



Marriage of Good & Truth

FaithBuilder 4 | Lesson 18 | Conjugal Love

Lesson Overview

1. BrainBuilder

What are “truth” and “good”? How do they help save us? p.1.

2. Read

The marriage of good and truth and its opposite, the marriage of evil and falsity. pp. 1-2

3. Discuss

How does the marriage of good and truth relate to our lives? p.3

New Church Concept Life of Truth from Love

By itself truth has no life except from the celestial flowing in. The celestial consists in love and charity, and all truth exists from these; and because all truth exists from these it is nothing else than a kind of vessel. What is more, truths themselves are plainly manifested as such in the next life, for there it is not the truths themselves that are seen but the life they have within them, that is, the celestial things within them that consist of love and charity. It is from these that truths are made celestial. *Arcana Coelestia* 1495

BrainBuilder

1. What is “truth”?

There are various kinds of truth. Truth can be natural—e.g. the earth moves around the sun. It can also be spiritual—e.g. God created and sustains the universe. All genuine spiritual truth is revealed in the Word. We cannot know what is *genuinely* true spiritually unless we read the Word.

2. What part does *knowing* truth play being saved (going to heaven)?

Knowing truth does not save. It allows us to identify false ideas and evil actions we want to do or have done in the past, and to fight against them. True ideas alone have no power to save until we choose to act on them. When we go to the spiritual world angels do not ask what we know, but how we have lived. See *Arcana Coelestia* 1495, on left.

3. What is “good?”

Doing what is true. *Genuine* good is when people do what is right because they *want* to—not because they are told to or because they know it’s the right thing to do.

Read

Our lives in this world revolve around what we *want to do* (will) and what we *need to learn* (understand) to achieve our goals. For example, people who love to play video games may set a goal of mastering a game. They may start out by playing the game and seeing what happens. When they get stuck and need help to get to a new level they may look for hints (or “cheats”) online or get help from friends who *know* more about the game because they’ve played it before. In the end it will probably take a lot of time actually playing a game to fully master it.

Achieving a goal involves *wanting* something and then linking the desire to have it with the *knowledge* of how to get it. Even when we have both desire and knowledge it may take a lot of practice before we enjoy the results or “taste the fruits” of our desires. These fruits are the tangible results of the marriage between what we want and the knowledge that helps us achieve it. They are the “spiritual children” of this marriage. The Writings call this the marriage of good and truth.

Let’s take a look at how the marriage of good loves and true ideas works when we set a goal—for example, the goal of going to heaven. A recent online survey* found that most people believe there is a heaven. The majority of people who believe there is a heaven also had the idea that leading a good life would affect a person’s chances of getting to heaven. The Writings explain the importance of connecting our beliefs about heaven with putting them into practice.

New Church Concept Marriage of Good & Truth

Heaven is granted only to those who *know the way to it and walk in that way*. This way can be known to some extent from knowing the character of those who constitute heaven, and from knowing that no one becomes an angel or comes into heaven except one who brings an angelic character with him from the world. Present in an angelic character is a knowledge of the way from walking in it, and a walking in the way through a knowledge of it. See *Divine Providence* 60

Developing heavenly character traits involves *learning* the steps that lead to heavenly life and being *willing* to practice these steps again and again—putting into practice the *marriage of good and truth*.

There is an opposite marriage that takes place when people connect false ideas with selfish loves, the *marriage of evil and falsity*. Just as there are natural and spiritual levels of truth, there are also levels of falsity. For example on a natural level it appears as if the sun revolves around the earth. Although this is not really true, we can understand the genuine truth of the situation to a lesser or greater extent, depending on how much we know and how accurately we are able to interpret what we see. Spiritual falsities are true ideas from the Word (Divine truths) that have been twisted and claim to be Divine truth, but are not.

The destructive marriage of evil and falsity takes place in a person when he or she chooses to act selfishly, and twists true ideas into false ones to support his or her selfish desires. The false ideas then become the tool through which evil works and becomes harmful.

People who are in evils cannot do otherwise than think from them to falsities. For evils are of their will and consequently of their love, and falsities are of their thought and consequently of their faith. For what a person wills, he loves; and what he loves, he confirms and defends. And evils cannot be confirmed and defended except by means of falsities. *Arcana Coelestia* 7437.2

So false ideas are what we use to defend and justify selfish choices and actions. In choosing to act selfishly and justify the choice to do so again and again, a person eventually confirms him or herself in a life that leads to hell through putting into practice the *marriage of evil and falsity*.

*see www.religioustolerance.org

The inmost origin of conjugal (marriage) love is the marriage between good and truth. No one has seen that there is a union between good and truth because goodness is not visible to the sight of the understanding as truth is, and therefore knowledge of it has remained hidden.... To the natural sight of reason, good and truth appear to have no connection. This can be seen from when people talk about good and truth. E.g., when they say, "This is good," they have no thought of truth. And when they say, "This is true," neither do they have any thought of good.

As a result, many believe that truth is something completely separate, likewise goodness. Many also believe as well that a person is intelligent and wise and thus truly human according to the truths that he thinks, speaks, writes, and believes, and not at the same time according to his goodness.

We will now explain that good does not exist apart from truth, nor truth apart from good, consequently that there is an eternal marriage between them, and that this marriage is the origin of conjugal love....

In the animal kingdom, good's truth or truth resulting from good is masculine, and truth's consequent goodness or good resulting from that truth is feminine.... From the marriage of good and truth flowing in from the Lord comes love for the opposite sex and also conjugal love. See *Conjugal Love* 83

Discuss

Choose questions for discussion.

1. Explain the “marriage of good and truth” in your own words.
2. Why is having a variety of sources of “truth” (natural/spiritual) important?
3. The Writings tell us that conjugal (marriage) love “descends from the marriage of good and truth in the heavens.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 9961.4) This heavenly marriage takes place when the angels receive the Lord’s goodness into their lives. How can we receive the Lord so that we can be joined with him?
4. Why is it impossible to be in heaven when true ideas are not connected to good loves and actions in our lives?
5. Why is the saying, “If it feels good, it must be good!” dangerous?
6. What are the implications of the marriage of good and truth, and the marriage of evil and falsity in our own lives? Or in our relationships with others.
7. How might the marriage of good and truth play out in our relationships with others?
8. How do “falsities” come into being?
9. Why is it important to reflect on the marriage of good and truth, and the marriage of evil and falsity?
10. Can a person who knows what’s true go to hell? Why or why not?
11. There are two kinds of falsity. The first kind—believing that the sun moves around the earth, is an appearance. People believe this because they have not been taught otherwise, and it appears to be that way. The second kind—twisting true spiritual ideas in order to justify our selfish loves—is a deliberate choice. Can people who are in either kind of falsity go to heaven? Why or why not?
12. What is the relationship between the marriage of good and truth relate and a person’s freedom and rationality?

When Is a Person in Heaven?

A person is not in heaven until good is present within him. If merely the knowledge of truths, called the truths of faith, is present in a person he does no more than stand in front of the door; or if, knowing those truths, he is looking towards good he goes through into the porch. But if, in knowing those truths, he is not looking towards good he cannot see heaven, not even from a long way off. The reason for saying that a person is not in heaven until good is present within him is that a person must have heaven within him while in the world if he is to enter it after death. For heaven exists within people; and it is granted in mercy to those who during their life in the world allow themselves to be led by means of the truths of faith into charity towards the neighbor and into love to the Lord, that is, into good. People are not in heaven until they have come into that state in which the Lord leads them by means of good. By good is meant the good of life; and the good of life consists in doing what is good *because there is a will for what is good*, and a will for what is good springs from love; for what a person loves, he wills. *Arcana Coelestia* 9832