

“Cut and Dried”

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The expression “cut and dried” probably comes from agriculture referring to hay or wheat or some other crop as it is processed from the fields. It has come to mean something that is complete or finished.

Recently while reading an article about this very thing, the writer said, “the more narrow our viewpoints the more ‘cut and dried’ our conclusions and positions.” As we consider this statement, there are some alarming things about it. The narrowness or broadness of a Christian should not depend upon his or her viewpoints but upon the word of God. It is “cut and dried” because the Christian’s life is the narrow way — not because of my viewpoint, but because of what the Lord taught in the great Sermon on the Mount. Jesus said, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). God’s way is the narrow way, because we are not to add to it nor take from it (Revelation 22:18-19), and we are not to go beyond it (2 John 9).

Another alarming thing that this writer said was, “For a matter to be ‘cut and dried’ tends to relieve us of any obligation to study, listen or struggle with the problems involved.” It is my conviction that this writer does not understand truth. Truth must have the characteristic of being “cut and dried” for it to be truth. Truth cannot be “wishy-washy” with many different and opposing conclusions. Since truth is “cut and dried,” it generates an urgent need to study in order to understand the narrowness of truth. Wouldn’t you imagine Nadab and Abihu now wishes they had spent a little more time in trying to understand the will of God so they could please Him (Leviticus 10:1-2)? Don’t you imagine Uzza now wishes that he had spent the time searching the truth to understand how to move the ark (1 Chronicles 13:7-10)? Certainly after Uzza died, David did. When they went back to bring the ark, David said, “God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order.” The Levites then brought the ark “as Moses commanded according to the word of the Lord” (1 Chronicles 15:13-15).

Christians seek to understand truth because of their love for God (John 14:15). They conform their lives to the “cut and dried” truth, because they realize that it is God’s will and there are great blessings awaiting those who will obey His will. The writer of the article said, “truth is alive...” He is right. Truth is alive, but not

because it changes from culture to culture or generation to generation or person to person, but because it changes lives. Paul stated in 2Timothy 3:16-17, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” Truth is alive because it teaches (doctrine), and we test (reproof) ourselves accordingly; then we make the needed corrections in order to be perfect or mature.

It is foolish for one to think that we cannot know truth absolutely since Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). God is not some foolish or vicious God who gives instructions that cannot be understood. We know that we will be judged according to His word (John 12:48), and only a vicious God would judge mankind according to that which cannot be understood by mankind. Since God is a loving God, and we will be judged according to His word, we can know His word, His truth, His will, but it takes study and meditation.

Yes, the word of God is “cut and dried” and, therefore, our beliefs and convictions should also be “cut and dried” because they should be based upon the Word of God. By the way, in the article mentioned, there was not a single scripture cited nor even alluded to. Of course that just means the article was not so “cut and dried”!