



Socrates, the Spirit, and Self

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“Know thyself,” advised the philosopher Socrates. Yet easier said than done. A recent public service ad warning about the dangers of smoking concludes, “The worst lies are the lies you tell yourself, like smoking isn’t that dangerous.” To admit the truth, to come to truth, to live the truth is no small thing.

Have you ever wondered why it takes a lifetime to come to wisdom, why we aren’t born with all the wisdom we need? It would make life so much easier. When Jesus promised us the Spirit, he said, “I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of Truth, he will guide you to all truth” (John 16:12-13). To know ourselves and the truth of who we are can be a painful process, coming to terms with what we do not want to hear. So the Spirit brings us to that wisdom gradually, over the course of a lifetime, lest we run from it.

Paul warns against “immorality and impurity and lust,” and each of us at some point in our lives must come to terms with the truth that if we do not channel our sexuality healthfully it will mess up our lives. Paul warns against “hatred, rivalry, fury, dissensions,” and each of us eventually realizes how any of those can ruin relationships and our very lives. Some of us learn such wisdom early in life, some late, yet coming to Truth is a lifelong journey guided by the Spirit. ●

Reflect

What truth do you know now that you did not know ten or twenty years ago?

The fruit of the Spirit is love,
joy, peace, patience, kindness,
generosity, faithfulness,
gentleness, self-control.

GALATIANS 5:22-23

