



CLEAR VISION

A Monthly Publication of the Center for
CHRISTIAN LIFE ENRICHMENT



Soul Food: Truth Performed Transforms

By Rich Blue

Truth performed transforms. It is not the hearing of truth which transforms us but the doing of it. Most of us would agree, we know much more than we do. Hearing is the easy part—it’s the application that’s the killer! James writes, “For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.”¹

We are inundated 24 hours a day with opportunities to hear scripture taught on radio, television and the internet and are easily tempted to lose sight of the fact that it is not what we know but what we do with what we know that matters. The Apostle Paul warned “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up”² and our determination to be doers of the

Word needs to be a central barometer on our spiritual dashboard to help us avoid the danger of being puffed up with pride.

God is all about truth and Jesus even referred to himself as “the way and the truth and the life.”³ Sometimes we get overly concerned about the source of truth, expecting it to come solely from the Scriptures, our Pastor or another trusted Christian. God seems

more concerned with the spread of truth and is known for using some of the most unexpected channels to get his point

across.

The story of Daniel is a powerful example of how God uses all kinds of sources to teach and train

his people. Daniel was a promising and privileged young man living in Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon laid siege to the city and took him and other Jews captive, deporting them to Babylon. Daniel was selected as one of the best and the brightest of the elite captives and was enrolled in an intensive three year training program intended to teach him the language and literature of the Babylonians. How upsetting would that have been if you were Daniel’s parents!

There were some tense moments for Daniel where his faith was challenged and he was able to remain true to his spiritual convictions. He learned to stand firm, remaining true to his principles when necessary and flexible with the rest. He grew in his faith while living in what would have been considered to be enemy territory.

Although his religion was

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...Our determination to be doers of the Word needs to be a central barometer on our spiritual dashboard to help us avoid the danger of being puffed up with pride.



Soul Food (continued):

Truth Performed Transforms



different, Daniel was able to bridge the gap and master the truth taught by the Babylonians. In fact, it would appear it was God’s intention to use the faculty at the University of Babylon to train Daniel and it is no surprise he graduated Summa Cum Laude. After his training, he was chosen by the king to enter into his service. He rose in power and influence using his gift to interpret dreams to serve the king. After enduring much adversity, he would become one of the three commissioners ruling over all of Babylon.

What stands out to me is God is the source of all truth. The knowledge God wanted Daniel to learn was not limited to the Hebrew Scriptures. Truth is truth and what God is most concerned about is not where it comes from but whether

It is much more frightening to leave our spiritual compounds and actually be in relationship with those outside.

we put it into practice. Only the truth performed transforms! Jesus bypassed a lot of theological and academic debate when he reduced all of the teachings of Scripture

down to relationships—loving God and loving our neighbor.

Let us consider God the source of all truth and be open to all the different ways He may teach us—whether

it be nature, science, literature, or other faiths. Most of all I would encourage us to consider one another, every person you come in contact with, as a channel for God’s truth. Look at others and ask yourself what God may want to teach you through them.

As Christians, we need to not let our fear cause us to isolate from the world. It is much more frightening to leave our spiritual compounds and actually be in relationship with those outside. We

need to learn how to live like Jesus did, being in the world but not of it. Let us look for wisdom from everyone we come in contact with knowing they are created in the image of God and remembering He often uses the most unexpected agents to get our attention.

It is not what we know but what we do with what we know that counts. Jesus exhorted us to multiply the gifts and talents with which we have been entrusted. To do so we must remember, “Truth performed transforms!” Jesus challenged us saying, “And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.”⁴ Let’s make the most of what we know.

¹James 1: 23-24 (NIV)

²1 Corinthians 8:1 (NIV)

³John 14:6 (NIV)

⁴Luke 12:48 (NASB)

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Truth in My Life

By Sue Blue

I struggle with the truth. On a surface level I believe that truth is important and certainly knowing God's truth is worth studying and searching out, but on a personal level, I act and believe that the truth is "not nice." In my attempt to live a life that is pleasing to God and to other people I have withheld the truth or submerged it in deference to appearing acceptable and nice. Sometimes when I am confronted by someone wanting to know what the truth is about me or my experience I find myself starting to spin. In that moment, I am looking for an answer that is palatable vs. what the truth is for me. I not only hide the truth from others, I hide truth from myself be-

cause I have judgments about myself.

I have been sharing more of myself with others and finding that as I do I am actually connecting on a deeper level and finding more support than I ever imagined. Admitting that I am angry or that I hate are not moral failings; instead they are a legitimate part of me. It does not come as shock to God that I am dark and internally flawed. He knows it already. My attempt to hide it from Him, from others and from myself actually keeps me in the dark. The more I tell the truth about myself the more uncomfortable I become and the more I grieve. It is a good grief; my sadness drives me to depend more on God. It causes me to love

Him more for choosing to be in relationship with me. The amazing thing I am learning is that He does not see me as a disappointment or a burden but as a joy and a delight.

The primary way I have learned to tell the truth is by being in relationship with other people who are on the same journey of self discovery and searching for truth. Not all of these people share a belief in Christ and yet as Rich has said in his article. Truth is truth. It does not matter who I encounter, if I am able to be honest with them and they with me I learn. God's truths are universal and timeless and often come to us in the most unexpected ways.

Christian Life Enrichment

An Emotionally Focused Marriage

Friday, February 13th
at 6:30pm to
Sunday, Feb. 15th

Join us for an exciting and meaningful weekend where we will be looking at our marriages through the unique lens of Attachment Theory, examining how our earliest experiences interacting with our parents have influenced our ability to bond meaningfully with our spouses.

At this retreat, we will:

- * *Identify our attachment styles.*
- * *Learn how to more effectively overcome our blocks.*
- * *Create more emotionally secure and satisfying partnerships.*
- * *Examine our cycles of conflict and learn new ways to short-circuit the time we are punishing each other.*

We will also build on the concept of maintaining a relational "dashboard" through which we can monitor the health and safety of our marriages. We will practice creating gauges and warning lights to monitor the vital systems in our partnerships.



DeKoven Retreat
Center,
Racine, Wisconsin



Christian Life Enrichment Staff Directory



**Richard Blue, M.A., LCPC,
NCC**
Clinical Director
rich.blue@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 14



Gabriela Caballero Cantú, M.A., LPC
gabriela.cantu@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 15



Lyndi Wood, M.A., Therapy Intern
lyndi.wood@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 12



**Nancy Rollins, M.S., LCPC,
NCC**
nancy.rollins@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 13



Andrew Mercer, Therapy Intern
andrew.mercer@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 17

This newsletter is intended to offer general information only and recognizes that individual issues may differ from these broad guidelines. Personal issues should be addressed within a therapeutic context with a professional familiar with the details of the problems.

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CHRISTIAN LIFE ENRICHMENT

666 Dundee Rd. Ste 503
Northbrook, IL 60062
Phone: (847) 272-3684
www.cle.us.com

CLEAR VISION

Save The Date

Spring Retreat

May 15th-17th, 2009