

TARGETS

Where the Body of Christ is Under Attack and How To Fight back



Truth ~ THE SHIFTING SAND OUR WORLD IS SET UPON

- THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF TRUTH

• The Written the Word of God

- For **the word of God is alive and powerful**. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. (Heb. 4:12 NLT-SE)
- Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who **correctly explains the word of truth**. (2 Tim. 2:15 NLT-SE)

• The Revealed Word of God

- I will send you **the Advocate—the Spirit of truth**. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. (John. 15:26 NLT-SE)
- People who aren't spiritual can't **receive these truths from God's Spirit**. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for **only those who are spiritual can understand** what the Spirit means. (1 Cor. 2:14 NLT-SE)
- But **you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it**. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the **Good News**. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it. (Col. 1:23 NLT-SE)

- THE SPIRIT OF THIS AGE

- A short four months before his death in February 2018, **Billy Graham** started one of his last messages to people of God with these words...

We are living in days of tangled thinking. Purposes, ideals, motives and ideas are all crashing.

Lawlessness and revolutions have now become the spirit of the age.

And it has penetrated into every realm of human thinking.

Billy Graham, October 3, 2017

- **Key Verse:** For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and **will look for teachers** who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. **They will reject the truth and chase after myths**. (2 Tim. 4:3-4 NLT-SE)

- THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TRUTH

- **Truth is NOT a list of facts or a collection of knowledge, but a relationship with a person.**

- **Jesus actually links his identity to truth...**Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. (John. 14:6 NLT-SE)
- **Truth isn't just a massive treasure hunt. If we allow him, the Holy Spirit promises to lead us into ALL truth!...**¹⁵ "If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you

another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. (John. 14:15–17 NLT-SE)

- **Freedom isn't one of the many outcomes, but is actually the goal of truth...**And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John. 8:32 NLT-SE)
- **If the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, and we can receive and know the Holy Spirit, then we can receive and know the Truth...**He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. (John. 14:17 NLT-SE)
- **This is amazing! We can hear words of truth that are spoken directly from God Himself...**When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. (John. 16:13 NLT-SE)

- THE ENEMY OF OUR SOULS WANTS TO HIJACK "RELATIONSHIP" AND USE IT TO EXPRESS HIS WILL ON THE EARTH.

- **Relationship with evil looks like this...**⁴⁴ For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because **there is no truth in him.** When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ So when I tell the truth, you just naturally don't believe me! ⁴⁶ Which of you can truthfully accuse me of sin? And since I am telling you the truth, why don't you believe me? (John. 8:44–46 NLT-SE)
- **Evil doesn't just want relationship with individuals, but is also seeking to develop a "church" of its own...**Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following. (Acts. 20:30 NLT-SE)
- **The culture is devolving quickly and the words of Isaiah in chapter 5 are for today as well...**What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil, that dark is light and light is dark, that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter. (Is. 5:20 NLT-SE)
- **No longer can we talk people out of their deception...**The days of man's opinions being swayed are all but over. No longer can a brilliant apologist like Zavi Zacharias argue the finer points of truth with someone antagonistic to the faith with the hope of winning them over. Our "Plan A" recourse is to **manifest the presence of Jesus in our lives** ("Children of the Burning Heart) and **allow the Holy Spirit to touch others through us.**
- **Who's are you?...**More than ever, it really doesn't matter whose side you're on; Democrat or Republican, gay or straight, Fox News or CNN, Charismatic or Non-Charismatic. They only thing that matters is, "**Who has your heart?**" Who or what is leading your life?
- **False-prophets attempt to talk people out of believing the gospel...**Most spiritual warnings in the first century church were pointed at false-prophets. These were people of influence who used their position to turn others away from the **gospel** (selflessness) and towards **evil** (selfishness).
 - Let these false prophets tell their dreams, but **let my true messengers faithfully proclaim my every word.** There is a difference between straw and grain! (Jer. 23:28 NLT-SE)
 - "Beware of false prophets who come **disguised as harmless sheep** but are really vicious wolves. (Matt. 7:15 NLT-SE)
 - For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform signs and wonders **so as to deceive**, if possible, even God's chosen ones. (Mark. 13:22 NLT-SE)

- Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must **test them** to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. (1 John. 4:1 NLT-SE)

• **We have to remember that “evil” has an agenda. The attacks may look random, but they’re not...**

Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, **mocking the truth** and following their own desires. (2 Pet. 3:3 NLT-SE)

- But we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. **That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.** (1 John. 4:6 NLT-SE)

- **IF ALL THIS TRUE, HOW SHOULD JESUS FOLLOWERS RESPOND?**

• **Start, not with what we say or do, but who we are and whose we are.** If our security lies in our identity in Christ, we will be much less insecure and fearful when what we believe is challenged by the culture. **God is not just calling us to recall and recite the truth, but to live it openly, so that the world can see truth in and through our lives!**

- We faithfully preach the truth. God’s power is working in us. We use the **weapons of righteousness** in the right hand for attack and the left hand for defense. (2 Cor. 6:7 NLT-SE)

• **We will NEVER give up!** This is not a battle that is to be won or lost, but a lifestyle that we have been called to lived out because of who we are.

- ¹³ Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle **you will still be standing firm.** ¹⁴ Stand your ground, putting on the **belt of truth** and the body armor of **God’s righteousness.** (Eph. 6:13–14 NLT-SE)

- ¹ This letter is from Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. I have been sent to proclaim faith to those God has chosen and to **teach them to know the truth** that shows them how to live godly lives. ² **This truth gives them confidence** that they have eternal life, which God—who does not lie—promised them before the world began. (Titus. 1:1–2 NLT-SE)

- ²⁴ “But I also have a message for the rest of you in Thyatira **who have not followed** this false teaching (‘deeper truths,’ as they call them—depths of Satan, actually). I will ask nothing more of you ²⁵ except that you **hold tightly** to what you have until I come. ²⁶ To all who are **victorious**, who obey me to the very end, To them **I will give authority over all the nations.** (Rev. 2:24–26 NLT-SE)