Who Told You That?

The short version of a longer story is that I was talking with a reasonably intelligent college student who was claiming some very wild ideas. I asked him, “Who told you that, and why did you choose to believe it?” He literally said, “All my friends know that.” I countered, “No, I ask you specifically, ‘Who told you that?’ and I want the name of a person we can call right now.”

He stuttered and stammered but I repeated, “A name, or no other words.” (Perhaps I was a bit too hard on him, but I wanted him to think for himself.) Finally, he said, “I don’t know.” I then told him we could go to his local university library, and I could prove to *his* satisfaction that his claims we not true. He quickly responded, “Why am I so gullible?” I noted, “You’re doing it right now. I’ve not proven it to you, I’ve only made a statement, and you believed me!”

That challenge is very real to all of us. How do we decide who is right and who is wrong; what is true and what is not? For most people, I’m sad to report, it is not a journey of logical examination. So, what is it? In reality, most people’s trek to truth is more emotional than logical:

a. “That evening news reporter has always seemed to be honest.” (Guess what… that’s why they hired him/her.)

b. “That *seems* reasonable, so it must be true.” (“Seems?” Is that really a good *proof*? That approach is actually *confirmation bias* in which the human mind tends to accept what is already believed and reject anything different. There is no actual proof involved in that process.)

c. “That matches what I’ve heard in the past, so it must be true." (S*upposed* “provable reality” changes all the time, even in actual science. “Butter and eggs are bad for you!” as reported a few decades ago. Now the best nutritionists say exactly the opposite, “Butter and eggs are both good for you.” And then, of course, we often have *dueling experts* who disagree with each other. And that is another example of confirmation bias.)

d. “My granny (or school teacher, etc.) said it’s true and she would never lie.” (Should anyone really believe that anyone close could never be honestly wrong? There are many others, but these will suffice for our purposes here.)

Thankfully, when it comes to scriptural truth, we *do* have a trustworthy, truthful, inerrant source, and Jesus, Himself, said so. In John 17:17, Jesus said in His prayer to the Father, “Sanctify them in truth, Thy word is truth.” Man can mis-interpret and twist God’s truth (2 Peter 3:16). Man can make up stuff and go beyond what is written (forbidden in 1 Cor. 4:6). Man can err by turning to the right or left from God’s truth (Deut 5:32; Prov. 4:27, et al). But God’s truth stands as God’s truth.

So, when considering spiritual, biblical truths, when someone asks (or we ask ourselves), “Who told you that, and why did you choose to believe it?” we can answer simply, “God did, and His word is our source of truth.”

Ray Wallace