



# Scottie Wisdom & Faith

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## Scotties and misinformation

I've been thinking a lot about misinformation. It seems everywhere you turn people have very different ideas about what is correct and what is not. How do we know what is right?

My Scotties have been bitten or aggressively charged by three large black dogs in the neighborhood over the past 10 years. Now they consider any large black dog as a threat. Not all of the large black dogs in the neighborhood are threatening. But the Scotties are stuck with this misinformation that they believe to their core.

Take the COVID situation. Some people believe, deep in their hearts, that the government has misrepresented the situation. Yet, talk to a doctor or nurse who is dealing with the state of affairs, and you will hear that we aren't doing anywhere near enough to protect people. Who is right?

Look at school funding as another example. Many people feel that we are being taxed out of our homes with bond measures that increase our property taxes above the 3 percent restriction measure passed many years ago. They say that's a big part of the cost of housing, which is making matters so difficult for younger families. Most teachers will tell you that they pay for many classroom supplies, out of their own pockets, because school budgets are too small. Who is right?

Then there is the news. Recently a man that I was working with told me this: "I have to watch CNN and then turn to FOX and finally turn them both off and think about what I've heard to try to understand what is really going on."

Even when he does all that, will he really be able to know what is correct?

A lifetime ago journalists were taught to get three solid sources to confirm a story. That went out the window years ago. Each newspaper or television organization simply quotes other organizations who share the same political views as their "sources" for many of their headline stories. Rarely do they go to an actual original source to confirm the information. Nobody has enough time to do real journalism anymore. Thus, the left and the right just feed each other the stories they want to push, often without good sources behind them.

And yet, even though most of us know that we don't really have all the true information that we need for many of the deep beliefs we carry, that doesn't stop us from forming very strong beliefs and sometimes yelling to our brothers and sisters that we are right, and they are wrong.

Many people don't understand the power of their brain to filter information as it comes in. If the brain didn't filter, we'd go mad with information overload. Think about this situation. You're

in the process of buying a new car. You've now focused on a Subaru. Suddenly you see Subaru cars everywhere. You had hardly noticed them before but now your brain is filtering to notice Subaru cars because you are thinking of buying one. And you filter everything else the same way.

How does this relate to misinformation? You have developed a complex filtering system at the subconscious level. Your preconceptions, which you developed over many years, allows in, or shuts out, information based upon those biases.

This means that everyone sees what he or she wants to see.

Are you happy with what you see? If you want to see a better world (and seeking that could actually help you make the world better) make a conscious decision to modify your filters.

Jesus told us that we were not to judge our brothers. The above discussion gives good illustrations why we shouldn't judge others. We make judgments about many things without all the information. So many, if not all, of our judgments about others

and situations are probably wrong. In other words, we build up hate and fear within ourselves completely unnecessarily.

Think about this. You have the power to choose. Decide to choose love over hate, joy over sadness and peace over fear as your filters. If you are upset about something, look at it again from the position of love. How different the above situations would be if we always used love to help us understand them. Imagine dealing with COVID using love and compassion as your only guide.

How different would your discussion be if you used peace as your guide during a conversation about school funding?

Think how you would change your political conversations by using joy as your guide.

My Scotties are smart, but they don't have the complex thinking abilities that we have. They may be stuck with fear inducing misinformation, but we don't have to be.

*"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins." — 1 Peter 4:8 NIV*

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