

# T.E.A.C.H.

## The Power of Truth

by Dan Harrison  
Chairman

Christian  
Education  
Department

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One of the most important responsibilities of Christian education is to teach the truth as it has been revealed in God's Word. Without a solid grasp on the truth men, women, boys and girls are vulnerable to all sorts of deceptions, fabrications, and distortions of reality.

The Bible has a lot to say about the importance of truth and it's impact on our lives. Consider for a moment the following verses.

*Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth* (Ephesians 6:14).

*You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free* (John 8:32).

*I am the way, the truth, and the life* (John 14:6).

*But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth* (John 16:13).

*I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. . . . Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth* (John 17:15, 17).

*Finally, brethren, whatever is true . . . let your mind dwell on these things* (Philippians 4:8).

The Bible says so much about truth because God understands the strong and undeniable connection between our beliefs and behaviors. He realizes that a person first processes an attitude or belief before any action is ever initiated or taken. Most people struggle with trying to control their actions which is often fruitless. The focus needs instead to be shifted to their thoughts which can then be weighed against the truth of scripture to determine whether the action being considered is appropriate or inappropriate for a Christ follower.

It is obvious that there are many definitions

of truth floating around today. This reality is supported by pollster George Barna's report that three-quarters of all adults and teens reject the notion of absolute truth in favor of an approach that is both personal and situational. Barna goes on to report that four out of five teens believe nobody can know for certain what truth is.

The behavioral outcomes that flow from that pattern of thinking are not good. More than half of all high school and college students report that they would steal from their employer if given the opportunity. As sad as that perception of acceptable behavior is, the response of the vast majority of parents interviewed is just as disappointing. These parents felt their children's criminal acts were perfectly "normal."

Scripture teaches us to know the truth, believe it, walk according to it, and to let our behaviors be a product of our obedience. When you believe something other than truth your behavior will always be faulty. But when you believe and act on the truth your behavior will reflect reality as it is revealed in God's Word. One of the most important things we can ever do for another person is to help them come to a clear understanding of truth as it is taught in the Word of God.

### Special points of interest:

- *Without a solid grasp on the truth, men, women, boys and girls are vulnerable to all sorts of deceptions, fabrications and distortions of reality.*
- *Most people struggle with trying to control their actions which is often fruitless.*
- *When you believe something other than the truth your behavior will always be faulty.*

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## The Power of Truth, continued

Neil Anderson shares an experience from his childhood about the impact of our perceptions of truth. He begins:

*When I was a boy on the farm, my dad, my brother and I would visit our neighbor's farm. The neighbor had a yappy little dog that scared the socks off me. When it came barking around the corner, my dad and brother stood their ground, but I ran. Guess who the dog chased! I escaped to the top of our pickup truck while the little dog yapped at me from the ground.*

*Everyone except me could see that the little dog had no power over me except what I gave it. Furthermore, it had no inherent power to throw me up on the pickup; it was my belief that put me up there. That dog controlled me by using my mind, my emotions, my will, and my muscles, all of which were motivated by fear. Finally I gathered up my courage, jumped off the pickup, and kicked a small rock at the mutt. I was amazed and relieved when it ran!*

Satan is like the yappy little dog in Anderson's story. He deceives people into fearing him. His power is in the lie. He is the father of lies (John 8:44) who deceives the whole world (Revelation 12:9), and consequently the whole world is under the influence of the evil one (1 John 5:19). Jesus promised, *You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free* (John 8:32). Scripture rightly teaches us to know the truth, believe it, walk according to it, and to let our behaviors be a product of our obedience. The listing of the fruit of the Holy Spirit found in Galatians 5 is the final outcome of the life lived in obedience to God's Truth. That godly lifestyle is your birthright - don't settle for less.

## What's New In the Library

### **YOU CAN DOUBLE YOUR CHURCH IN FIVE YEARS OR LESS** by Josh Hunt



This is a 5 video series that teaches you practical ways that can double your church.

Some of the topics are:

## Wouldn't You Rather Be Fishing

"I Would Rather Be Fishing." I read the bumper sticker in front of me and was instantly reminded that Jesus promised to take us on a spiritual fishing trip. He said that if we followed Him we would become "fishers of men." There is a wonderful "fishing hole" in the local church called the Sunday School. In fact Sunday School can be spelled:

### Fellowship

The Sunday School is a place where everyone is called by name and people are missed when they are absent. Burdens can be shared and relationships developed and strengthened both inside and outside of class.

### Instruction

The Sunday School is a place where people can learn how to apply the word of God to their lives and deal with the issues of life biblically.

### Service

The Sunday School is a place where people can be given the opportunity to serve Christ with the gifts and abilities.

### Helps

The Sunday School is a place where needs can be made known and help can be given and received.

Sunday School still offers a great opportunity to win people to Christ. Put these four components in every Sunday school class and disciples will be made. Wouldn't you rather be fishing?

- Six Attitudes of Churches That Double
- 5 Actions of Doubling Churches
- The Leadership Summit
- Faithful is the Servant Who Doubles
- Five Myths (and the Truth) about Doubling

# Everybody Ought To Be In Sunday School

Elmer Towns

Because I believe that every one ought to be in Sunday school, I phone absentees with a view of getting them back in attendance. Recently, I phoned Judy, a business woman who attended my Sunday school class on an irregular basis.

"Because we work such hectic schedules, I think its important that husbands and wives spend quality time together" Judy explained to me. "Our brunch was such as a meaningful time, we stayed right through church time.

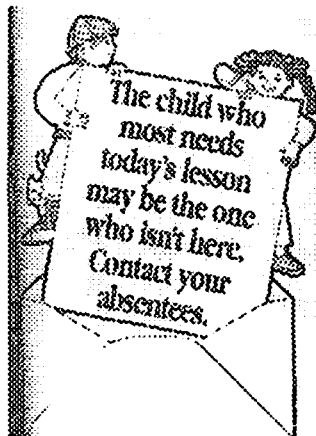
"Judy, I missed you last Sunday," I mentioned to her over the phone. Then I went on to say, "No class should be so large that people can fall through the cracks and not be missed."

I was concerned about her coming to Sunday school, so I asked, "What about the kids?"

"We dropped them off for Sunday schoo!," Judy said. "Then we came and got them after church."

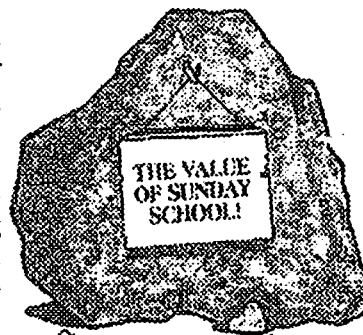
I found that phoning absentees is one of the very best ways to build a Sunday school class. If I phone ten absentees during the week, at least five of them will be present next Sunday.

Judy's view of Sunday school reflects the average Christian's obligation today. Most people think that Sunday school is a nice experience to gain some Bible knowledge, but they do not feel that Sunday school is absolutely necessary.



I said to Judy, "You were not sitting in your usual seat down front." Most people sit in the same location of a classroom every week. So I said to Judy, "Were you sitting in the back of the room?" Sometimes Judy comes in late and sits on the back row.

The average Christian's view of spirituality has changed over the years. The following is not an accurate understanding of spirituality, but reflects generational attitudes.



"Dr Towns, I might as well tell you the truth,"

The depression babies (born 1925-1945) tie their spirituality to church loyalty, i.e. attending church, working in church, and giving to the church. The baby boomer (1945-1965) tie their spirituality to relationships such as husband and wife intimacy, quality time with children and their people relationship to the unsaved. The baby buster (born 1965-1985) tie their spirituality to taking a bold stand for Christ such as "Meet You at the Pole," or "True Love Waits," and wearing a T-shirt that tells people Jesus is awesome.

she said with transparency, "my husband and I went to the Hilton for brunch." She offered an explanation of why she was not in Sunday school.

"My husband and I both work demanding jobs, and we get very little time to spend together," Judy explained to me in all frankness. Her explanation was believable for she is the Personnel Director for a large corporation and her husband is a realtor.

**What Leaders must teach the new generation -**  
**Attendance is mandatory**  
**Absences are serious**  
**What leaders must do about it**  
**Contact of absentees is vital**

"Judy, I think that quality time with your husband is absolutely necessary." Then I said cautiously but with deep conviction, "But not on God's time..."

continued on page 4

Judy is a boomer who feels that her spirituality is tied to quality time with her husband, children, and lifestyle evangelism. Boomers feel they must attractively communicate the message of Jesus Christ to the lost.

I am a depression baby, and feel one's spirituality is tied to church loyalty. Therefore, I feel that Judy should be in Sunday school every Sunday unless there is an emergency. So, what did I tell Judy when she explained that she and her husband spent quality time at brunch during my Sunday school hour?

The rising baby boomer generation has created a crisis for Sunday school. They do not deeply value Sunday school attendance as previous generations. Statistics tell us the average Christian will take a "break" approximately five weekends per year.

People don't come to your Sunday school because you expect them to attend, they come when you contact them after they are absent. Contacting absentees is inspecting the results. The bottom line is that people will come to Sunday school when you "check up" on their absences for being away from Sunday school. Therefore, I phone my absentees for three reasons:

1. Because contacting absentees is part of my Sunday school commission.
2. Because Jesus told about the shepherd with 99 sheep who went after the one that was lost.
3. Because contacting the absentees works. They come back to class.

To be a strong, complete Christian, you must know the Bible completely, comprehensively, and practically. Therefore, you must be in Sunday school where you get a complete, comprehensive, practical experience with the Word of God.

I believe in Sunday school because it is the Bible-based foundation of our churches. Getting everyone to attend Sunday school is foundational to strong churches. Following up Sunday school absenteeism is the best contribution a teacher can make to strong churches.

P.S. Today, Judy is teaching the fourth grade Sunday School

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## THE POWER OF SUNDAY SCHOOL, "Why I Teach" by Paul Burgett

There is a lot of discussion today about the role of Sunday school. Keith Drury has said that in the last 25 years, the Sunday morning service and Sunday school have exchanged roles. Each has taken the other's mission. This switch has happened as few noticed, and it has created confusion and uncertainty for the Sunday school. Whether we agree with this or not one thing is sure and it's no secret, the Sunday school is in trouble.

In the midst of all it's struggles Sunday School does have a great strength. Next to God's faithful anointing the power of the Sunday school rests on the teacher. It's true—there's an inherent generosity in the human spirit and one of it's faces is that of the teacher.



I personally began teaching Sunday School at the age of 12 as my mother's assistant in our one room church at Grove City. I learned early the great joys of teaching. One could

ask, "Why teach"? It doesn't make you rich. It takes time and commitment. So, "Why teach?" For a short answer I interviewed two teachers from my church's Sunday School. Although they are very special to the West Jeff Church they represent the backbone of every Sunday school in the world. Every church has them—teachers who are faithful and I'm sure they all have wonderful stories of how teaching has changed their lives. I believe the power of the Sunday School is on their shoulders. Here are two such teachers:

### Teacher Profiles

August Archey was born January 18, 1931 in Williamsport, Ohio and became a Christian at the West Jefferson Church of Christ in Christ Union on January 23, 1965. August has been a teacher for 24 years.

Sheila Flick was born June 7, 1964 in Parkersburg, WV. and became a Christian at Faith Baptist Church on June 1971. She has been a teacher for 20 years.

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## In due season, ye shall reap...

by Jim Cichon

"I guess I'll quit teaching Sunday school. I'm not really doing much anyway!"



Sound familiar? All too often a Sunday school teacher is tempted to let go of one of the richest ministries God could give us, because he or she has grown "weary of well doing."

But if we could look down the road a little, if we could see into the future of our students' lives, we would be amazed and thrilled at what God is doing through our humble Sunday school classes.

An example of this is Pamela Fischer. Pamela is 43 years old, a fine Christian, a devoted wife and mother of a 10-year-old girl. Pam teaches a Sunday School class of six and seven year olds. But Pam is more than a teacher-she is a shepherd. Her students are her sheep; she learns about each of their lives, weeping with them today over a burden they are sharing, rejoicing next week over each victory, praying for them faithfully. She loves her charges!

But go back with me 35 years. Pam is 8 years old. Her mother is waking her up in the middle of the night. Pam's father has gone to work-at a stag bar. Now in the middle of the night, Pam's mother and siblings are quickly packing a few things and moving. It is the only way they can move safely, before her father comes home. You see, dad is an alcoholic and a gambler, wasting all his money before he ever gets home. And once home, he often becomes abusive.

Pam settled into her new home in Portsmouth, Ohio; she was lonely, hurting and in much need of love. A Sunday School bus ministry was picking up children in her area. She and her sister were allowed to go. Within a year, both Pam and her sister had found the love and stability they needed so much. For at the hour of an 8-year-olds greatest need, the Lord put her in a Sunday School class where the teacher had a shepherd's heart.

It was in this class that Pam found God. Her teacher tenderly spoke to her after class one day, leading her in a sinner's prayer for pardon. Soon afterwards her teacher gave Pam her first Bible. Week after week Pam grew in the Lord; you see, she had a shepherd for a teacher. She learned how to forgive, how to be patient; how to love others. Pam's class was a safe haven. Pam began to learn how to deal with her strug-

gles at home. And Pam learned to pray! Now in the dark times, Pam was not alone. She learned to talk and walk with God.

Within a year, Pam was moving again, a new home, new school, and an uncertain future. But in that one year, Pam was grounded in her faith. She learned to walk with the Lord through her rough years ahead. Pam was so inspired by her teacher that she too has become a teacher-and a shepherd of souls.

Do you have a Pamela in your class? Or two? Or three? Has God given you the privilege to shape a life and save a soul? "Be not weary in well doing! You will reap, if you don't grow weary!" (Galatians 6:9)

### WHY I TEACH, continued from page 4

How long have you been a teacher?"



**August:** When we were in our building Project in 1975 and we had three adult classes. We were in need of space so we combined all three classes and I was elected to teach the new class. I am still there today as Adult Bible Class teacher.

**Sheila:** I've been teaching off and on since I was 16 years old. I've always loved being with kids.

**"What are your high points being a Sunday School-teacher?"**

**August:** Taking the Bible and making it relevant in the lives of my students today.

**Sheila:** The number one "High Point" for me is when my students give their hearts to the Lord. I also love it when they learn memory verses. As a teacher, learning something new from God's word is an extra high point. I found that even though I've been in church all my life, I'm still learning.

**"Why are you teaching?"**

**August:** When I was elected to teach the Adult class I did not first want to, but the Holy Spirit said "I will help you." As long as He helps me I will give my best. I have found it spiritually refreshing to share God's Word.

**Sheila:** I really enjoy teaching and being with the children. I believe this is what God wants me to do.

## Christian Education Department

Christian Education Department  
P.O. Box 356  
Winchester, Ohio 45697

Phone: (937) 695-0655  
Fax: (937) 695-0388  
e-mail: [cedept@dragonbbs.com](mailto:cedept@dragonbbs.com)  
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



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### Why I Teach, continued from page 5

**"Can you recall lives that you have seen changed?"**

**August:** Through the years there have been a number of lives that God has changed. There are also many more who have come to me after class and commented on how much they have gotten from the lesson. I've learned that we all need encouragement once in a while.

**Sheila:** When I was teaching in my home church, Calvary Community church. We were talking about Jesus going up to Heaven, and this little four year old girl told her Daddy about the Sunday School lesson when she got home. She told him how Jesus went up, up, up to Heaven. It did something to this grown man and the next Sunday he was in church where he went forward and gave his life to Christ. Not to long after that he had an aneurysm and died. Praise the Lord, he knew Christ!

The secret in Sunday school today is not to get back to what we did in the past. It's not about contest or promotion although they don't always hurt. It's about doing what we do best—teaching. It's about helping people take a bigger step toward deeper commitment to Christ and right living.

### Children's Paraphrase

A Church of England publication listed the following children's answer to church school questions:

- Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark.
- The fifth commandment is:  
Humor thy father and mother.
- Lot's wife was a pillar of salt  
by day, but a ball of fire by  
night.
- Mary was the mother of Jesus and sang the Magna Carta.
- Christians only have one wife. This is called monotonny.
- The Pope lives in a vacuum.
- A Republican is a sinner mentioned in the Bible.
- Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob and Jacob begat  
twelve partridges.
- The natives of Macedonia did not believe, so Paul got stoned.
- The first Commandment: Eve told Adam to eat the apple.
- It is sometimes difficult to hear what is being said in church because the agnostics are so terrible.

