incredible - when you personally know the people and their intelligence level. Never-the-less, they have been “blinded by the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4) and **do not understand “THE truth”**. Their one great need – their only hope – is to receive the Spirit of Truth.

People who have not received the Spirit of Truth do not believe this ... God’s wisdom is revealed by the Spirit:

“<sup>6</sup> We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. <sup>7</sup> No, we declare God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory

before time began.<sup>8</sup> None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.<sup>9</sup> However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived” — the things God has prepared for those who love him —<sup>10</sup> these are **the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit**. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.<sup>11</sup> For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way **no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God**.<sup>12</sup> What **we have received** is not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand** what God has freely given us.<sup>13</sup> This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words **taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words**.<sup>14</sup> **The person without the Spirit** does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness and **cannot understand** them because they are **discerned only through the Spirit**.<sup>15</sup> The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,<sup>16</sup> for, ‘Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.”

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Again, this separates the whole of the human race into two types of people - “*the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’*.” How can people “transition” into the “*haves*” group? Faith – which is an entire topic on its own and not within the scope of this article. I have written on “faith” in [“Coming to Faith in God”](#). Suffice to say here that coming to faith in God is nothing short of moving from illusion to reality.



In the first part of this article, I've tried to make a convincing argument that there are truly only two types of people on planet earth – those who *have* a love of “THE truth” and those who *have not* a love for “THE truth” – the “*haves*” and “*have nots*”. Now, I'd like to make suggestions on how “*haves*” might better conduct themselves when engaged with the “*have nots*”. The reason I am writing this is not because I am good at conducting myself well with “*have nots*”, but rather, because the Holy Spirit has indicated to me that I am not good at conducting myself well with “*have nots*”. Therefore, what I am sharing is what He has pointed out for me to learn.



## *Worlds in Collision*

I find that interacting with the “*have nots*” very often leads to emotional hurt – for myself, and possibly for them as well. My natural defense mechanism is to conclude “I should just listen without making comments – as in ‘*one-way communication*’”. This is actually not a totally bad idea: James advised us to “quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger”. (James 1:19) But he

didn't say, "*Don't speak at all.*" It is the anger, not the speaking, that is to be avoided. In these tense situations, we can learn to speak with "wisdom from above which is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free of hypocrisy." (James 3:17)

But it does seem that the clash of worldviews cannot be separated from human emotion. All too often conversations become emotional debates, relationships suffer conflict, and the feelings of both parties are hurt. It may not be as pronounced as "*walking away, licking your wounds*", but most often I feel a grievousness in my soul – a dampening of love between people. I think of what Jesus said: "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love with grow cold." (Matthew 24:12) This is the reality: If someone does not have a love for "THE truth", they are, in fact, walking in a "lawless" worldview – in rebellion, rejecting a biblical worldview – the worldview God has given to Humanity. The "*haves*" need to guard their hearts so that they don't end up in the statistical group of those whose "love has grown cold".

Threatening someone's worldview is traumatic and can give rise to feelings of self-defense, and even self-preservation, because consciously or unconsciously, "all the issues of life" rest upon the worldview we hold deep in our heart. (Cf. Proverbs 4:23 NKJV)

These types of conflicts are terrible, and most of us (not all, but most) would prefer to avoid these conflicts – particularly with those whom we know and love. But I believe the Holy Spirit can teach us and lead us in how to better conduct ourselves in these situations: It is not a matter of avoiding these conversations – but often (not always, but often) refraining from presenting arguments which, as we have said, the person is incapable of understanding without having the Holy Spirit. I believe we need to learn **the art of asking questions** as Jesus often did:

## *Asking Questions*

A survey of the gospels show that Jesus asked more than 300 questions. Of the 183 questions asked of Him, He gave only 3 direct answers, frequently asking a question in response to being asked a question. Asking questions was a distinctive and deliberate aspect of His way of communicating and teaching. Jesus asked questions to engage listeners and provoke thought, to challenge assumptions and beliefs, to expose motives and encourage honesty, to encourage introspection, self-examination, and faith, and to lead people to deeper understanding and transformation.<sup>5</sup> Just some examples would be:

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<sup>5</sup> *The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity* founded in 1982 by John Stott and others: <https://licc.org.uk/?s=jesus+asked+questions> Also: *“Jesus: The Master of Influential Questioning”*, Carl Joseph.

- Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler: Drawing attention to the pride in the human heart. “Why do you call me good?” (Luke 18:19)
- Jesus and the Samaritan Woman: Establishing a personal connection: “Will you give me a drink?” (John 4:7) “What do you want Me to do for you?” (Matthew 20:32)
- Jesus and the Scribes and Pharisees: Challenging their hypocrisy: “Have you not read...?” (Matthew 19:4), “The baptism of John was from what source: from heaven, or from men?” (Matthew 21:25) “Whose image and inscription is this?” (Matthew 22:20)
- Jesus and His Disciples: Challenging their faith: “How many loaves do you have?” (Matthew 15:34); “But who do yourselves say that I am?” (Matthew 16:15)
- Jesus and Peter: Calling for whole-hearted commitment: “Do you love me?” (John 21:15-17)

We can learn to ask questions which may cause a person to observe the futility of their worldview, and at the same time, give room for the ministry of the Holy Spirit within their hearts in a repentance – regeneration process of coming to faith in God. I have written of these things in [\*“The Drawing of the Holy Spirit”\*](#) and [\*“Coming to Faith in God”\*](#).

## Answering Questions

“Always be ready to give a [logical] defense to anyone who asks you to account for the hope *and* confident assurance [elicited by faith] that is within you, yet [do it] with gentleness and respect.”

1 Peter 3:15

Along with “gentleness and respect”, there are 2 more significant things contained in this verse – **questions** and **hope** (elicited by faith).

### Questions

It is my personal experience that very few people ask me questions – about the Lord, or about myself. It may be that people feel that your asking questions takes them “*out of the driver’s seat*” in the conversation. But it also seems to me that people are basically self-centered. One of the things Dale Carnegie discusses in his book, “*How to Win Friends and Influence People*”, (in my own words) is to talk about what the other person wants to talk about – themselves. It absolutely works! I ask people questions about themselves, and they love it. But their asking questions about myself, or the Lord – very rare.

So, if someone does ask about the things of the Lord, it is almost a certainty the Holy Spirit is drawing them. In this case we need to

be sensitive to what the Spirit of Truth is doing in His ministry of revealing Christ (John 15:26), and “prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment:”. (John 16:8-11 NIV) We need to discern where they are in the conviction-conversion process of repentance-regeneration. I’ve written of these things in [“The Drawing of the Holy Spirit”](#) .

### Hope (*Elicited by Faith*)

I have written elsewhere on [“Hope”](#). But for here, let’s consider again what Peter wrote in that verse: “Always be ready to give a [logical] defense to anyone who asks you to account for **the hope and confident assurance [elicited by faith]** that is within you, yet [do it] with gentleness and respect.”

1 Peter 3:15

Because of faith, **the “haves” have “THE hope”** (definite article) “which is reserved for them in heaven”. (Cf. 1 Peter 1:3-5; Romans 5:4-5, 8:24-25; Colossians 1:5; Titus 1:2; 1 John 3:2-3) Whereas, lacking faith, **the “have nots” are “having no hope and are without God in the world”**. (Ephesians 2:12-13) Following is a quote from [“Coming to Faith in God”](#):

*“I have found that with a believer in a general discussion with a sincerely interested non-believer, the two will inevitably find themselves needing to discuss faith – because it is the ‘bottom line’. You either have*

*faith or you don't. One is being 'asked about the hope and confident assurance [elicited by faith] that is within you'. In a very real way, hope is a prerequisite for faith. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for'. (Hebrews 11:1) When speaking with a non-believer, the believer should communicate the hope we have according to the scriptures. For that particular hope is one of the essential things the non-believer does not have. The hope of glory – 'Christ in you' and the hope of eternal life are things the non-believer is not hoping for. Therefore, why would he be interested in having faith for 'things hoped for'? That hope must be put forth to the non-believer. While they may not comprehend the Spirit of 'Christ in you,'<sup>6</sup> I believe all human beings are concerned with 'the hope of glory' – the hope of eternal life. Of course, they may not 'believe' there is such a thing. But that is exactly why faith is being discussed! 'And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for the one who comes to God must believe that He exists, and that He proves to be One who rewards those who seek Him.' (Hebrews 11:6) This is the reality, and I believe that most non-believers understand that to be the case. You either have faith or you don't."*

There are two types of people: The "haves" - having "a love for THE truth", have faith and hope; and the "have nots" - who do not have a love for "THE truth", also do not have faith or hope, and "are without God in the world".

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<sup>6</sup> In our testimony of Christ, we really need to leave off a carnal approach such as – "Come to Jesus, and all your problems in this life will be solved.", etc. The spiritual reality is this: "You MUST be born of the Spirit." (John 3) "God is Spirit, and who worship Him MUST worship in spirit and truth. (John 4) "Christ in you" (by His Spirit) is "the hope of glory". (Romans 8) "Knowing the one true God is eternal life." (John 17:3) This is exactly why faith is necessary: the realities of God are primarily spiritual by nature. It seems to me, non-believers instinctively understand this – faith is a prerequisite to belief in God.

Bill & Frances Furioso  
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, discipled many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... [www.AtChristsTable.org](http://www.AtChristsTable.org)

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