The Implications of Truth

Considering the Implications of Truth in Regard to Christian Education and Pastoral Care

Presenter: Rev. Dr. Matthew Richard

Part 1:
An overview of the subject of truth and its powerful repercussions upon the three dimensions of worldview, language, and emotions
Disclaimer!

Sessions will be like drinking from a fire hydrant!
Drink Fast!

Suggestions...
The Material Will Be Posted To My Blog

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PART 1

An overview of the subject of truth and its powerful repercussions upon the three dimensions of worldview, language, and emotions.
Is truth/knowledge really that powerful?
Introduction: The “I Love You” Note

A wife discovers a hand written note in her husband’s coat. The note says, “I Love You,” and is written in women’s handwriting. What are the implications of these three simple words?
Implications? It Depends!

Who is the note from?
Who is the note for?
Is it true?

From Daughter
From Mother
From Another Woman
Picked up trash
For wife from daughter
Is Truth Powerful?
What are the consequences of the simple truth “I Love You?”
...if it is from the husband’s daughter
...if it is from the husband’s mother
...if it is from another woman
...if it is a piece of trash picked up on the sidewalk
...if it is from the daughter for the husband’s wife
Indeed Truth is Powerful

The note will either strengthen or bring into question the status of the marriage. The note will either strengthen or bring into question the wife’s view of her marriage. The note will dictate the wife’s emotions, whether the wife will be angry or happy with her husband. The note will shape how she speaks about her husband and marriage (i.e., positive or negative). Three simple words on a note will impact the way the wife sees reality, feels, and talks. Indeed truth is powerful.
An Overview Diagram Of Our Topic

- Feelings
- Lens (i.e., issues of worldview)
- Truth (i.e., epistemology)
- Language
How do you know what you know?
Everyone attempts to gather truth in various ways and from various sources. This is often done subconsciously; it happens intuitively. The gathering of truth is typically done to answer fundamental ‘ontological questions’ such as: the existence of God, the meaning of being human, and the nature of truth/reality, etc...
Let us look at some examples of ‘how’ we attempt to know truth:
How do I know?

AUTHORITY

i.e., I know because Albert Einstein told me; because the Pastor told me; because the Teacher Told me; because the Doctor Told me.
How do I know?

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

i.e., I know because nearly everyone in my family/community/church/city thinks so.
How do I know?

EMPIRICISM

i.e., I know because many studies that used very large samples of the total population of people who have this disease confirm a high statistical correlation between salt intake and the aggravation of this disease.
How do I know?

i.e., I know because, since A was greater than B, and B was greater than C, I concluded that A was greater than C.
How do I know?

Mysticism

i.e., I know because of the spiritual connection that I had with God through my inward contemplation and self-surrender to Him; I experienced God.
How do I know?

OBSERVATION

i.e., I know because I was there and saw it for myself.
How do I know?

i.e., I know because I welded it up that way in my shop, tried it out in the field, and it has never failed me since.
How do I know?

i.e., I know because the Bible tells me so; or, thus saith the Lord.
How do I know?

SENSES

i.e., I know because I touched it, and it felt hot, and it smelled as if something were burning.
Everyone combines several ways how we know truth. We mash them together and other times we alternate between them. This is done implicitly rather than explicitly.

-T.R. Halvorson
More specifically, what are your ‘sources’ of truth (i.e., knowledge sources)?
Note: Instead of using the term ‘sources of truth,’ I prefer using the term ‘sources of knowledge,’ for not all of the following examples are valid sources of truth; some of them provide false truths.

Thus, there are effective and ineffective ways of knowing truth, as well as true and false sources of truth.
The average person is relatively unaware of all the sources of knowledge that shape and form them. We mash several sources together, bounce back and forth, etc... The receiving, gathering, and formation of knowledge happens subconsciously.
Why is it important to understand ‘how’ we know what we know, as well as ‘what’ our sources of knowledge are?
Answer: Because truth shapes our lenses (i.e., worldview)
• Sources of knowledge and how we know truth, forms and shapes our lens. They are connected. The sources of knowledge and the way we know truth are at the foundation of a person.
• Like falling dominos, sources of knowledge and how we know truth have drastic consequences upon lens, either positively or negatively, depending on the truth claim embraced.
Questions Thus Far?
How do these lenses function?
A lens (i.e., worldview) is a person’s ‘perception’ of reality.

Everyone views the world through a particular lens. These lenses “are deep, they are generally unexamined and largely implicit. Like glasses, they shape how we see the world, but we are rarely aware of their presence. In fact, other can often see them better than we ourselves do.” (Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 85.)

These lenses are like maps or narratives that help us view and understand reality and life.
Knowledge/Truth and Lens are interconnected too!
Indeed sources of knowledge and how one knows truth shapes and forms a person’s lens. However, keep in mind that a person’s lens processes and delivers knowledge back to the person.

Keep in mind that a person’s knowledge comes through their already pre-existing lens. Around and around they go, working together! Incorrect and Correct Truth ‘forms’ a worldview, but it is through a person’s lens that they are ‘informed.’ This is called ‘circularity.’
How does the Christian know truth and what is the Christian’s source of truth?
Refer to the Article:

“Your Quintessential Knowledge Source: God's Word”
How does the Christian primarily know truth and what is the Christian’s source of truth?

Answers:

-How?
Revelation

-Source?
God’s Word (i.e., Christ’s Cross)
What are the implications of sources of knowledge and lenses upon language?
• Words express truth claims and are visible signs of people exercising their own reason.
• Words capture and express the person. Words express a person’s reason.
• Reason though is embedded in a particular lens and sourced from particular knowledge sources.
• Words are not autonomous, but have layers of depth behind them and in them.
What are the implications of sources of knowledge and lenses upon feelings?
• Like words, feelings are visible signs.
• Feelings and behavioral patterns flow out of a person’s lens.
• Feelings emerge either positively or negatively.
• Generally speaking, emotions will trend negatively in the event of cognitive dissonance and dissymmetry and they will trend positively in the event of cognitive harmony and symmetry.
Both ‘feelings’ and ‘language’ are visible signs of a person’s lens and visible signs of a person’s reason, reason that is embedded in sources of knowledge.

Feelings and language are the person’s lenses and sources of knowledge in action within a specific time, place, and context.

They are the tips of the iceberg if you well.

They are the tremors and seismic vibrations of tectonic lenses and tectonic sources of knowledge interacting with different tectonic lenses and different tectonic sources of knowledge.
Summary of Part 1

There are 4 basic dimensions to be aware of. Feelings and Language are at the visible level, however, there are always intricate workings occurring at the Worldview and the level where one acquires truth (i.e., epistemological level). Thus, sources of knowledge have a drastic impact on the whole person.
In the second session, we will explore the ramifications of what goes on when a person encounters knowledge sources and lenses that are foreign to their truth framework. Indeed, new truth or false truths will cause tremendous amounts of tension and turmoil upon a person’s lens, language, and emotions.

In the second session, we will be looking at how conflict begins, how we defend in conflict, and the results of the conflicts.
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