

Jesus prayed for his disciples:

**“Sanctify them by the truth;  
your word is truth.”** Jn. 17:17

This morning I put a razor to my throat—and nothing bad happened! However, nothing good happened either. When I absent-mindedly grabbed the razor and ran it down my cheek, it slid off my face so fast I almost dropped it. The cover was still on the razor! That certainly wasn't what I expected to happen. I really did want the razor to do some cutting.

The Word of God is sharper than any double-edged razor. It “penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” Its sharpness delivers to us the truth of God—the truth that sanctifies us. Just like we put a razor to our bodies to sanctify them for better presentation to the world around us, God sanctifies us by his truth. But like my shaving experience this morning, we sometimes fail to expose ourselves to its cutting edge. Maybe the blade needs to be loosed from the cover!

It occurs to me that our relationship to the Word of God should be much like our relationship to the daily shave. We need it, and want it. The cutting edge of scripture should work on us all the days of our lives. We should find ourselves feeling uncomfortable and unkempt when there has been a prolonged absence of its cutting effect. How sanctified by the truth are you feeling today?

We notice in scripture that the Jewish people had great regard for the text. They believed that every person (young and old) should have a great familiarity with God's text. Teachers assumed that a Jewish audience had a considerable acquaintance with scripture. One of the strategies that a Jewish rabbi would use in his teaching was to allude to a scripture text by quoting a word, or very short phrase of it, and expect the audience to fill in the rest of the quote in their own minds— grasping both the full scripture quote and its implication for the message the teacher was wanting to give. Jesus did this often. (Sort of adds another layer of personal responsibility onto Jesus favorite saying to his audiences: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear,” doesn't it?) Amazingly, these teachers expected their allusion to make a dramatic impact on their listeners. Over the next few weeks, on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights, we will be analyzing some of the teaching of Jesus that utilizes this teaching strategy. Join us for these studies as we attempt to discern, ***“What Was Jesus Alluding To?”***

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