



# CLEAR VISION

A Monthly Publication of the Center for  
CHRISTIAN LIFE ENRICHMENT



## SOUL FOOD: Transformational Truth

By Rich Blue

Every day we solve hundreds of problems. Some are much easier to resolve than others because we are able to clearly identify the problem. We get stuck when we are unable to see the truth of our predicament. Jesus recognized the religious leaders of his day were not accurately assessing the health of their relationships with God. He turned their world upside down when he preached the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>1</sup> Repeatedly Jesus contrasted what they thought was true with what he knew was true in their hearts. Jesus introduced each wave of his spiritual tsunami with the phrase, “You have heard it said . . . but I tell you.”

Like with the tables in the temple, Jesus was intentionally overturning their comfortable understanding of spiritual maturity. *“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*<sup>2</sup> They mistak-

enly believed they were living lives pleasing to God because their hands were clean—Jesus confronted them with the truth that God not only wanted clean hands but pure hearts as well.

The other day I was having a conversation with some friends of mine who are pastors. We were having a stimulating theological discussion and suddenly the mood changed and there was tension in the air. Passions began to build, voices got louder and things suddenly became very personal. What began as a thought provoking theological dialogue was quickly becoming a very heated debate. One of the guys took offense at what was being said and adopted the role of being the defender of Biblical truth while the other person started to feel scared and angry as though what they thought was bad or wrong and that they were being corrected.

Who was right? What was true? In this case it was clear to me that

there was a very legitimate theological discussion happening on the surface at the content level. While at the same time, there was another argument happening below the water line at an emotional and inter-personal level. It was as if two mature adults were discussing the merits of a particular theological position while at the same time two children were having a very passionate and heated scuffle to see who was right and who would end up on top.

As Christians, we are trained to think of truth propositionally, from the perspective of our heads and inadvertently undervalue the truth of our hearts. We are quick to monitor and defend doctrinal truth, yet, we are less vigilant about examining what I call “personal” truth—the truth about how we feeling in our hearts. Jesus repeatedly reminded people of the importance of not only obeying the law but also living their lives from a heart of love.

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What I noticed in my interaction with my pastoral buddies was our discomfort with conflict and our tendency to ignore what was happening interpersonally-heart to heart. It was as if we could just ignore the interpersonal discord then magically we might be able to override our feelings and simply be dispassionate in our doctrinal debate. Instead, I realized if we would each tell the truth about how we were feeling in the moment and what was going on at a heart level then we could be able to have a very thoughtful and respectful discussion. Exposing and expressing the truth about what was happening between us interpersonally, heart to heart, was foundational to experiencing any thoughtful and respectful discussion of our theological

We cannot become who we want to be without knowing the truth of our hearts.

differences.

Jesus used our eyes as a metaphor for the importance of inner mindfulness—"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness."<sup>3</sup> If we do not learn to monitor the condition of our hearts, then our eyes will not be

clear and focused and we will not know whether we are walking in the darkness or in the light. The Pharisees made the mistake of thinking that they could ignore their hearts and focus instead on their heads and hands. Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."<sup>4</sup> To love with all our heart we must learn to be very sensitive and responsive to

our feelings.

Let us strive to be men and woman who radiate the love of God to everyone around us. Let us tend to our heads as well as our hearts and have everything we do express the love and grace of God.

*Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence. (1 John 3:18,19)*

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Chapters 5-7

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 5:27

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 6:22,23

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 27:37

CLE's Spring Retreat 2008

# The Transforming Power of Truth

*"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:33)*





## Communication: Process vs. Content

*By Rich Blue*

One of the strategies I have found helpful in identifying my heart-truth is to differentiate between “content” and “process” based communication. Content based communication is that which is made up of knowledge, ideas, concepts, facts, beliefs, doctrines—all that which I associate with thoughts in my head. Process based communication is based on what I am feeling in the moment—the truth of my heart as expressed through my feelings. I think of content as the thoughts we are communicating head to head and process as the feelings we are expressing heart to heart. Both are essential; however, many of us are much more comfortable expressing our thoughts at the expense of our feelings.

Process communication is simply the truth about what I am feeling in the moment. It is hard to argue with someone who says, “I am feel-

ing hurt and angry.” The person is not blaming, attacking or building a case. They are simply expressing what they are feeling in the here and now. When people can clearly and responsibly express what they are feeling in the moment this allows each person to relax and accept where the other person is coming from without feeling defensive or responsible.

Healthy and responsible communication happens when we first examine and express the feelings in our heart. I think of this process communication as the denominator in a division problem. Fill in the denominator first by accurately expressing the truth of what you are feeling in your heart. Then, fill in the numerator, stating clearly what you are thinking. Heart first, head second!

Earlier today I was stuck and not making any progress on an article I was writing. I was getting increas-

ingly upset and starting to panic. Immediately I tried to think about what I was doing wrong and strategizing about what techniques I could use to get myself moving again. When my mental strategies failed, I began to feel like I was not gifted enough to be a writer and the waves of despair started rolling in.

At that point I remembered, “Process first!” So, I began expressing how I was feeling out loud in the moment right there in my family room. As I became conscious of my feelings and started expressing them, I sensed a shift in my focus and concentration. Within minutes, my mind was clear, my momentum was moving in a positive direction and my writing was flowing.

Practice first being present to your feelings, expressing them in the moment and then looking to your mind for solutions.

We will be exploring the power of truth and learning how knowing the truth sets us free to become our most whole and complete selves. Become more proficient at knowing what you are feeling in the moment and being more present with yourself and others. Learn how to use the “funnel of truth” to identify your core issues and challenge the mistaken beliefs limiting your joy and aliveness. Experience more intimacy with others as you explore the deepest truths of your heart.

Join us for this amazing adventure in community!

**When?** Friday, May 16th at 6:30pm through Sunday May 18th at 1:00pm

**Where?** The DeKoven Retreat Center, Racine, Wisconsin

**Registration fee:** \$675 (\$575 if a non-refundable deposit of \$275 is paid by April 18)

*For more information, call CLE at (847)272-3684.*



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*Living Life Abundantly*

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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