Opinions cannot save us. Only the truth can save us. Opinions have nothing to do with eternal salvation. They do not build us up toward God. Teachers are to be “speaking the truth,” not their opinions (SEE Eph 4:15). God will not commend us for our opinions. He will not reward us for them. They do not make us right before Him. He will not praise us for having such a good opinion about something. Yet He will praise and reward us for the truth; our belief in it, our obedience to it, our love for it, our ability to hear it, etc. In fact, in regards to the parable of the sower, Jesus warned us, saying, “Take care how you listen” (Lk 8:18). People are not careful listeners. Worshipers are not careful listeners. Many Christians have become “dull of hearing” (He 5:1). Not everybody can hear the truth. So you must be careful to listen for the truth of what Jesus has said, and follow it, not something else, like an opinion.

1. The Difference Between Truth and Opinion

Now when we begin to discuss the word of God, like in a Bible study, when we begin to talk about “the truth” out loud, in front of others, we should settle one very important issue at the outset; the difference between truth and opinion. One is a fact, the other is fiction. One is revealed, the other is hidden. One is accurate, the other is theory. One we know, the other we do not know. One is evident, the other is speculative, speculation, a guess. One is commanded, the other is not. One is from God, the other is from man. One is required, the other is not and may be misleading, vain, misinterpreted, misapplied, or contrary to what is right. So for example, if at 12:00 noon I tell you that it is daylight, I have just told you the truth, not my opinion. It is utterly evident that God created light and called it day. Likewise, He called the darkness night, and there was evening and morning one day (Ge 1:3-5). The first thing which God created was the 24 hour day/night system. We have created a clock which is based on it. We can see in creation, and in the Bible, that this is true. [Now if I told you something contrary to this, well then, I would be, at best, opining, and at the worst, I would be very wrong and misleading to someone. For example, if I told you it is 11:00 AM when it was truly 12:00 noon, well then you might start yawning and want to go to bed so you can get up and do your work in the morning.]

Indeed, in the confines of the Scripture, as to how the Scriptures define it, thus how God defines it, is that “opinion” is “speculation”; guessing. It is not a commandment of the Lord. It is from one’s own mind, not the mind of our Lord. For example, Paul said itself: “Now concerning virgins I have no command from the Lord, but I give an opinion” (1 Cor 7:25). So before Paul speculated (opinionated) on this subject, before he guessed, Paul cleared himself by saying that he had no commandment from the Lord about whether or not virgins should or should not marry. And so whatever Paul said on this subject is not binding. But in this chapter, he did say some things which were commandments from the Lord. These are binding. [In Romans 14:1, there is more teaching concerning “opinions”, which is sometimes translated “disputations,” indicating the true nature of “opinion”, that it gives rise to disputes. In 1 Timothy 1:4, the concept of opinion is sometimes translated and defined as “speculation,” again indicating the true meaning of “opinion”, that it is guessing, and says that this does not further the gospel because it is foreign to it, namely “strange,” and it is considered “fruitless discussion” (1 Tim 1:3, 4, 6).]

2. The Difference Between Opinion and Application

We know that we must carry out, perform, or apply the commandments of Christ in order fulfill the will of God and please Him. But an “application” of a commandment of Christ is not an “opinion”. It could be a proper application of a commandment of Christ or it could be an improper (misapplication) of it. For example, baptizers have been commanded to baptize those who believe the gospel (SEE Mk 16:16; Mt 28:19). The proper application of this commandment is water immersion, as the Scriptures say, “buried” (Ro 6:4; Col 2:12). A misapplication of this verse would be to sprinkle. There are many churches who sprinkle, and some which pour, for baptism. They have not yet made a correction in their application of it. Obviously, there are many other commandments of Christ which may or may not be applied properly by churches. But some are making applications, not from a commandment of Christ, but from an opinion.

3. Making Applications from an Opinion

Some are making an “application” where there is no commandment at all. For example, some so called “Anabaptists” say, “Since at one time Jesus refused to be made king (Jn 6:15), Christians then must not be a part of the government.” Obviously, this is an opinion (speculation). Jesus refusing to be made king at one time, by force, is not a commandment, and so there is no application to be made for us. It is a strange teaching, foreign to the teaching of the gospel. Likewise, the subject of color. Some say certain colors are sinful and proud (indeed some are sinning by showing favoritism/partiality to the color black, and holding others in contempt and judging others who do not). Yet where is the specific command for this opinion? There is none! What about food laws? We have none in the New Testament, excepting the commandment to avoid blood, animals which are strangled, and food offered to idols (Ac 15:20, 29). Besides, Jesus declared all foods clean (Mark 7:19). So some teach these opinions on food and drink, and are making a handsome profit from it. For example, one boldly claims in the title of his popular and authoritative book on this subject that it is “God’s Diet”. Others claim to be making “Ezekiel Bread,” or “Ezekiel Granola,” both in many different opinions (flavors), and so on and so forth. When will the application of opinions cease to be an essential part of one’s religion, or a group’s religion, or a profiteers product or service offering and instead the commandments of Christ be taught, applied, and advanced? Opinions (speculations) do not advance the cause of Christ! (READ 1 Tim 1:3-6).
4. The Conclusion of the Matter

Christians must listen to and follow the truth (Jesus Christ), not opinions (man). We must discern the difference between the two. Likewise, we must speak the truth to others, especially God’s people, not our opinions. We also must be able to tell the difference between a proper and an improper application of a commandment of Christ. And we must discern the difference between an opinion and an application of a command of Christ (opinions do not have a commandment of Christ associated with it). We must not make or teach an application where there is no commandment. We must not make our own opinion a commandment, since there is no commandment of Christ on that subject. And certainly we must not apply our opinions in various ways, since opinions are not commandments. Yet we must properly and fittingly apply the commandments of Christ in order to prove that we have heard and follow the truth, Jesus Christ. We must carry out the words of Christ.

Before I became a full-time evangelist, I worked in the leading and pioneering computer consulting firm, Electronic Data Systems (now Hewlett-Packard software services 2012). Our 2nd president, Lester Aberth, attempted to change the culture of the firm. According to a Time Magazine article on the subject, he wanted to “change the soul” of everyone in the company. He enlisted the help of the renowned Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) school of business. They began to train our top executives on their newly designed management training philosophy called “The Fifth Discipline,” written by Peter Senge, and also taught by MIT professor Harold Kaufman, who was a Jew. They taught this fundamental folly: “What you believe is truth, is really only opinion.” [I heard Peter say this himself on a video Q&A session when asked about the essence of this philosophy.] He made truth equal with opinion. And to prove his point, Peter’s colleague, Harold, taught a class, which included leading managers from my company and others, on this subject: “The myth of Jesus Christ.” Harold said to his class that Jesus Christ is only an opinion, not truth, but a myth. Harold, a Jew, did not believe in Jesus as the Christ. He was of the spirit of the anti-Christ. And so, as much some in the class may have objected to this being taught, they still came back to our company to teach this management philosophy. And when this false teaching got around our company, what do you think the new thing to say was, especially in regards to matters of Scripture? “That’s just your opinion.” Or, as Peter Senge said, “there is no truth.” Shocking! Twisted! This teaching not only works against the truth about Jesus Christ, it also works against business. What business can run on opinions and not facts? Ask any accountant whether opinions work or not! This teaching is totally destructive to everything. Our leader simply wanted to take us in the direction of speculation, not fact. This was a lousy decision! It was chaotic and lacking sense. I raced my job by refusing my managers pleas for me to attend this mandatory, weekly, ongoing training. I also influenced one advanced software engineer, who was a dean, to remove himself from it as well. We sat in an empty office while everyone else was learning that there is no truth, only opinion.

5. Examples in the World Clarify the Point

Christians are not the only ones who have to deal with the difference between truth and opinion; presidents and kings of nations do; business men do, etc. Consider the following examples.

A Personal Experience in the Software Consulting Industry: Before I became a full-time evangelist, I worked in the leading and pioneering international computer consulting firm, Electronic Data Systems (now Hewlett-Packard software services 2012). Our 2nd president, Lester Aberth, attempted to change the culture of the firm. According to a Time Magazine article on the subject, he wanted to “change the soul” of everyone in the company. He enlisted the help of the renowned Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) school of business. They began to train our top executives on their newly designed management training philosophy called “The Fifth Discipline,” written by Peter Senge, and also taught by MIT professor Harold Kaufman, who was a Jew. They taught this fundamental folly: “What you believe is truth, is really only opinion.” [I heard Peter say this himself on a video Q&A session when asked about the essence of this philosophy.] He made truth equal with opinion. And to prove his point, Peter’s colleague, Harold, taught a class, which included leading managers from my company and others, on this subject: “The myth of Jesus Christ.” Harold said to his class that Jesus Christ is only an opinion, not truth, but a myth. Harold, a Jew, did not believe in Jesus as the Christ. He was of the spirit of the anti-Christ. And so, as much some in the class may have objected to this being taught, they still came back to our company to teach this management philosophy. And when this false teaching got around our company, what do you think the new thing to say was, especially in regards to matters of Scripture? “That’s just your opinion.” Or, as Peter Senge said, “there is no truth.” Shocking! Twisted! This teaching not only works against the truth about Jesus Christ, it also works against business. What business can run on opinions and not facts? Ask any accountant whether opinions work or not! This teaching is totally destructive to everything.

The “stimulus” program, which is the truth (indeed, Jesus Christ is the truth Jn 14:6), instead of saying, “My opinion is,” or, “I have a different opinion,” or, “I think,” or, “Nobody is entitled to this opinion,” or, “Here is a different opinion,” or, “Here is the opinion of a commandment of Christ (opinions do not have a commandment of Christ on that subject. And certainly we must not apply our opinions in various ways, since opinions are not commandments. Yet we must properly and fittingly apply the commandments of Christ in order to prove that we have heard and follow the truth, Jesus Christ. We must carry out the words of Christ.

Before you speak about “the truth” to others, especially the brethren, make sure that it indeed is the truth that you are saying, and not simply your own opinion, which came from your own mind, not God’s. For example, when speaking about God or His holy word, which is the truth (indeed, Jesus Christ is the truth Jn 14:6), instead of saying, “My opinion is,” or, “I have a different opinion,” or, “I think,” or, “Here is the truth,” or, “Here is the commandment of Christ,” “Here is how to apply that commandment”. Answer with Scripture. Answer with the truth of God’s word, and apply it with wisdom, not folly. Now when you are challenged over speaking the truth to someone about the gospel of Jesus Christ, like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came... yet it did not fall” (Mt 7:24, 25). We can avoid the wrath of God by listening to and following the truth of God. We can stand on the truth of Christ’s words, not opinions.