

What No One Is Asking Scientologist Tom Cruise

Tom Cruise is back in the news with the fifth installment in his *Mission: Impossible* series. Last April, he made headlines for a far different reason: the documentary *Going Clear* alleged that the actor profited personally from the slave labor of Church of Scientology members. Many thought that Cruise's controversial commitment to the church would be part of the media's run-up to his movie's premiere last weekend.

However, the issue has not come up in interviews a single time. Even Jon Stewart, who won an Orwell Award for "distinguished contribution to honesty and clarity in public language," avoided the subject when he interviewed the actor last week.

Meanwhile, a group of nuns in Hollywood are blocking singer Katy Perry's attempt to purchase their convent. Their property is for sale, but the nuns looked through Perry's music videos and weren't pleased with what they saw.

In these cases, the media doesn't care about a performer's personal morality, but a group of elderly nuns does. And our culture's confusion over right and wrong continues.

Dorothy Sayers, in her classic 1947 essay, "The Lost Tools of Learning," observed that effective learning progresses through three stages. The first is the acquisition of information. Children learn the alphabet and numbers, name things and collect knowledge. In the second stage, children and adolescents seek to understand what they have learned. "Why?" becomes their dominant question. In the third stage, students begin to synthesize knowledge, making it their own and

applying it to life.

I wonder what Sayers would think of learning in our digital age. Educators worry that the Internet makes cheating easy, shortens attention spans and affects our work ethic. Most significantly, they note that we don't feel the need to learn information as we once did. So long as your smartphone is handy, the world is a few clicks away. But we cannot understand what we don't know. And we can't apply what we don't understand.

As I once heard Henry Kissinger say, we have more information than ever before, but less wisdom.

The dictionary defines wisdom as "the ability to discern or judge what is true, right or lasting." If we cannot "judge what is true," we are left to the vagaries of popular opinion and shifting cultural sands. From same-sex marriage to marijuana legalization to euthanasia, reality has not changed, but public perceptions have. And perception is reality, or so we're told.

Where do you need "the ability to discern or judge what is true" today?

First, value wisdom: "Through wisdom is a house built, and by understanding it is established" (Prov. 24:3). Second, spend time with wise people: "Hear counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days" (Prov. 19:20). Most of all, turn to your Lord: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally and without criticism, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5).

Seven different groups in the New Testament called Jesus "rabbi." But not all who called Him their rabbi obeyed what He taught. He understood the reason: "If a man loves Me, he will keep My word. ... He who does not love Me does not keep My words" (John 14:23, 24).

Jim Denison, Ph.D., is founder of the Denison Forum on Truth and Culture, a non-sectarian “think tank” designed to engage contemporary issues with biblical truth. Join over 100,000 who read Dr. Denison’s daily Cultural Commentary: . For more information on the Denison Forum, visit . To connect with Dr. Denison in social media, visit or