

Core Study Series

THE TRUTH ABOUT TRUTH

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INTRODUCTION:

“Truth has nothing to fear but men fear the truth.” WHY?

“Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I SHOULD BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH. Everyone who is of THE TRUTH hears My voice.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘WHAT IS TRUTH?’ And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, ‘I find not fault in Him AT ALL’ (John 18:37, 38).

Almost two-thousand years ago, Pilate asked the question that mankind had asked centuries before, and has asked centuries since: ***“What is truth?”***

To the question, **What is truth?** Man has answered in numerous ways. Here are some of those answers:

1. *Truth is a label we assign to propositions we agree on that has a set of rules that are acceptable.*
2. *Truth is a set of cultural norms agreed to by a segment of society.*
3. *Truth is a hypothesis that is proven by acceptable evidential facts.*
4. *Truth is what is “real for each person”—may differ from person to person.*
5. *Truth is merely a word pursued endlessly through epistemological inquiry and research.*
6. *Truth is conformity—the correspondence between two different things that are in agreement.*
7. *Truth is fundamental to every aspect of life; we cannot go to the greater without the fundamental.*
8. *Truth is an elusive linguistic search where answers never become stable or permanent.*
9. *Truth is metaphysical and is contained in the spiritual universe.*
10. *Truth is the opposite of a known lie.*
11. *Truth is in direct contrast to concealment, delusion, lying, falsehood, cheating, betrayal, fraud, etc.*
12. *Truth is the higher use of pragmatism—what works in a given situation.*
13. *Truth is a label we stamp on something “proven by our five senses” (i.e., the rain is cold).*
14. *Truth is fundamental rules of math, sports, chemistry, biology, etc. agreed to universally.*
15. *Truth is not just intellectual acceptance, truth is also DOING (cf. James 1:21-26).*
16. *Truth is harmonizing two contradictory statements or events, etc. that one or both may be false.*
17. *Truth is the core of all relationships seeking agreement between all parties involved, based on truth.*
18. *Truth is Christ and God’s word (John 1:14-17; 17:17; 14:6; 18:37, 38; Proverbs 23:23).*
19. *Truth is knowable and is contained in God’s word (John 8:32, 36); truth is Christ Who sets us free.*
20. *Truth is sharable (Ephesians 4:15).*

“What is worse than doing evil, is being evil” (Ethics, p.67). To lie is wrong, but what is worse than the lie is the liar, for the liar contaminates everything he says, because everything he says is meant to further a cause that is false. The liar as liar has endorsed a world of falsehood and deception, and to focus only on the truth or falsity

of his particular statements is to miss the danger of being caught up in this twisted world” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer).

“Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the FATHER OF IT. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me” (John 8:43-45).

NOTE: This Core Study Series lesson is about THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TRUTH

A LIE—THE ENEMY OF TRUTH

QUIZ:

1. Where was the first lie, in human history, told? _____

2. Who told the first lie? _____

3. To whom was the first lie told? _____

4. What was the content of the first lie? _____

5. What were the consequences of believing and obeying the first lie? _____

PERSONAL ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES RELATIVE TO TRUTH

Before we go deeper into our study of truth, take a few minutes and respond to the following quiz about your current attitude and practices relative to the truth. Using a self-grading scale of **1 to 100**, give yourself a grade for each of the following statements:

- ___ 1. How important is truth to you in marital relationships?
- ___ 2. How important is truth to you in medical issues?
- ___ 3. How important is truth to you in dealing with friends?
- ___ 4. How important is truth to you when communicating with your neighbors?
- ___ 5. How important is truth to you when dealing with politics and politicians?
- ___ 6. How important is truth to you when dealing with family issues and problems?
- ___ 7. How important is truth to you in business dealings?
- ___ 8. How important is truth to you in religious and spiritual issues?
- ___ 9. How important is truth to you in media matters?
- ___ 10. How important is truth to you in dealing with siblings?

- ___ 11. How important is truth to you in facing your personal—“know thyself”—issues?
- ___ 12. How important is truth to you in all communication efforts?
- ___ 13. How important is truth to you in our criminal justice system?
- ___ 14. How important is truth to you in education?
- ___ 15. How important is truth to you in Scripture interpretation?
- ___ 16. How important is standing for the truth important to you?
- ___ 17. How important is it to you to be known as a truthful person?
- ___ 18. How important is it to you to be told the truth, regardless of circumstances?
- ___ 19. How important is it to you to be sure all advice is truthful?
- ___ 20. How important is it to you to truthfully confess your need for help?
- ___ 21. How important is it to you to speak the truth in love?
- ___ 22. How important is it to you to share the truth of the Gospel with others?
- ___ 23. How important is it to you to never stop your quest for the truth?
- ___ 24. How important is it to you to live truth in every aspect of your life?
- ___ 25. How important is it to you to sacrifice for the truth?
- ___ 26. How important is it to you to be consistent in practicing truths you say are important?

APPLICATION:

We must note that it is one thing to affirm the importance of truth in one of the above areas; yet, totally something else to practice it in our day-to-day lives. We must be careful not to fall into the attitude and practices of the scribes and Pharisees. Here is what Jesus said about them: “...for they say, and do not do” (*Matthew 23:3*). Therefore, one way we “buy the truth and sell it not” (*Proverbs 23:23*), is by DOING it (cf. James 1:22-26).

BIG TRUTHS ABOUT THE TRUTH

HERE IS A WARNING: Timothy 4:1-5 (Prophecy by the Holy Spirit—“Speaking lies”).

A. What are the biggest truths about truth?

1. John 8:32, “You can know the truth”
2. John 8:32, “It alone will set you free.” It is Jesus, (John 8:36).
3. Proverbs 23:23, “You can buy the truth.” Through study and owning once learned.
4. Acts 5:3, “Satan fills our hearts with lies” (Like Eve in the Garden).
5. Rev. 21:8, “A lie may cause a person to lose his soul.”
6. Gal. 5:7, “Truth makes enemies” (The church in Galatia).
7. 1 Tim. 3:15, “The church is pillar and ground of truth.”

B. Truth is the rock foundation of everything in life:

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| 1. Character | 8. Decisions | 15. Spirituality |
| 2. Ethics | 9. Happiness | 16. Science |
| 3. Communication | 10. Morals | 17. Freedom |
| 4. Values | 11. Successes | 18. Integrity |
| 5. Relationships | 12. Trust | 19. Fidelity |
| 6. Valor | 13. Faithfulness | 20. Honesty |

C. What are some enemies of the truth?

1. Lie (The opposite of truth), “White lie” is still a lie. “Mental reservation is a sin, too.”
2. Power
3. Money
4. Self-pleasure
5. Deception for personal gain
6. Refusing to consider—closedmindedness
7. Propaganda through media sources: advertisements, etc.
8. Authority—status—position, dictator, counsel, etc.
9. Lack of reasoning skills or questioning.
10. No interest, mind made up, prejudice.
11. Manipulation
12. Concealment

D. Let the Bible speak about truth (The one true, and only impeccable source of truth):

1. Psalm 15:2, 3: “Speak truth in our hearts”
2. Ephesians 4:15, “Speaking the truth in love may grow thereby”
3. 1 John 1:6, “Truth affirms our walk in the light.”
4. Philippians 4:, “Truth is part of our thinking agenda”
5. John 14:6, “Jesus, ‘I am the way, the truth...’”.
6. John 4:24, “Must worship God in spirit and in truth.”
7. John 17:17; 1:17, “Jesus is the source of truth—the Gospel”.
8. Psalm 119:30, “We have the ability to choose the way of truth.”
9. 2 Timothy 2:15, “Must correctly handle the word of truth.”
10. James 1:18, “We have been begotten by the word of truth.”
11. Galatians 4:16, “Can be hindered from obeying the truth.” How?
12. John 1:14, “Jesus is ‘Full of grace and TRUTH.’” Source (John 8:36; 10:27).
13. Psalm 29:3-11, “Truth is the “voice” of God (cf. Hebrews 3:7; 4:7)
14. 1 Corinthians 14:10, “Truth is tied to language”—do we understand—“Unknown tongue.”
15. Numbers 23:19, “*God is not a man that He should lie*” (Titus 1:2).
16. Psalm 31:5; Isaiah 65:16, “*God is the God of truth.*” *Truth is His nature.*
17. John 14:16, 17, “*The Holy Spirit is truth.*” (cf. John 15:16; 16:13; 1 John 5:6).
18. Psalm 33:4, “*All of God’s words are faithful and true.*”
19. 2 Timothy 2:15, “*Rightly handling the word of truth.*”
20. Psalm 145:18, “*We draw close to God by the truth.*”
21. Titus 1:1, “*Knowledge of the truth leads to godliness.*”
22. Ephesians 6:13-15, “*Relying on the truth helps us win the spiritual warfare.*”
23. 1 Peter 1:22, “*We purify our souls by obeying the truth.*”
24. John 3:21, “*Living the truth brings us into the light and keeps us in the light*” (1 John 1:5-9).
25. Romans 1:25, “*Mankind can exchange the truth for a lie*” (Romans 2:8).

E. How to ascertain what is truth. How do you? Several ways. Major way is asking QUESTIONS:

1. Does the “new truth” contradict “older known truths”?
2. Who is the source of the “new truth”? Credentials? Authority? Proof? Ethical?
3. Is it contextually provable by the Bible? 1 Peter 4:11; Matthew 4:1-4.
4. How does it elevate society, mankind, ethics, values, morals, etc.?
5. Where do we see Jesus practicing, approving, or teaching the truth? Scriptures?
6. Does it bring you closer to Christ-likeness and glorifying God? (Philippians 2:4-9; Ephesians 2:21).

7. Study, study, and study! (Proverbs 23:23; 2 Timothy 2:15).
8. Inductive—deductive reasoning with rational and biblical thought.

F. QUESTIONS about truth:

1. What are some reasons why people are reluctant to TELL the truth?
2. What are some reasons why people are reluctant to HEAR the truth?
3. Why do some people freely, quickly, and openly tell the truth?
4. Why do some people use—or don't use—discretion in telling the truth?
5. How do some people twist the truth?
6. When do some people choose not to tell the truth? Why?
7. What does *"Buy the truth and sell it not"* (Proverbs 23:23), mean?
8. How does a person's attitude about truth impact his lifestyle?
9. Why doesn't truth have anything to fear?
10. Why are some people hesitant or fearful of obeying the truth?

G. Thirteen MAJOR things we need to know the truth about:

All truths are important but not all truths are of equal importance. For example the truth about a skin pimple is important but not as important as the truth about a melanoma skin cancer; especially in selecting a procedure to respond to the skin condition. In my understanding as a Christian, the following 13 areas are part of what I call core truths we need to know and practice. It's not to minimize any other truths.

1. The truth about God's existence, attributes and love for everybody, regardless (John 3:16).
2. The truth about the origin of mankind and the universe (cf. Genesis 1-3).
3. The truth about the integrity and inspiration of the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15-17).
4. The truth about Jesus as the ONLY Savior (John 10:19; 14:6).
5. The truth about the sinfulness of sin (Isaiah 59:1, 2; John 8:24-29).
6. The truth about how amazing God's grace is (Ephesians 2:5-9).
7. The truth about the need and results of obeying the Gospel (Mark 16:15, 16; Romans 1:14-16).
8. The truth about the essentialness of faithfulness unto death (Revelation 2:10).
9. The truth about life, death, and beyond (Hebrews 9:27).
10. The truth about the blessings of worshiping God in "spirit and in truth" (John 4:23, 24).
11. The truth about the continual blessing of forgiveness of sin (1 John 1:6-9).
12. The truth about being a faithful steward in every area of life (1 Corinthians 4:1, 2).
13. The truth about being a co-worker with God (1 Corinthians 3:7-9).

H. Why do people, once they have known the truth, abandon the truth?

1. The lust of the flesh leads them back into sin and the world (James 1:11-17; 1 John 5:19).
2. They fail to discipline the flesh (cf. Galatians 5:21-26).
3. They failed to count the cost of following Christ (Matthew 16:24).
4. They failed to grow spiritually (2 Peter 1:5-11).
5. They love the things of the world (Demas, 2 Timothy 4:10).
6. They have "eyes full of adultery" (2 Peter 2:14).
7. Their minds aren't "set on things above" (Colossians 3:2).
8. They are "conformed to the things of the world" (Romans 12:1, 2).
9. They haven't developed the "attitude of Christ" (Philippians 3:4-9).
10. They don't ingest, digest and activate God's word—spiritual food (Matthew 4:1-6).

I. Wrong attitudes toward the truth:

1. You can have an attitude that changes the truth into a lie (Romans 1:25).
2. You can have an attitude that reject and disobeys the truth (Romans 2:8).
3. You can have an attitude that refuses to love the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10).
4. You can have an attitude that walks contrary to the truth (Galatians 2:17).
5. You can have an attitude that refuses to believe the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:12).
6. You can have an attitude that is destitute of the truth (1 Timothy 6:5).
7. You can have an attitude that never comes to the truth (2 Timothy 3:7).
8. You can have an attitude that resists the truth (2 Timothy 3:8).
9. You can have an attitude that turns from the truth (2 Timothy 4:4).
10. You can have an attitude that refuses to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).
11. You can have an attitude that doesn't rejoice in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).
12. You can have an attitude that refuses to contribute to the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16).
13. You can have an attitude the refuses to share the Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:2).
14. You can have an attitude that doesn't encourage others to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24, 25).
15. You can have an attitude that doesn't love as God intends (1 John 3:18).

J. Obeying the truth that leads to eternal life:

You may know the truth about a "101" things but if you don't know and obey the truth that related to eternal life, you have missed the most important reason for knowing the truth about the truth. Here is a brief look at the truth that leads to eternal life. Every person has four major problems: (1) All have sinned—a sin problem (Romans 3:23; 6:23), (2) life is filled with struggles—a life problem (Job 14:1), (3) death is up ahead for all of us—a grave problem (Hebrews 9:27), and (4) eternity is the destiny of every person—a destiny problem. God through the TRUTH has provided the answers to our four problems.

1. First and foremost the truth that leads to eternal life is Jesus Christ. He is *the way, the truth and the life* (John 14:6). He is the truth that sets sinners free (John 8:32, 36). Therefore, Jesus is the *"author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him"* (Hebrews 5:8, 9).
2. Second, Jesus commanded the preaching of the Gospel and forgiveness of sins to those obeyed it (cf. mark 16:15, 16; Matthew 28:18-20). Paul wrote that the Gospel is the *"death, burial and resurrection of Christ"* (1 Corinthians 15:1-6). We share in it when we are *Buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life* (Romans 6:1-7).
3. Third, obedience to the Gospel is predicated on believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24-31; 3:16). The Gospel message produces faith (Romans 1:14-16; 10:17).
4. Fourth, in order to follow Christ a person must "count the cost" which related to denial of self, taking up a cross and following Jesus (cf. Matthew 10:24).
5. Fifth, Jesus made it clear than unless a person *repents he will perish* (cf. Luke 13:3, 5). Repentance means to "change the mind, to have another mind, to go from one mind to another." The change of mind (inward) leads to a change of outward behavior. The fruits of repentance is seen in a person's life.

6. Sixth, Jesus was very clear relative to the essentialness of a person *“being born anew by water and Spirit”* (John 3:1-6). This is experiences in immersion into Christ (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27).
7. Seventh, as a “new creation” in Christ the journey of being faithful unto death has begun (Revelation 2:10; Romans 1:17-20). Growing *“into the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ”* has begun and will never end (cf. Ephesians 4:11-16). On this journey you work on maturing in the *“fruit of the Spirit”* (Galatians 5:22-26).
8. Eighth, your objective as a growing member of the Body of Christ is to be a DOER of God’s word (James 1:21-27). This is the blessing of being a co-worker with God (1 Corinthians 3:9). As a branch in the Vine (Christ) you bear “much fruit” (John 15:1-8).
9. Ninth, as a “born again” child of God, you are now blessed and privileged to glorify God through *“worshiping God in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:23, 24; Ephesians 2:21). This worshiped in expressed in praying, singing, communion, stewardship, teaching, sharing, and living a godly life (cf. 2 Peter 1:3).
10. Tenth, as a member of the Body of Christ you have the honor, place and command to have a spiritual and positive influence on all the other members of the body. You are a supplier (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 4:11-17).

K. A lie has never freed anyone for very long, or if at all:

1. A lie may make a person feel good for a while, but sooner or later will expose and let down.
2. A lie may make you look smart and good for a while, but will sooner or later expose you.
3. A lie may be culturally acceptable, but God condemns it.
4. A lie may help you be in with the “In crowd”, but will cause conflict with God.
5. A lie may help you avoid punishment for a while, but Judgment Day is coming (Hebrew 9:27).
6. A lie may be a manmade law, but God’s word is the eternal standard (cf. John 12:48).
7. A lie is still a lie if a million people say it isn’t. God determines what truth is.
8. A lie may be popular—“everybody is doing it”—God, not the crowd, is the Judge
9. A lie may be a “creed” or tenant of “faith”, so-called, but God rejects and condemns.
10. A lie may be in vogue for centuries, but it is still a lie from God’s standard.
11. A lie is a blinder of one’s mind, heart, soul, and volition.
12. A lie closes the doors to heaven, if not forgiven by God (cf. Revelation 21:8).

L. Why do people lie—some for no “reason”?

“I’m not upset that you lied to me, I’m upset that from now on I can’t believe you” (Friedrich Nietzsche).

“If you tell the truth, you don’t have to remember anything” (Mark Twain).

“You have not lied to men but to God” (Acts 5:4).

The question relative to “why do people lie?” As far as psychological research is concerned, the answer is complicated. Why? Because people lie for various reasons. Some of the reasons why people lie include the following:

1. Some people lie to avoid being punished, rejected, or ostracized.
2. Some people lie in order to control and manipulate others or a situation.
3. Some people lie to appear admired by others or to be among the popular group.
4. Some people lie because of low self-esteem and poor self-image.
5. Some people lie because they can't tell the difference between a lie and truth.
6. Some lie to avoid being shamed, exposed, or made fun of, etc.
7. Some have a sociopathic disorder related to brain chemistry.
8. Some lie because of various personality disorders: "Eating disorder may lie about caloric intake, etc.
9. Some lie to avoid hurting someone else's feelings.
10. Some lie to avoid personal embarrassment (e.g. level of education, places traveled, etc.)
11. Some lie because it is "expected" in certain situations, e.g. "white lies."
12. Some lie to get out of an immediate predicament, consequence, or exposure.

BEWARE OF MIXTURES

"What is the nature of the border between truths and lies? It is permeable and blurred because it is planted with rumors, confabulation, misunderstanding and twisted tales. Truth can break the gates down, truth can howl in the street; unless truth is pleasing, personable and easy to like, she is condemned to stay whispering at the back door" (Hilary Mantel).

The people in Isaiah's day wanted only to hear "sweet" things from their teachers and leaders. *"Who say to the seer, 'Do not see,' and to the prophets, 'Do not prophesy to us right things; speak SMOOTH (Hebrew sweet) things, prophesy deceits. Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to CEASE from before us'" (Isaiah 30:10, 11; cf. 30:8, 9).* Can you imagine this attitude by God's people? Yet, the apostle Paul wrote this to the Christians in Galatia, *"Have I become your enemy because I have told you the truth?"* He told Timothy there would come a time when people would selected only preachers who "tickled their ears" (2 Timothy 4:1-6).

Restaurants in the south serve an ice tea called the "half and half". It is half sweet tea mixed with half unsweet tea. This mixing reduces the sugar intake and calories. Some medications warn on labels that they are not to be taken with certain foods or other drugs. We all know about the warning of drivers' not mixing alcohol with driving. Mixing can be positive or negative. Truth is pure—100 %—without mixtures of any kind. 99% won't do! As we have noted a lie has never, and never will, free a person from the bondage of sin. Only the TRUTH sets us free (cf. John 8:32, 36).

In Matthew, chapter 13, Jesus taught several parables about the consequences of improperly sowing the word, improper reception of the word, not doing the word, and mixing other things with the word. The word—TRUTH—can be contaminated by man. I believe there is a principles to be gained from 13:24-30: "The seed and weeds" parable. Satan and men sow lies mixed with truth in order to weaken, harm, and even destroy the effects of the truth. Mixing the truth (seed) with "small errors" (tares) will usually go unnoticed. The truth can be concealed or buried under a "white lie" or conversely. It's like half and half tea: it has just enough sweet flavor to satisfy the taste buds. But truth, in contrast, to ice tea, when mixed with lies can be deadly. Half-truths don't free, neither does 99% truth free. It is the "Whole truth and nothing else but the truth that frees" (cf. John 1:17; 8:32, 36; 17:17; Proverbs 23:23). Beware of mixtures. A lie nor a half-truth has never freed anyone.

Remember Abraham? He mixed a half-truth with a lie relative to his relationship to Sarah. He told a foreign leaders, King Abimelech (Genesis 20), “*she is my sister*”, rather than admit “*she is my wife and my half-sister.*” Abraham had told this same lie previously (cf. Genesis 12:10-13). It was easy to slip back into it again. Sarah was Abraham’s half-sister. Many call this a “white lie”; told by Abraham to protect Sarah. He didn’t qualify his relationship with Sarah. His half and half tea became sour tea. While a “spoon full of sugar may make the medicine go down”, a spoon full of lies will not make the truth go down. That is, not from God’s standpoint. Just as oil and water don’t mix, truth and lies don’t mix.

Why would people try to mix a lie with the truth?

What are some contemporary examples of people mixing lies with the truth?

What are some ways to prevent mixing lies with the truth?

NOTICE!

This content and much more will be contained in a soon to be published book, ***Buy The Truth And Do Not Sell It*** (Proverbs 23:23). Watch for its release on this website.