

Where do we start?

Joyce Huggett writes (in *Open to God*):

“Whenever we yearn to make a fresh start in our relationship with God, the place to begin is with the realisation that the desire is, of itself, God’s work ...

There is no need for us to struggle back to some spiritual starting line before we start to pray again.

God chalks the starting line just where we are.”

Walking in the light starts now, right where I am, expressing in simple honesty the state of my heart to God, no frills, no censoring. It is simply being honest, with myself, in the presence of God.

Revelation 3:20 - so often use evangelistically - was originally addressed by Jesus to a lukewarm bunch of believers at Laodicea:

“Here I am! I am standing at the door and knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them, and they with me.”

Applying this invitation to our prayer, again Joyce Huggett writes:

“God waits to indwell us and to fill us with yet more grace, more love, more wholeness and with his own fullness. But the God of the Bible never bulldozes his way into a person’s life. He loves us enough to wait until, of our own free will, we invite him to come to us. In the language of Revelation 3:20, this means discovering that **the handle of the door lies on the inside of our lives**, not the outside where the door can be forced open. It means opening this to God once more.”

Your move!

Feel free to reproduce these guidelines for your own use or to give to others
(David Crawley, 2011)



This is the message
we heard from Jesus and now
declare to you: God is light, and
there is no darkness in him, at all!
So we are lying if we say we have
fellowship with God but go on walking in
spiritual darkness; we are not practicing
the truth. But if we are walking in the
light, as God is in the light, then we
have fellowship with each other,
and the blood of Jesus, his Son,
cleanses us from all sin.

(1 John 1:5-7)

Walking in the Light

What is the opposite of walking in the light? Walking in darkness, obviously! But notice how John restates this as ...

“not practicing the truth.”

In Greek it is literally *“not doing the truth.”*

So, positively, the spiritual practice of “walking in the light” can be thought of as cultivating the habit of *“doing the truth.”*

In other words: being honest with ourselves and God about the realities of our lives - our thought patterns, our feelings, our relationships, our behaviours.

Here’s a bold claim: unless we commit ourselves to “doing the truth” in relationship to God and life generally, any other spiritual practices we try to put in place will end up being a waste of time. *Not* doing the truth, *not* walking in the light, is absolutely *toxic* to genuine spiritual growth. This applies to our prayer life and worship especially, as well as our key relationships with others.

Have you ever longed to have a deeper relationship with someone, but they just won’t be real with you? Intimate relationships depend on honesty, being real with one another, and relationship with God is no different in that regard.

In Psalm 51, a very honest prayer of confession, the Psalmist acknowledges to God:

“You desire truth in the inward being” (v6).

Walking in the light starts with doing the truth in our own heart of hearts.

There are various reasons why people struggle with this:

- Doing the truth with God means facing the truth with ourselves, and that can be scary and uncomfortable. Yet, as Jesus said, it is through the truth that we are set free.
- We may feel that other Christians would be shocked or disappointed if they knew how we really thought or felt, so we maintain a spiritual “persona” that is not particularly authentic. (Sadly, it’s sometimes easier to “do the truth” outside of the Church!)
- We may feel that *God* would be shocked if we expressed our feelings or struggles in prayers of raw honesty - especially if we are angry or disappointed with God. Like going into the presence of the school principal or the boss, we may feel we should be on our “best behaviour.”

A minute’s thought would tell us that it is pointless to present anything other than our real selves to the one who already knows us better than we know ourselves!

It is not for God’s benefit, but for our own, that we are exhorted to practice “doing the truth” in our spiritual walk. It clears the ground of pseudo-piety, and it gives God the opportunity to meet us where we really are.

When Moses or Job or the Psalmists or the prophets let God “have it” with some very honest complaint or doubt or confession, God doesn’t strike them down! Rather it opens the way for God to speak into their situation with reassurance, encouragement, healing or fresh perspective. Check out some examples:

Numbers 11:11-17; Psalm 13; 38; 1 Kings 19:19:3-5; Jeremiah 12; Matthew 27:46.

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