

## **What do these words actually mean?...**



### ***A Christian Perspective***

Hopefully this will clear up some confusion about some words that often get mis-used and mis-communicated.

### **Religion**

(Dictionary) The expression of man's belief in and reverence for a superhuman power recognized as the creator and governor of the universe; a specific fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of persons or sects.

**The term "religion" has gotten a bad rap. Probably because people think of religion as an attempt to get a group of people to conform to a set of rules and rituals intended to avoid sin and force good deeds, with an order of hypocrisy on the side. Understandable! Based on the actual definition, everyone is religious about something right? According to the book *How to be free from sin while smoking a cigarette*, by Martin Zender, "Religion is man standing on his head for God; truth is God standing on his head for man." If someone is turned off by "religion", they have their reasons. That is a good opportunity for us to ask questions and try to understand and accept them. Also, let them know that we respect their concerns and consider ourselves seekers of truth and followers of Jesus Christ, first and foremost. We should always encourage others to seek a higher power and let God reveal himself.**

### **Tolerance**

(Dictionary) The capacity for, or practice of, allowing or respecting the nature, beliefs, or behavior of others.

**Tolerance does not mean "accepting" or "celebrating" a different viewpoint. It basically just means we should respect differences and try to get along. So if someone tells me I am intolerant by stating I believe marriage is between a man and a woman, or I believe in protecting the rights of an unborn child, isn't that person being the intolerant one? Hmmm**

### **BY: DAVID HALSEY**

Words are powerful. Words can be used to build people up or tear them down. The meaning of words can also be changed to fit an agenda.

For example, just recently New York Governor Mario Cuomo stated that "extreme conservatives who are right to life, pro-assault weapons, and anti-gay...have no place in the state of New York."

I am pro-life, I believe in a constitutional right to bear arms (I own a gun myself), and I believe marriage is a God-ordained union between a man and a woman. I do not consider myself anti-gay at all. Does this make me an extreme conservative that is no longer welcome in the state of New York? I'm confused!

Someone can be "Pro-Choice" or "Pro-Life". Both are correct in their terminology. The difference is who they are choosing to defend.

People are not intolerant for having an opinion. People are intolerant for not respecting someone else's opinion.

Maybe we should focus more on what we are "for", have some logic/reason for our opinions, listen to other viewpoints, and respectfully agree to disagree sometimes. I believe this is a healthier way to co-exist peacefully and become better versions of ourselves.

## Truth

(Dictionary) Conformity to knowledge, fact, actuality, or logic; Fidelity to an original standard.

There is “Objective Truth” and “Subjective Truth”. Objective Truth is based on Fact (e.g. The sun rises every morning) and Subjective Truth is based on feeling (e.g. The warmth of the sun feels good). Martin Zender stated it well in a modern-day story he told about an African American who still believed he was a slave, even though the Emancipation Proclamation was signed in 1863 and it clearly stated that he was free. The original document was lost in the Chicago Fire, but that doesn't change the fact that he was a free man. A mentor and sage in my life, Loren Siffring, revealed that truth is the person, Jesus Christ. Wow! It's like looking for the ketchup bottle in the fridge, not seeing it, and then finding out it was right in front of you on the top shelf the whole time. TRUTH=JESUS. The fact is that he already delivered us from sin and freed us. So we need not live like the man above who still believed he was a slave. We are free! According to Loren there are many things that are true, but only one Objective Truth, which is not a thing, but a person.

## Faith

(Dictionary) A confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or thing. Belief that does not rest on logical proof or material evidence.

(Bible) **“Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (John 20:29)** **“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1)** **“... Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.” (Matthew 17:20)**

So, we know that we are justified (proven to be innocent) and free because of Jesus through faith and faith alone. It's that simple. Also, we know that “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” (James 2:26) This means a result of our faith through the Holy Spirit is our desire to serve as “God's ambassador representing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth” (Danny Cox, Kensington Community Church)



## **Trust**

(Dictionary) Firm reliance on the integrity, ability, or character of a person or thing; confident belief; faith.

I am a Detroit Lions fan, and like many other fans, I have faith they will improve and eventually make it to the Superbowl. Okay, maybe this is really “blind faith”. However, I still don’t trust them because I don’t have a confident belief or any evidence that they have a plan and know how to get there, nor do they have a proven track record. The great news of the Gospel is we are saved by faith alone and we can also trust God to do what is best for us. According to John Piper in his book entitled *Don’t Waste Your Life*, “biblical faith in Jesus must mean that we trust him to give us what we need most – namely, himself. Trust requires us to allow God to do His will and not ours. Trust is especially important during trials and adversity, because we sometimes can’t clearly see God’s purpose at the present time. It also requires that we understand that God will do what is best for us, at the right time. The more we trust God and allow Jesus to live in our heart and speak to us through the Holy Spirit, the evidence will be the fruits of the Spirit, which are “Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

**WHO DOESN’T WANT THAT?**



## **Marriage**

(Dictionary) The state of being husband and wife; The legal union of a man and woman as husband and wife.

(Bible) Jesus said to the Pharisees, “Haven’t you read, that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?” So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate.” (Matthew 19:4-6)

(Merriam-Webster on-line 2013) – The state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law (2): the state of being united to a person of the same sex in a relationship like that of a traditional marriage <same-sex marriage>.

## Marriage (continued)

Did you see what just happened? The definition of marriage in the dictionary has changed from my 1979 hard cover version to the 2013 on-line dictionary. The bible, however, has not changed. Some people will claim that the biblical definition of marriage is contradicted because there are statements in the Old Testament allowing a man to take more than one wife, execution of the wife for adultery, the wife must be a virgin, etc. That is a weak argument. Jesus fulfilled the law AND he specifically commented on marriage as evidenced in the scripture above. We are not intolerant to define a God-ordained marriage as exclusively between a man and a woman and we have scripture to back it up. However, all people should be treated with love and respect, and through God's eyes, not ours.



### Bonus Words:

**Joy** - Emotion evoked by well-being, success or good fortune; gladness or delight

**Peace** - State of calm; freedom from strife or discord; harmony in personal relationship

**Hope** - To desire something with confident expectation of its fulfillment

**Love** - Strong affection, desire, or devotion (we believe love is much more than a feeling. It is a choice.)

**Christ** - Anointed; Messiah

**Messiah** - King; Anointed; Christ

**Emmanuel** - God is with us

**Yahweh** - The Lord

**Abba** - Father

**Amen** - So be it; Truly; Yes

**Hallelujah** - Praise the Lord

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Ask about my other articles, including:

"Am I stupid to believe in God?"

"Am I crazy to be a Christian?"

"Why are there so many other religions if they are all fake?"

### References I used include:

- "Dictionary" - The American Heritage Dictionary, New College Edition, Houghton-Mifflin, 1979.

- NIV Bible

- Merriam-Webster on-line Dictionary (2013)

- Dictionary.com