

## Love of the Truth

We live in a time when many play loose with the truth. Whether it is politicians, people in the media, advertisers, or tele-evangelists, we see many who seem to have no problem in deceiving others, as long as there is some small shred of truth somewhere inside what they say.

We need to be careful not to be influenced by the world around us, not to be pressed into its mold.

**Romans 12:2** 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

If we aren't careful, it is easy to fall into the trap of letting this world's standards control us. We may begin to feel it is okay, to mislead others, as long as what we say is technically true.

We are called to a higher standard. We should love the truth.

**2 Thessalonians 2:8-13** 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. 13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

Not just tolerating or merely accepting the truth, this scripture talks about the dangers of not loving the truth. Here the ones, who didn't love the truth, were judged and perished. We also see one of the reasons people have for not loving the truth, they "took pleasure in wickedness". We need to be careful that we don't get so caught up in what we want, that we are willing to bend the truth to get it.

## Costs/Temptations

Next I want to look at some of the costs or other temptations that can take us away from the truth.

**John 9:20-21** 20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself." 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.

One temptation is being afraid of the consequences. Here they were afraid of the Jews. We often see this with young children, who don't tell the truth being afraid of the result. But in this scripture, it was parents, not young children that were afraid. We need to be on guard that fear of what others will think or do, doesn't weaken our love for the truth.

**Matthew 19:20-22** 20 The young man \*said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?" 21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

Here the truth was told, but there was a cost. The young man Jesus spoke to went away. We too, may lose someone when we tell the truth. We can be tempted to weaken or water it down. Again, we remember that we are called to love the truth.

**John 6:63-66** 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. 65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." 66 As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

Another example where the truth was told, but there was a cost. This time many disciples withdrew. Telling the truth may affect our popularity. We may find many people withdrawing from us.

**Luke 6:26** 26 Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.

People may speak poorly about us for the truth, We may be called negative, judgemental, or worse.

**Galatians 4:16** 16 So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

Telling the truth may make enemies.

**Matthew 22:16** 16 And they \*sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any.

In this question we see another temptation to untruth, being partial. Our love of the truth goes beyond whether the one affected is a friend or loved-one.

## Importance

Next, I want to look at a few verses to remind us of the importance of the truth.

**Revelation 21:8** 8 But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

A simple, flat, uncomfortably direct statement, all liars part is the lake that burns with fire. We need to realize the consequences are serious.

**1 Timothy 4:1-2** But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

Liars, seared in their own conscience. Lies have a way of growing. Telling one lie, makes it easier to tell the next. It starts us on a slide down a path, we don't want to take.

**Psalm 5:6** You destroy those who speak falsehood; The Lord abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.

**Romans 1:18-19** 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

The wrath of God is revealed against men who suppress the truth.

**1 Peter 3:8-12** 8 To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. 10 For, “The one who desires life, to love and see good days, Must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. 11 “He must turn away from evil and do good; He must seek peace and pursue it. 12 “For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

**Psalm 15:1-2** O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? 2 He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart.

What is required to abide with God? We need to speak truth in our hearts.

**Jeremiah 5:1** “Roam to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, And look now and take note. And seek in her open squares, If you can find a man, If there is one who does justice, who seeks truth, Then I will pardon her.

We see in this Old Testament example the importance our seeking truth can have on those around us, our people, our nation.

**Galatians 2:13-14** 13 The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, “If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?

Not being true, not only in our speech but also our actions, affects those around us. We can be responsible for leading someone else astray.

**John 8:44** 44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Whose side are we on, when we lie? Who is our father when we lie?

## What is Truth?

What is the truth? This can be a sarcastic question by those who don't care about the answer.

**John 18:37-38** 37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." 38 Pilate \*said to Him, "What is truth?"

We know the background to Pilate's question. The truth wasn't going to control what he did. He found nothing wrong, but feared the people, feared the results .

Just a few chapters earlier, Jesus gave the answer to this question in one of his prayers.

**John 17:17** 17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

God's word is truth. Not our opinions, not our think-so's, not a majority rule. Truth is absolute.

A few chapters earlier yet, we also see a red-letter quote from Jesus with the answer.

**John 14:6** 6 Jesus \*said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

**Hebrews 6:17-18** 17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.

Impossible for God to lie. Shouldn't we have that as our goal.

A verse that more directly shows that our opinions don't enter into it.

**Proverbs 14:12** 12 There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

**Psalms 119:160** 160 The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.

The sum of God's word is truth. We need to look at all of what it says and not take small parts out of context.

**2 Peter 3:15-16** 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Not loving the truth, but being willing to distort leads to destruction. We need to be careful in our own teaching, not to misuse a scripture, even when doing so would support something that is true. We need to love the truth enough that we trust it to be enough.

**Proverbs 24:28** Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, And do not deceive with your lips.

**Jeremiah 9:5** "Everyone deceives his neighbor And does not speak the truth, They have taught their tongue to speak lies; They weary themselves committing iniquity.

Don't deceive with your lips, Don't deceive your neighbor. A couple of verses out of what I could have used, that show that deceit is wrong. A technical truth that deceives still violates these verses.

**Titus 1:13-14** 13 This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.

**Mark 7:6-8** 6 And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 7 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' 8 Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."

God's word is truth. Regardless of what some religious groups teach, traditions aren't. They can be wrong.

## Our Character

**Psalm 34:11-14** Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.  
12 Who is the man who desires life And loves length of days that he may see good? 13  
Keep your tongue from evil And your lips from speaking deceit. 14 Depart from evil and  
do good; Seek peace and pursue it.

**Proverbs 4:23-24** Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs  
of life. 24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth And put devious speech far from you.

**2 Peter 2:1-2** Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy  
and all slander, 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it  
you may grow in respect to salvation,

**1 Peter 2:21-23** 21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered  
for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 who committed no sin,  
nor was any deceit found in His mouth; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in  
return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who  
judges righteously;

**Psalm 51:6** Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You  
will make me know wisdom.

**1 Corinthians 13:5-7** 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not  
provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in  
unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes  
all things, endures all things.



## Conclusion

**Ephesians 5:15-17** 15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

**Psalms 26:2-4** Examine me, O Lord, and try me; Test my mind and my heart. 3 For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, And I have walked in Your truth. 4 I do not sit with deceitful men, Nor will I go with pretenders.

**Ephesians 6:13-14** 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,