

Three Levels Of Truth: How These Impact Marriage and Divorce Decisions

By Stephen Gola

What Are Truths, Laws — Absolutes?

Something that works consistently constant on its own or is established to be consistently constant, is a law or truth — an absolute. There are three levels of truth. They are: Canon (Scriptural) Truth, Cultural Truth and Conscience Truth.

These levels of truth influence our lives everyday. More importantly, they influence our daily decision-making process. Therefore, having and understanding of their differences can greatly enhance our quality of life; on the other hand, not having an understanding of these levels of truth can cause us to suffer needlessly. Sorry to say, many are suffering needlessly.

The statement many have made, “What is truth to you is not truth to me,” is an incomplete and partially true statement in itself. Because there are three levels of truth, many do not understand that this concept or belief only applies to “conscience truth” only. The two levels of truth remaining are: Canon (Scriptural) truth and cultural truth.

A man spoke-up and said, “There are NO absolutes.” Another man retorted, “Are you absolutely sure?” The first man responded back confidently, “Absolutely!” This statement, “there are no absolutes” is a contradiction within itself. “No absolutes” is an absolute statement itself. Maybe what is really meant is that there is only ONE absolute: the truth that there are no absolutes???

Let’s look at a few basic absolutes that greatly impact our lives every day. The Law of Gravity is an absolute. You can count on that law working every-time — always, unless it is superseded by a higher law — the Law of Aerodynamics. All of science, physics and great relationships operate upon absolute truths. Something that works consistently constant on its own or is established to be consistently constant, is a law — an absolute. Could you imagine if a physics formula worked one day but not the next? It’s unthinkable!

Let’s imagine one law was not consistently constant. You’re in an airplane flying at 35,000 feet and the Law of Lift is having a bad day. The Law of Lift feeling discouraged says to the Law of Gravity, “Gravity, I’m tired of taking the weight off of your shoulders. I’m quitting!” All of a sudden the airplane you are in starts falling like a rock because even gliding is governed by the Law of Lift. As you are falling at hundreds of miles per hour for about fifteen seconds and screaming at the top of your lungs, the Law of Gravity convinces the Law of Lift that many are depending upon him to be consistent. At that very moment the pilot has his stick pulled all the way back for max climb. Instantly, instead of hanging-on for dear life, you are thrown down with a powerful force. You feel a bit of recovery and someone shouts, “Praise God” though it is short lived. Just as fast as the Law of Lift was encouraged by the Law of Gravity, Lift feels discouraged again. Without warning, Lift quits doing his job. Immediately, the plane you’re in starts falling again and the earth below is getting closer. Panic sets in and everyone is yelling. However, Gravity is not taking this sitting down. He grabs Lift by the shoulders, shakes him and says, “Multitudes are counting on you to be consistently constant. Their very lives are at stake!” With that, Lift repents, shakes off the discouragement and gains strength in his heart. Lift then professes loudly, “I am a Law, I am constant, and therefore people can depend on me.” With that, the plane again lurches upward and finally stabilizes.

The constant consistency of all absolutes, both laws and truths, are what give us peace, prosperity and happiness in life and in our relationships. Many people are in bondage and are desperately trying to get free but are lost amongst the lies taught as truths. Unbeknown to them, these embraced lies that are clothed in “truths clothing” are the very chains that bind them — so they seek elsewhere to find the answer to get free. When there are no absolute truths in a person’s life, they wander aimlessly

through life from one tragedy to another. We all want to know the truth — in our case, for our relationships. Simply put, without absolutes in a relationship, a relationship will not work. Relationships are built on truth. We will discover how knowing or not knowing these truths affect our lives and to replace the lies we don't even know we have with Truth, thus stabilizing our lives, restoring joy, peace and happiness.

Canon (Scriptural) Truth

Truth is not just an ideal or law, Truth is a Person — Jesus said, *“I am the... Truth”* (John 14:6). Truth speaks of Himself. Jesus is God — His Word is Truth (see John 17:17).

The first level of truth is Canon or Scriptural truth. A person's word is only as good, as stable and as trustworthy as the person themselves. You cannot separate who a person is from their words. They are one and the same.

For *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (teaching), for reproof (to express strong disapproval — censor), for correction in righteousness (doing right acts), that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”* 2Timothy 3:16-17). Because “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” God claims full responsibility for His own Words, since it is impossible for God to lie, it gives us the assurance what He says is absolute truth. Whether or not we that may understand that truth is a different matter — it is still truth. God is consistently constant: that is one of the things that make God, God.

An angel from Heaven visited Daniel — that same Daniel who was thrown into the lion's den by King Nebuchadnezzar, and said to Daniel, *“I will tell what is noted in the SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH”* (Daniel 10:21). Truth liberates the heart. It frees a person to make the right decisions. At times, speaking the truth makes one feel vulnerable, however, in reality, it liberates you.

As we grasp the understanding of how important truth and absolutes are to our lives and then start to govern our lives by them, our lives will immediately start to become stable; peace, joy and blessings will be the norm rather than turmoil, depression and hardship. God wants our minds and hearts to be unshackled from all bondages of guilt, shame and hurt from the past. Knowing the truth is what sets you free!

Cultural Truth

“Cultural truth” is just that: what the culture has established as truth for them. God has granted the cultures of the world great liberty to be distinct by giving them their own rights to adopt customs, laws and ways which are not contrary to His Word. There are geographical national cultures such as the customs and laws of India verses the customs and laws of England. There are localized cultures — multiple communities with different practices and customs within a specific city, town or village. Or, it could be a culture within a culture.

Because of technological advances in media, communications and gadgetry, cultural changes or shifts are happening at an unprecedented rate. Within as little as seven years a new culture is formed. Because of this, a family can have as many as three to six cultures within the same household depending on the number of children they have and how far apart everyone's age difference is. You can readily see the problems this can create within a family simply by the parents not knowing how to work with the different cultures that have formed within their own children.

Understanding cultural truth is not just knowing the differences of laws and customs between one nation and another, or even knowing the different practices of one ethnic group verses another within the same city, but the different cultures within your own household. Different values — what is accepted or is not accepted to each individual may vary (and most of the time does) because of what

has been taught or what has not been taught — whether by experience or formal learning. A person can do a specific thing in one culture and be totally accepted as the norm. However, by doing that very same thing in a different culture one can be tried and found guilty for a serious violation and be even punishable by death. What is embraced as truth does not necessarily mean that it is the truth.

Note: There is a difference between a “lie” and a “non-truth”. A “lie” is when a truth is known to be the truth but is intentionally covered up and revealed as something other than what it is. A “non-truth” is when a lie is believed and accepted as being the truth. For instance, a person can read an untrue article, be told something as a matter of fact, or overhear someone speaking a lie without knowing it and accepting it as the truth. Therefore this lie becomes a “non-truth *to them* — a lie accepted as the truth. Basically, it is being deceived into believing a lie as being the truth.

Therefore, almost all cultural practices and beliefs are formed from a combination of both truths and non-truths. The specific practices and beliefs of a specific culture will be known by these combinations of truths and non-truths that they have embraced as their “culture.” This is why it is essential to be established in truth and absolutes: not only being known by your fruits, but being the fruit itself — your life being fruitful.

Conscience Truth

“Conscience truth” is not only the third level of truth, but it is the level of truth that has to do with self — self-governing. It is influenced (programmed) by both Canon (Scriptural) truth and cultural truth. Conscience truth is the reflection of what you have or have not embraced as truth. It is the conviction of what is right or wrong TO YOU.

When a person is conceived in the womb and their spirit and conscience is formed, there is a basic set of truths that are instilled by God within that person’s conscience. These basic truths within the conscience can either be dulled or sharpened. A person’s conscience (which is part of the spirit of a person) can actually lie to them. In other words, because a person’s conscience is “programmable” the conscience can be programmed with either truth or non-truths. This “received” information comes through sources such as the culture (or cultures) they are apart of, what they give themselves to in the form of information exchange: conversations, music, reading, visual input from movies and television and their own thought-life. All this influences the conscience. If the input is corrupted, the output is corrupted. There is a saying in the computer industry when you program a computer: garbage in, garbage out. This is true for our conscience as well.

If you want your conscience to only convict you of absolute truth, you must only feed it with absolute truth. If a person does not feed their conscience only with the truth, their emotions will be very unstable because their conscience will be convicting them of a “truth” and “non-truths” as all being truth all at the same time. With these conflicting messages driving the emotions one can see how someone can be very emotionally unstable in specific situations. The process is a *choosing process* in which to accept or reject something as the truth. The decision process of “accepting” or “rejecting” truth is happening every moment of every day of our lives. The result of keeping or rejecting what is perceived as truth will be the very program that will tell us whether or not our actions are right or wrong.

Having a Corrupted (Sin) Conscience

Having a corrupted conscience — one that has been programmed not by truths but by “what one accepts as truth” is like a person taking all the red lenses out of all the traffic lights and exchanging them for a green lenses. Even though this new confidence of safety gives them more perceived “rights,” they have actually put themselves and others in dangerous situations, and possibility even situations of death. Purposely programming oneself with “what is truth to me” is like directly driving into danger with a confidence of safety all in the guise of doing what is right in my own eyes. The specific knowledge we acquire and possess (or do not possess) is what programs our conscience

directing it to convict (tell us) whether a situation is right or wrong, whether we are sinning or doing right. When a person chooses what they want to accept as truth instead of what actually is truth it is like purposely programming a computer with erroneous information and then expecting the outcome to be true and exact. This is self deception. On the other hand, to reprogram your conscience to only convict (to tell) you the truth in every situation is a matter of exchanging the non-truths and lies with the knowledge of the truth. Otherwise, your conscience will assure you that all is well — that you have made the right choice or that you are not sinning when in fact you have made one of the worst choices and will affect you negatively all your life and also your generations to come.

The Bible speaks of having a “weak” conscience. A “weak” conscience is having accepted a non-truth as being the truth — having incorrect knowledge about a specific situation and believing it to be the truth. A prime example is in 1Corinthians 8:1-7. *“Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that WE ALL HAVE KNOWLEDGE. Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. However, THERE IS NOT IN EVERYONE THAT KNOWLEDGE; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol: and THEIR CONSCIENCE, BEING WEAK, IS DEFILED.”*

A weak conscience is a conscience without the truth. This is why God said, *“My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge (the knowledge of the truth). Because you have REJECTED KNOWLEDGE (KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH) I also will reject you...because you have forgotten the law (absolutes and truths) of your God, I also will forget your children”* (Hosea 4:6). This is why Jesus emphasized that when you accept His Word (the Scriptures) as truth and apply them to your life then *“you shall KNOW the truth, and the TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE”* (John 8:32). It is in knowing the truth for yourself that makes you free.

Examples of Having a Corrupted (Sin) Conscience

To point out a few specifics of a corrupt conscience let me give you two examples from the people that we have counseled:

A lady and the husband she was divorced from was counseled by the lady’s pastor that it was alright for her divorced husband to come back home to live with her because in “God’s eyes” they were still married.

Because the lady did not have the knowledge of the truth in her heart, she was in terrible confusion not knowing who to believe: her pastor (a man of truth) or her own conscience, so her heart condemned her. The husband probably liked it because of sex. The pastor’s heart was not convicting him of sin because he believed a non-truth as the truth. The lady suffered the consequences because her conscience did not have the truth in it in order to rightly divide between the “absolute truth” and the “believed truth.”

Another lady was separated from her husband for over two years and has since filed for divorce. She met a nice man in church who was also going through a divorce. After a while they started dating. The leadership of the church told them to stop dating while going through the divorce process. The leadership also expressed that they did not know whether it was alright for them to even get married since they were divorced, so the two of them left the church.

The dating couple had no conviction of sin because they had knowledge of the truth. They know that the leadership of their church was making a wrong decision. The man and woman would have consented to not date for conscience sake of the rest of the congregation until their divorces went through, however, because the leadership did not know if they would even accept them to be married, they left the church. The consciences of those in leadership were confused and thereby they would not allow them to marry: They had mixed feelings — mixed truth with non-truths. They could not recognize which “truth” was correct in order to give the divorcees the true answer.

Even if your conscience is “clean” it could still be wrong. It is having the ABSOLUTE TRUTH that makes a conscience truly clean and truly right.

Replacing Non-Truths and Lies with Truth in the Conscience

When a person chooses to reprogram their conscience with absolute truth they will be journeying through three specific stages. They are: deception, confusion and reality or truth. We continually go through these three stages during our lives until our belief system is built on a firm foundation of truth. When our conscience is built on Truth and our emotions and attitude are in perfect harmony — a life of truth, peace, joy, being free from fear and a stable life will follow.

Many in church leadership believe, though ignorantly, when trying to get someone to “believe the truth” that that person can just rip-out or discard a certain belief. However, this is just not the case. A person’s conscience will not allow them to simply through-out or discard a belief that is different than what is already in place within their conscience. I call this part within the conscience a “truth grid.” Therefore the person must go through a decision-making process which is to identify that which is the truth and that which is a lie. Having a deep desire to know the truth and seeking that truth by learning and asking the Spirit of Truth to lead you into all truth are all vital parts of arriving at the absolute truth. Once a person journeys through the three phases of deception, confusion and reality, THEN the information is replaced: accepted by the conscience as truth and the other piece of information is discarded as a lie.

Anything that passes through this “truth grid” must conform to what is already there. However, many times because much of what is not truth has been installed long before we knew the difference, we get conflicting convictions from our conscience. It is trying to install a supposed “truth” within an area where both truth and non-truths abide.

Before we step through and identify the stages in which a person passes through to reprogram their conscience, there is an important understanding regarding “confusion” that I want you to grasp. That is: confusion is a path — a means to reality (truth). Confusion is good ONLY when leaving deception and entering into reality (truth). When the Scripture says, “...*God is not the author of confusion...*” (1 Corinthians 14:33), it is saying that God does not give BOTH truth AND a lie to decide from. He is TRUTH!

The three stages in coming to truth are:

Deception:

You think you understand, and believe you know the truth, when in fact you have embraced a non-truth as being the truth itself. Remember, THE POWER OF DECEPTION IS THAT YOU DON'T KNOW YOU'RE DECEIVED. Remember, a non-truth is a lie masquerading as the truth.

Confusion:

You have opened your heart to receive new understanding, which now conflicts with what you believed to be true. You're no longer sure. The “previously held” belief or knowledge may not be true in light of the new belief. TWO OPPOSING THOUGHTS APPEARING TO BE TRUE IS CONFUSION.

Reality (Truth):

We understand which is truly REAL and which is the counterfeit or false, then we make the decision to embrace the truth; we leave confusion and enter into reality (truth). TRUTH IS ALWAYS ABSOLUTE. IT DOES NOT CHANGE IN THE PRESENCE OF “NEW” TRUTH. At this point because we have identified the difference between what we thought to be true and what actually is the truth, we knowingly discard the non-truth as being a lie and accept the truth in its place.

If someone is “ignorant” instead of deceived, that is, they hold no knowledge or belief one way or another, they go from “ignorance” to “reality” without passing through any confusion. This is because the decision to

choose between a non-truth and truth does not have to be made. A non-truth and truth are not always present at the same time to choose from.

The opposite often happens to people concerning when they get mad at God. Instead of progressing from deception or being ignorant to truth, they digressed by exchanging the truth that they know for a lie, and go back into deception — darkness. *“Because they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. WHO EXCHANGED THE TRUTH OF GOD FOR A LIE ...they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, [so] God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting...”* (Romans 1:21,25,28). We must retain the truth of God in our hearts, which is the ONLY truth; otherwise we are dead while we live.

The Culture of the Kingdom of God

The “culture” of the Kingdom of God supersedes ALL cultures upon the earth. God calls every one of us to abandon specific “truths” — parts or areas of a culture that conflict with the culture of God. The culture of God is a culture of Truth. Living in the culture of God is living-out Truth through His Spirit, His Word and by His voice. It is fellowship with Truth Himself — connected to Heaven. Darkness and Light cannot co-exist within the same space. We must abandon one and take up the other. Or, we must hold fast to one and reject the other. The choice we make or do not make will leave us in darkness or Light. There is no other place to dwell!

Everything that God tells us NEVER to do is either evil, sin or done in darkness. The culmination of all these is what the devil is: Always sinning, full of the deepest evil, and lives his life out damned in continual spiritual darkness. He and all his cohorts are damned from the darkness and damned from the Light — double damned. God is ALWAYS calling us out of darkness to dwell in the Light with Him.

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