

# PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

*For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)*

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## Come to Terms

### Introduction

Where I grew up “coming to terms” was a common phrase when addressing untenable situations or problems. The phrase meant that you either fixed the situation, eliminated it, or learned to live with it. In other words you “came to terms” with the problem.

This all sounds well and good until we apply it to our approach to God. Coming to terms with God implies that I am in some way able to reach agreements with God that allow me to do things my way or by my own understanding. Is this something that is even possible? Is it something that God will allow?

### Natural Knowledge

Man holds knowledge in high esteem. We have divided knowledge and learning into different categories and pursued them with zeal. This has resulted in the technological explosion of our modern society. However, this very process is at odds with spiritual knowledge. Paul is clear about this when he writes the Corinthians.

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. (1 Corinthians 2:14 NASB)

Why does Paul say this? Because he knows that the basis of knowledge is the tree of which Adam and Eve partook in violation of God's command. It was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This tree puts the determination of right and wrong, good and evil within the mind and reasonings of man. It is the basis for man desiring to want to come to terms with God on man's terms and not God's.

Natural knowledge and understanding cannot come to terms with the idea that evil exists, or that God allows it, or that there is a judgment day, or that there is a lake of fire and that some will be condemned to it. This is all foolishness to the natural man because to him none of these things make any sense and certainly would not be condoned or even allowed by a loving God. But that is because the natural man thinks in his own terms and not in God's terms.

Our vanity causes us to think that our understanding is greater than God's; that our finite minds are able to think greater thoughts than God; and that our understanding of right and wrong is

more righteous than God's. But that is not what He says.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9 NASB)

This vanity of fallen man results in us considering our terms, our ways as the best way.

There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. (Proverbs 16:25 NASB)

Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts. (Proverbs 21:2 NASB)

## God's Terms

However, God has His own terms which He established before the foundation of the world. His terms are unchanging and uncompromising. His primary term is Christ Jesus is the Way. No one comes to the Father except through Him. If you reject this condition of God or refuse to come to terms with it then you have rejected and refused God. There are many secondary conditions to God's terms that are applicable as we mature in Him. If we refuse or reject His terms and try to substitute our own terms our progress in Him stops. Job is an example of one who had progressed in maturity but reached a point where he had to come to terms with God.

"Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him. (Job 13:15 NASB) [*For "argue" the KJV says "maintain"*]

We hear the first half of this verse quoted in sermons but the second half is virtually ignored. God will not allow us to argue or maintain our ways with Him. We must come to terms with that or stunt our spiritual growth. Could this be why so much of the Church seems to be so immature?

This was the same problem that the Children of Israel had during their forty years in the wilderness. They went astray in their hearts because they didn't know the ways of the Lord. They didn't come to His terms. As a result they were prevented from entering into His rest.

"THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS'; AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.'" (Hebrews 3:10-11 NASB)

We do the same thing. We see and experience the power of God. We walk in His provision and protection. And yet our hearts maintain our own ways instead of changing and conforming to His ways. We want to receive all of the benefits of the Lord on our own terms. If we think that the Lord will allow this as we mature then we are sadly mistaken.

There are two major facts that we must address head on. We must come to terms with them.

1. My ways and the Lord's ways are not compatible.
2. The Lord doesn't change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

The solution is simple: I am the one who must change. My heart must learn His ways. I must throw out my terms and come to Him on only His terms.

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