

CHAPTER 15

Our Greatest Barrier To Truth

Me: God.

God: Yes son.

I love You.

I know. I love you too.

Can we talk about something important?

Like what?

Like why we have such trouble with the truth.

What do you mean?

Well, I've noticed many times that when we find the truth, or when the truth comes to us, we either can't or won't accept it. We find it almost impossible to accept the truth! Why is this?

Let Me ask you a few questions to clarify some points for understanding first and then you will see.

Okay.

What is the single largest problem that a person has in coming to be aware of the truth?

Probably the lack of clarity in his life and personality and thinking.

Exactly. As you have learned, clarity is the first barrier to overcome before you will allow yourself to see the truth.

Okay, I got this. What else do You want to ask?

How does a person get clarity on a particular subject?

Simple. He just accepts reason and then questions himself about this particular subject.

Okay, and let's say that he currently has many false beliefs in this area that he is questioning himself about. How will he find out that his current beliefs are not true?

Why, it's simple. Reason will show him.

Are you sure?

Certainly. Reason is always the best guide inward into the land of understanding about beliefs and truth.

Why is that?

Because reason is the light that reveals the truth. Reason is the power that You Yourself have given us to find the truth.

You mean that a person should base his beliefs on what is reasonable?

I would hope that a serious seeker of truth would do just that!

Why is it so important to use reason to find the truth?

Because there are powers that want each of us to be deceived about the truth, and these powers will lead us astray if at all possible.

And what is the best defense against these evil powers?

Reason, a loving and willing heart, a good sense of humor, and a sincere willingness to question one's own dearly held beliefs.

Why be willing to question your own beliefs?

Because only a fool says, "Don't confuse me with the facts or reasonableness; my mind is already made up on this subject!"

Why is this so foolish?

Because once you hold your beliefs so tightly that you are no longer willing to question their validity, then you have cut yourself off from being able to learn the truth—if you are mistaken.

Why is this?

Say you believe that life is not worth enjoying, and this belief is untrue and is causing you a great deal of harm and trouble. If you are not willing to listen to someone else's opinions or stated case of facts or reason, you will not be giving yourself the chance to change your false belief and come to accept the truth. You will not even be willing to listen to reason, even though reason is your only hope to come to the truth and therefore have a better life of love, peace, and joy.

So, if a person is unwilling to see the truth in the first place, what is probably the problem?

Lack of clarity because he refuses to listen to reason.

Are there any subjects where reason should be disregarded when studying or searching for the truth?

No. And there are some subjects where reason alone is not sufficient to fully understand and know the truth about.

Such as?

Such as love. Love is beyond the mere confines of reason. A proper understanding of love cannot be arrived at with reason alone.

Does this mean that when a person studies love to learn the truth about it he should throw reason out the door and ignore anything that reason suggests about love and loving?

Not at all. Reason should still be heeded and listened to, yet a person must understand that on this subject, reason alone will not be enough for a total understanding.

So, should reason always be heeded and sought and listened to when searching for any truth?

Yes, always!

Very good! You have learned well. Indeed, reason should always be your guide, for only reason can lead you fully to the truth!

And what do you think reason is?

Reason is our touchstone to God's truth. It is the mental tool that You have given all of us to use to find the truth.

Very good. Reason should always be sought on a subject because I AM reason. I am reasonable, and except for those things that transcend reason, reason alone is all that is needed to find the truth. If reason is ignored, what truth could a man possibly come to understand?

None. A person without a reason is either retarded or a fool.

And what is a person who has a good reasoning ability and is yet unwilling to use it in some particular area that he wishes to know the truth about?

He's typically human—like we all are at times.

Are you saying that sometimes a person says that he is searching for the truth, yet when reason attempts to reveal the truth to him, he suddenly changes his mind and won't listen to reason anymore?

Yes. This is exactly what I was getting at in the beginning of this conversation. Why do we do this?

Let Me continue the questions and I think that reason itself will pose the answer to you.

Fine, ask away.

As an example let's use a typical person who might come to you after reading this book in the hopes of advancing his perfection.

Okay. Is he serious in his search?

Yes.

Is he committed to the truth?

Well, whether he is or not is hard for you to perceive unless I tell you. It is only important to you in the beginning of instructing a willing learner that you be convinced that he is serious. Let's say that he is serious and comes to you for instructions on how to once again become his true self and achieve the goals that he has established for himself.

All right. We'll assume this. Now what?

Let's say that one day you are teaching him about the nature of God.

Okay.

When you ask him the questions revealing the account that we presented earlier in this book about what I want most is to love you, he finds it difficult to accept this.

Granted. It may be very difficult for even the most sincere seeker of truth to easily accept truths that are foreign to his currently held beliefs. I should know, I had You as my teacher and I had absolutely no doubts about Your integrity and knowledge of the subject matter that You were teaching. Yet I found it difficult at times to accept some of the things that You taught me. And I think that I was about as serious and sincere a seeker of truth as there ever was. Those that learn from me will surely have doubts about my integrity and knowledge of the subject matter in the beginning of my instructions to them. I can certainly understand their caution in areas such as this.

Yes. Yet you realize that if you follow My guidance on how to assist others back to the truth, you will not be the one teaching them.

I know—their own good sound judgment and reasoning will be their teacher. I cannot teach them anything; they can only teach themselves.

This is true. And since you cannot teach them anything, why are you even speaking with them?

As You do for me, I shall do for them. I will be their guide along the path to themselves. I shall assist them to continue along the correct path, and to not turn away when it is tough. I will merely ask them the right questions so that they can find their own reasonable answers. And, when the occasion warrants it, I may put in my own two-cents worth of understanding and knowledge. I may propose alternate answers or solutions that they had not considered before.

So what is your main job with them?

To propose the proper questions, suggest alternate answers, and open locked doors.

A guide?

A guide.

Very good. You understand your part well. You are not there to carry them the entire journey, even though you may at times choose to carry them part way for your love of them and their inability to advance on their own power. Yet, your primary job for them will be as Mine has been for you—asker of the right questions at the right time for their sure advancement in the right direction.

Okay, I got all that. Yet, what about the problem that we all have with not being willing to accept the truth that reason proposes to us at times?

Yes. False beliefs are like a mountain that most people have to tear down in order to return to their true self. And ignoring our own reasoning power is like a wall between that mountain and us. Until you get over the wall, you cannot even begin to work on the mountain.

I understand this. Many times I have experienced this. I'll just get going good with a person and will propose some new concept or question, and bam, just like that, they get real scared and run for the hills. Why is this?

Because of the concept that you are proposing.

Why? All that I do is ask some question. Their own reason is proposing the answer to them. I only ensure that they understand the possible consequences of their choices and decisions in the matter.

Exactly. And this is their great fear at the time.

WHAT?

The new concept.

Why should they be scared by their own reason proposing an answer to some new area of thought that they had not considered before?

They would not be scared if that were the case. And, that is not the case that we are discussing here.

Oh, what is the difference?

Whatever it is that struck a sensitive nerve in them must be something about which they already have dearly held beliefs! If it weren't, they would not be getting in such an uproar about it—they would simply listen to the voice of reason from within themselves, and casually accept what reason suggested to them. The explanation of why it is so difficult is because reason has just proposed some different answer than they have in their current belief system. And, the bigger the fit they throw against their own reason's proposal, the more dearly they must be clinging to their particular false belief being attacked by their reason.

I get it! I always did this with You when You proposed some reasonable idea that went against some belief that I held as sacred to me! I understand why it becomes such a problem for us sometimes—we cling tightly to our old beliefs and ideas.

Even when they are contrary to your own reason?

Exactly! And if this is true, it explains something else.

What's that?

Let me put it into an example. Let's say that I have a dearly held false belief that God cannot sin or lie or do anything wrong.

Okay, for the reader's understanding, let Me ask you a few questions about this example.

Go ahead and ask.

Why do you believe this?

I believe it because my human father believed it dearly and drilled it into me with many examples.

Yet don't you realize that your human father could have been mistaken in this belief?

No; I thought that he was perfect. Remember the parental worshipping when I was a child.

Okay. So you had no reason to doubt that this belief was indeed true. Yet, why is it such a dear and tightly-clung-to idea of yours?

Because when I was young I got into a serious argument about whether God was really good or evil. My opponents had many reasons why they thought that God must be evil. For one, there is so much evil in the world that God at least allows us to endure. And then there are the things like innocent children dying of terrible diseases. They made a very convincing argument about why God must be evil in nature, or that at least he is evil at times.

Okay. And what was the outcome?

Well, the crowd was basically convinced that my opponents had the more convincing case, so many people went away that evening believing that God was evil—at least sometimes.

So?

So, I knew that this was not true. I knew deep down in my heart that God was good. I knew that God would never do anything bad or evil. And this truth became very important to me.

Why?

Because I am secretly afraid that perhaps my opponents were correct. Perhaps God does do evil things at times.

Would you consciously know that you harbor this secret doubt?

No way! I would never allow a fear such as this to surface in my conscious mind. I am afraid to even discuss the subject about God's nature for fear that I may find out that God really is evil. I'm afraid that my own reason will propose the same arguments that I heard my opponents propose that night—and I have no reasonable refutations to these proposals. If it ever comes up, I may learn the truth that I am afraid of learning.

I thought that you were sincere in your wanting to learn all truth.

In this example, the person does not want to learn any truth that goes dead against what he thinks must be right, even though he cannot see the reason why he is right.

So, what does he do when the question about the nature of God comes up?

Runs for the hills.

How?

Lots of ways. I could start a general argument, switch subjects, cloud the issue with a lot of silly or irrelevant questions, evade the issue, and any number of other things. I have learned many neat ways to remain in this dearly held belief before—and I must not discuss it openly and reasonably!

Oh, why not?

Because if I did, I would run the sure risk of having my own reason agree with my opponent. Even then I would still be unwilling to give up my dearly held belief—I know that it must be true, even though I cannot defend it against my own reason.

What would be so wrong with maintaining your chosen beliefs even in the face of opposing reasons? You are a free human—you may choose to believe whatever you wish, right?

No. If my own reason clearly contradicts what I now believe, and I maintain that belief still, then I have become what I detest most in others.

And what is that?

A phony. A hypocrite. A liar. Someone that doesn't practice what he preaches.

So, if you have already subconsciously chosen to maintain this belief no matter what, and you know that reason may suggest to you that you are mistaken if the question comes up, how do you fix it so that you can live with this?

Simple. I play ostrich on the subject. If it comes up, I bury my head in one of my diversionary tactics.

And what are the results of this charade?

I get to maintain both my questioned belief and my outward integrity for being a serious seeker of all truth.

And how do you know that this is the case if someone starts sidestepping some issue?

Because if they are a serious seeker of the truth, they should wish strongly to seek out just such problems as may be lurking within the vault of their beliefs. If there is some belief in there that is indeed unreasonable and untrue, I will want to expose it and discuss it and learn the truth about it for myself—IF—if I am committed to the truth! And that's the key; this person is obviously not really committed to the truth—even if he says that he is. We many times say that we are what we think we should be like, rather than what we subconsciously know that we really are like.

And this is the answer to your question. Let us use an example: A person comes to you and says that he is a sincere seeker of truth. He says that he is truly committed to the truth and finding all of it. Then he starts sidestepping some issue, concept, or idea that you propose. You need to understand that at times a person will say or act in the manner they wish they were, not as the truly are. They do this in an attempt to cover up what they fear they are really like. It is all so silly, for the person accepted false beliefs about how he is, and these are causing him to act in an unnatural way. This act is an attempt to cover up the things in himself he believes are unacceptable to others. The truth is that it is really his false beliefs at the heart of both the mistaken ideas about himself, and the fear that others won't accept him as he truly is.

So the difference is one of commitment to the truth and finding all of it that pertains to our own life and purpose?

Certainly. For why would a person say, "I choose not to discuss or consider what you are proposing," if it were not that he fears that it may prove that he is wrong on that particular subject?

So is it that a person is afraid that he may be proven wrong about this particular idea?

Yes. I'm sure that you remember well your lengthy discussion with Phillips at work some time ago.

Yes, I remember.

What was the problem in having a calm discussion about the nature of God?

No matter what questions that I proposed to him so that his own reason should assist him to see the truth, he sidestepped, countered, and argued until he neither had to concede the point to his own reason or admit that his beliefs were incorrect.

And what were the results of his arguing?

I guess he came off thinking that I was attacking his faith or attempting to prove him wrong.

And here is another of the keys! Sometimes a person believes that you are attempting to prove him wrong—and they would much rather be right than to learn any truth to the contrary! They don't really want to know the truth, or they would willingly listen to new ideas proposed and accept whatever reason truly suggested on the matter. If they couldn't wholeheartedly agree with the point at the time, they would at least be very anxious to further discuss the issue in the hope of shedding new light of reason on the subject.

What did he do after the argument?

He treated me coldly and seemed to remain aloof around me.

What did you get as his message of his treating of you afterwards?

I got this: "Don't talk to me any further on the nature of God—my mind is already made up!"

And how do you feel towards Phillips now?

I feel deep love for him, yet I also feel a little sorry for him. He seems typical of many people that I have talked with who think that they are sincerely seeking God's truth and love, yet I fear for them. Thank You for Your mercy.

Yet I allowed you to discuss this with him just because I wished for him to learn the truth from his own mind's reason. If he refuses to listen to his own reason, then he has pretty well tied My hands from being able to teach him the truth on this subject.

How shall I know when it is truly Your guidance and when it is just my own blabbing?

Peniel, the way to know is to be. So long as you love Me and remain close in My favor, what does it matter whether you or I start your actions? Would you intentionally lead someone astray or harm another unjustly?

Never! I love You and I respect the YOU that is within others—even though they may be unwilling to show that You are in there. I would never willingly deceive another or intentionally misguide them.

Then you should not fear anything that you teach. Always remain loving and dedicated to the truth and to loving and serving Me through willingly receiving My gifts of love and service to you, and through your own willingness to teach others. Then you will be the most pleasing to Me. I have created you so that you could guide others seeking truth. I have destined that it be very easy for you to learn these truths and then convey them in a reasonable way to others. This is My will for you; do not deny Me the joy of seeing you do great things merely because you are afraid that you may cause others to be judged more severely because they have not accepted the truth that their reason posed to them as a result of you asking them some questions. I love you and I know that you love Me. Why do you even now remain obstinate in your refusal to casually accept My will for you?

I fear that my teachings may do a great deal of harm to others. If they have some questions asked by me and this causes them to have severe difficulty in their current relationship with You, I am not sure that I want that responsibility.

Then I will tell you how to safeguard others from yourself, if this is your wish.

It is, for now at least.

When a person comes to you and seeks to find truth with your guidance, first be sure to your own satisfaction that he or she is sincere. Then, before you get to those dangerous waters of discussions that you realize are the ones that cause most people the most difficulty, make sure that they understand that you may discuss some things that are very difficult for them to consider. Forewarn them, and if they choose not to venture into these waters for the time being, then respect

their wishes; wait until they advance more and then suggest again that you may discuss such matters. If they take the responsibility themselves for seeking all the truths that I wish for you to show them, then this will relieve you of that responsibility.

I am not concerned over being relieved of the responsibility, I simply do not want to do them more harm than good. Even if I do as You suggest here, many people are not fully aware of what is good for them. They may honestly believe in their conscious mind that they are ready for bigger things, yet it may be that they would not receive these difficult matters easily. I do not wish to harm them because I proposed some hard saying that they were not prepared for.

If you feel that this may be the case, then test their sincerity concerning the particular matter. Give them a trial run into the shallow waters of the matter. I had the same dilemma when I came. Just imagine what it was like for Me to be telling the people gathered in the crowd that I was the Bread Of Life that had come down from heaven. The vast majority in the crowds of people listening to Me at that time were simple folk without what you would consider a deep desire to know the truth. A great many of them were merely curious about Me. Yet I proposed to them such a difficult belief to accept that even many of My disciples who had given up everything to follow Me said, "This is a hard saying. Who can take it seriously?"

Yes, I remember. And then You asked them if that shook their faith in You. I guess that I am more afraid of being rejected by those who have come to learn from me than I am of doing them harm with my questions. You wouldn't have done this. You would have simply done what came naturally to You. You always said what You thought You should say, and asked the questions that You thought should be asked at that time. Sometimes I don't do as I feel compelled to because I am afraid that others may reject me due to the uncommonness and strangeness of what I may propose at that time. I could do as You do and always do what I felt compelled to do.

Then, DO SO! I have given you the self-confidence that you need to trust your own feelings. You know what your desires and wishes are, you know of My guidance in your everyday life, you know of My

love for you and yours for Me; trust your compulsions. You are very, very good and only your own little remaining fear is between you and the greatness that I wish for you. Overcome your fears and follow Me closely. I shall not let you harm others! I love you and them. You are as yet unaware of much of the good that is done through you. Know that I will use whoever allows Me to use them to do good for the world and My beloved children. I love you all.

Okay, I see. It is my fear of rejection that is more to blame for my unwillingness to teach as I naturally feel compelled to at any given time, rather than my wish to not harm others. I shall remember this. I thank You for revealing yet another of my inconsistencies to complete devotion to You and my assigned mission in life. Will I never totally overcome my own self?

Perhaps not. Yet the important thing is your motives and wishes. You wish that you were totally devoted to Me and doing My will—and this is the more important of the two.

I love You, sweet Father. Thank You for helping me to understand why we sometimes have great difficulty accepting our own reason. I shall remember this the next time someone sidesteps the issues. I shall respect their wish to remain in the dark on it unless I feel compelled otherwise.

Is there anything else that would be proper to put here in this discussion on our greatest barrier to truth?

Yes. Let's talk about a related subject.

Okay, what?

Remember that we talked about the poem "St. Peter at the Gate"?

Yes.

Let's talk about this false righteousness that is demonstrated in that poem. Many people have this feeling of righteousness and supremacy because they think that they have the truth and others are still deceived. Of course, few people who will fit into this category will admit that this might be the case for them. They will say, "Oh, yes. I have known many people who are just as you have described them. Such hypocrites!" And then they will go on their way, just as hypocritical

as before. This is such a pitiful state of affairs because a person who is unwilling to consider that they may be incorrect, is doomed to their beliefs.

Was this the reason that You had such problems with the religious leaders when You came?

(Chuckles.) No! I didn't have a problem with them—they had a big problem with Me!

Why were You such a big problem to them?

Many different reasons. One big one was that I threatened them and what they stood for. They were very hypocritical and My being who I am shed great light on their hypocrisy. It was very difficult for them to deal with Me, since that they were supposed to be good and holy men. Oh, they had convinced themselves that they were very righteous; after all, they were the religious leaders of God's chosen people—surely God was on their side. They thought that if I was what some were proposing I was, I would surely come to them and submit to their guidance. Fools! They saw Me doing things that they believed were contrary to God's law—by their interpretation. And they believed that they were the only ones who should interpret what the law meant. They had gone too far in their twisting of My laws given to their ancestors. They were using My laws to heap up large loads for others to bear the burden, while they sat in places of honor. Most of them had become very corrupt and were full of dead men's bones on the inside.

Why else were You such a problem to most of them?

Because I shone the light of reason on the error of their teachings. When I taught, I taught with the authority of reason. When the religious leaders taught, they quoted others rather than proposing valid reasons why what they were teaching was true. Reasonableness and simplicity are the true hallmarks of teaching authority. If what you teach is primarily simple and very reasonable, who could counter it and not seem foolish?

Imagine this scene: A religious leader attacks Me outright in front of many people in the hope of discrediting Me. He wants to show that I disobeyed God's laws. His intention is to make Me appear to be a lawbreaker and a bad person in the eyes of the crowd gathered around Me. He attacks Me by saying, "You do what scripture says not to do.

You perform miracles on the Sabbath.” By his interpretation of what was allowed on the Sabbath, I was clearly in the wrong. However, I merely showed the unreasonableness of his interpretation of the meaning of scripture. I said to the crowd very casually and with a smile, “Who among you would not go and get one of your farm animals out if it fell into a ditch on the Sabbath”?

Well, the crowd understood the reasonableness of what I was saying. They also understood that God is not a dictator. Perhaps the limits that the religious leaders had determined about this were unreasonable. They knew clearly that the religious leaders of that day had imposed a great deal of hardship on them through their interpretations of the scriptures, and the crowd viewed Me as a refreshing change from the heavy burden that their leaders had placed upon them. Who wouldn't desire more freedom than less?

None. I see why they had such difficulty with You. Your reasonableness is what gave them some of their problems with You.

Yes. And many of their own people were wishing that I would claim greater authority. I didn't quite fit into their idea of a Messiah. Once again, false beliefs caused the difficulty.

It seems to always be at the root of man's difficulty between You and us.

It is man's greatest barrier. And, coupled with the problem of a person insisting that he is RIGHT, it really creates difficulties.

I have much enjoyed your company this evening. I love you more than you can imagine. Continue to enjoy the wonderful life that I have given you, Peniel. There is so much more destined for you.

I shall, sweet Dad.