

# Three Difficulties

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Truth is a precious commodity. It is unfathomable how much of the world runs on lies. In ancient times, many Greco-Roman cities each had their own gods and temples. The economies focused around the activities at those temples. People's lives were practically subservient to the idolatry-based economies, and they were all based on lies. The ancient prophet bemoaned the ignorance of the man who made an idol of wood and was too misled to say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Isaiah 44:20). When such a lie was challenged with the truth, there might be an uproar, such as the one Paul witnessed in Ephesus. The apostle Paul tried to preach about the unseen God, but the silversmiths of the region protested that they would not be able to make money off of an unseen God (Acts 19:21-41). Lies were responsible for running the world and for making policy. Modern (or postmodern) man has not advanced much further. From preschools to universities, evolution is the crux of academia, rakes in millions in media coverage and is the basis for many business and political decisions. Truth is absent in the sphere of those who have professed themselves to be wise (Romans 1:22). Regarding truth, it seems that contemporary man is faced with three difficulties: Finding it, standing for it and standing for it in love.

**Finding truth** might not be as easy as it sounds. America used to be a nation flooded both with Bibles and with people who had at least some sense of respect for it. They may not have been New Testament Christians, but there was a social more, if you will, of the Bible being the Word of God. Today, we live in quite the contrasting world. The dogma of the day is that nobody is right in anything they say. There are no moral absolutes. The only thing wrong is saying that some practice might be wrong. Each person can choose his own way, and each way is just as right as someone else's way. The doctrine is referred to as postmodernism on a philosophical level, but it finds its way into every arena of life. Its tenets flood the talk shows as every sort of lifestyle is heralded as good. The only evil, in this way of thinking, is saying that there is actually an evil. Many adherents of this system seem to be rather unwitting adherents. They've just been taught for so long that everybody is right in whatever they want to believe that they've never really thought through such consequences. The Bible is maligned, of course, because it **does** set up a standard of right and wrong that is absolute! It hardly ever occurs to people that there might be such a thing as truth. It is the farthest thing from their minds. Yet, when some might have an inkling that there might be such a thing as truth, they find themselves against overwhelming odds to be able to find it! Finding truth in a sea of doubt, uncertainty and outright lies can be difficult, indeed. It can be done, though, as Jesus promised (John 8:31-32; Proverbs 23:23).

Next, **standing for the truth** can be very difficult. Once one becomes a New Testament Christian, he is under obligation to be able to stand for those things that are true and then to expose falsehoods (1 Peter 3:15; Ephesians 5:11). Preachers are to preach the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) and be ready when people like it and when they don't (2 Timothy 4:2-5). This kind of stand is increasingly difficult. George Orwell is credited with the quote, "The further a society drifts from the truth the more it will hate those who speak it" ([http:// www.goodreads.com/quotes/673583-the-further-a-society-drifts-from-truth-the-more-it](http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/673583-the-further-a-society-drifts-from-truth-the-more-it)). Indeed, the apostle Paul questioned belligerent Galatians, "Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16). Truth makes enemies. The Truth (John 14:6) was crucified. Why should anyone expect that standing for the truth would be easy?

A further difficulty is **standing for the truth in love**. Once one finds truth and becomes convinced of it, it is quite disturbing to see so many people practicing error. There will even be those claiming Christ who stubbornly hold to false beliefs or act in ungodly manners. With such folks, it is hard for the defender of truth to be patient, but he must. Quarreling is not becoming of the Christian (2 Timothy 2:24-26). Meekness and gentleness in correcting error is becoming of the child of God (Galatians 6:1-2). The truth simply must be spoken in love (Ephesians 4:15). Of course, there may be a time for a stern warning (Jude 22-23); Jesus quite pointedly rebuked some hypocritical leaders (Matthew 23). Anger can be righteous (Mark 3:5), but love must be ever present. Love may not be the ooey-goey, feel-good idea the world thinks it is, but love must be the attitude in all defense of the truth.