

O1 Truthful

Godly leadership is about character. Character means many things and has many components. This four-part study will consider the following character traits: (1) truthful, (2) transparent, (3) teachable, and (4) tender. These four significant pillars of integrity support a successful leader.

(John 18:33-37 NKJV) "Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" {34} Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" {35} Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" {36} Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here" {37} 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." {38} Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"



Pontius Pilate



I. WHAT IS TRUTH?

{ Try to define truth.

Three observations

1. Pilot, a leader, a man in authority, was confused about what truth was. Today, **people are confused about what truth really is**. When this happens to leaders, they, and everyone they have influence over are in trouble. **(It results in false teaching, cults, abuse of God's people.)**
2. Much of the world's belief systems define, or redefine truth, without any **verifiable basis** for their definitions.
3. People often **knowingly distort or misrepresent** the facts to convince others that what they say is truth. In our daily lives and ministry, we will continually encounter such people. It is vital that we know the answer to Pilot's question.

- ☑ **How do we eliminate the confusion?**
- ☑ **How do we sort things out to know the truth?**
- ☑ **How do we recognize and see through the deception?**

PSALM 100:5 NKJV

For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting and His truth endures to all generations.

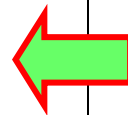
ACTS, Chapter 5

(Acts 5:1-3 NKJV) "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. {2} And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. {3} But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?""

Ananias and his wife publicly promised to give money to the church. Then they lied and misrepresented to the church leadership what the amount they were giving represented. They only mentioned part of the amount they had received. They said they were giving it all, but... **They kept something back.** (Some of the money and part of the truth)

1.

Ananias teaches us that, first of all...
Truth is "Something that keeps nothing back."



What they gave was **not what they claimed it to be.** It was **not the truth.** It was **a lie.** Peter said that in lying to their brothers in the church, they had lied to God.

- When you speak truth, nothing is to be kept back for the purpose of manipulation or misrepresentation. There are to be no secret compartments in the heart.
- Jesus said, "*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*" (Matthew 12:34)
- **Things kept back are poisons stored in the heart.**

The words we speak have power. Truth spoken is life spoken. Lies are spoken to deceive. They cut the speaker's reputation to pieces. They are killers.

- There are to be no secret compartments in the heart.
- Jesus said, "*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*" (Matthew 12:34)
- **Things kept back are poisons stored in the heart.**

2.

Ananias and his wife Sapphira next teach us that **truth is**
"Something that passes the test of telling it to God."

Peter said to Ananias, "*You have not lied to men but to God.*"

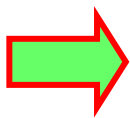
Do we think of our words as only directed toward the people we speak to? They are always directed toward God's ear too. **Are we sensitive to the fact that God is always listening?** ...Or do we ignore that fact? Do we care? When you speak truth, nothing is to be kept back for the purpose of manipulation or misrepresentation.

- Lies are "presumption." (The sin of presumption) There is no "fear of the Lord" in liars. They presume to test God – to demean God. You cannot test God.

Truth never tests God. 

"Presumption" can be described as an attempt to take dominion or authority away from God. No fear of God. Satan was thrown from heaven for the sin of presumption.

- Lies are selfish, self-centered and self-serving.
- Truth is Christ-centered! Truth goes like the wind and blesses the community of mankind.
- The lie is designed to protect the speaker.** In reality, lies always fail to protect. They weave a web of deceit that becomes **a trap** for the liar. The day will come when he or she is exposed by the lie...to people they lie to. (They were already instantly exposed to God.)
- Do not fear exposure to people. Fear exposure to God. He is your judge. Ananias did not lie to men, but to God.



**Truth keeps nothing back!
It passes the test of telling all to God.**

STORY – Coming home from work, a woman stopped at the store on the corner to buy a chicken for supper. The butcher reached into a barrel, grabbed the last chicken he had, put it on the scales behind the counter, and told the woman how much the chicken weighed.

She thought for a moment, and said, "I really need a bit more chicken than that. Do you have any larger ones?"

Without a word, the butcher put the chicken back into the barrel, groped around as though finding another, bigger chicken, but pulled the same chicken out, and placed it on the scales. "This chicken weighs one pound more," he announced. The woman thought about her choices and then said, "Okay. I'll take them both."

(Source unknown)

A DEFINITION OF TRUTH

The narrative of Ananias' lie illustrates OUR THIRD POINT.

3.

Truth is "The clear, complete, and pure expression of the way things are."

Truth simply is what it is. Your words will not alter truth, they can only deliver and describe it. Or ... they can deny it!

- ☑ Words of truth cause grace to flow and God is pleased.
- ☑ Kindness and mercy are released by truth.
- ☑ Christ comes near to you and those you speak to.

(Ephesians 4:29 NKJV) "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."

A DEFINITION OF HALF-TRUTHHalf-truth is **always a mixture**. It will contain some truth, and some (or all) of the following elements:

[1] deception [2] manipulation [3] misrepresentation

Half-truths are actually lies designed to mislead people.**A half-truth is always missing something. It is always mixed with something.**

Ananias' and Sapphira's deception was that they deliberately lied by saying they were bringing the full price of the property to the church. **Why?** They lied for appearance's sake – **to please men**. It was a half-truth. It could have fooled the people. However, Peter had a word of knowledge. You cannot fool God! Only a fool would try.

- Truth, when mixed with deception, manipulation or misrepresentation becomes a lie!
- The person whose lips speak the lie loses integrity and wholeness with every word spoken.

- **It's clear.** There is no confusion,
- **It's complete.** Nothing is deliberately left out.
- **It's pure.** Your motives for telling it are not hidden or evil.
- It's a picture of the way things really are.
- **WHAT YOU SAY IS WHAT THEY GET!**

- A truthful life is a strong, wholesome and successful life. Truthful people are respected and admired.

A half-truth is nothing more or less than a complete lie!

To be truthful is to live a correct, complete and undefiled life in Christ. God has empowered you to be a person of truth. It is the way to success and significance.

What about just keeping silent, when you know you should speak? (Sin of omission)

Silence signals agreement. Silence says, “*I have no objection.*” If you have no objection, but God does, then you are in trouble.

*(Acts 5:7-10a NKJV) “Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. {8} And Peter answered her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?” She said, “Yes, for so much.” {9} Then Peter said to her, “How is it that you have agreed together **to test the Spirit of the Lord?** Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.” {10} Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last...”*

Sapphira’s behavior teaches us that keeping silent in the face of a lie tries to test the Lord. It can indicate that we are in agreement to deceive. We are accountable for this sin.

Silent, deliberate sin is never unseen or unheard by God!

Sin will always close the windows of heaven. It will open the windows of confusion and fear. God will forgive us as we repent.

II. FIVE MORE BIBLICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF TRUTH

Truth cannot be taken lightly. Leaders in the church have great accountability in this matter. Remember, truth begins with these three things.

1. “Something that keeps nothing back.”
2. “Something that passes the test of telling it to God.”

3. “The clear, complete, and pure expression of the way things are”

What else is Truth?

4. **Jesus is the truth.** (John 14:6) *“I am the way, the truth...”*

All truth comes from the Person, the life and the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is not simply the Teacher of Truth; He is Truth!

5. **Truth is something to be done.**

Truth is not just something to say or hear. It is one thing to hear the truth, but it is another thing to act on it - to do it. Are your actions truthful? Do they advance truth?

(John 3:21 NKJV) “But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

John 3:19-21 tells us that truth brings us out of darkness into the light and shows the light to others.

Light represents the presence of God, the knowledge of God, and a Godly path through life.

- What is darkness? = Ignorance + the absence of God
- What is light? = Knowledge + the presence of God
- What does leaving darkness for light (or truthful behavior in place of a deceptive life) do for us?
Answer: Truthful behavior sanctifies us. Truth is an agent of sanctification. It causes us to change from ignorant, darkened, defenseless souls to wise, enlightened people. Therefore, doing the truth causes a change in you and you become God’s person. You become free from the poisonous behavior of deception, which causes decay, doubt and even death. You begin to look like, think like, act like, speak like and love like Jesus! Your light begins to shine and God is glorified.

(Matthew 5:14-16 NKJV) “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. {15} Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. {16} Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

What is Sanctification?

1. To be separated from evil and set apart to God
2. To progressively realize our potential in Christ”

6. Truth is something to be spoken.

Truth must **not** remain silent.

When truth is spoken, it matures us (again, it is an agent of sanctification). It draws everyone closer to Christ.

(Ephesians 4:15 NKJV) "but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ;"

Speaking the truth allows us to be a witness to the character of Christ. Truth in our voice establishes our credibility and trustworthiness. A leader must have credibility and be found trustworthy!

LYING

Nowhere in God's Word is lying recommended or approved. Lying is always a failure to trust God.

(Ephesians 4:22-25 NKJV) "that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, {23} and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, {24} and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. {25} Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another."

(Ephesians 4:29 NKJV) "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."

(Proverbs 12:17 NKJV) "He who speaks truth declares righteousness, But a false witness, deceit."

STORY: On a beautiful day, four young friends decided to go for a drive in the car instead of showing up to class on time. When they did arrive in class, they lied to the teacher. They said they were late because they had a flat tire.

"Since you missed this morning's quiz, you must take it now," the teacher said. "Please sit in the four corner sits in this room without talking – and no cell phones.

When they were seated, the teacher said, "There will be only one question on the test today. On your paper, write the answer and do not to look at each other. Here is the question – **Which tire was flat?**

(Source unknown)

You cannot keep covering up lies with more lies. It becomes too big a burden. You will forget the lie you already said and will contradict yourself.

7. Truth is something to be worn.

You wear it for two reasons:

First, to display it for others to see and desire. You live a truthful life. Others see you and want to catch it!

Second, you wear it for your own protection.

(Psalm 91:4) "He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler."

(Ephesians 6:14 NKJV) "Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,"

8. **God's Word is truth**

Truth has a God-given purpose for us. The Bible says, it effectively works in those who believe.

(1 Thessalonians 2:13 NKJV) "For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."

(Psalms 119:142 NKJV) "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth."

(Psalms 119:151 NKJV) "You are near, O LORD, And all Your commandments are truth."

(John 17:17 NKJV) "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."

What have we learned? Truth is...

1. Something that keeps nothing back
2. Something that passes the test of telling it to God
3. The clear, complete and pure expression of the way things are"
4. Jesus is truth.
5. Truth is something to be done.
6. Truth is something to be spoken.
7. Truth is something to be worn.
8. Truth is God's Word. God's Word is truth.

III. THE MEASURE OF A THOUGHT

Being truthful does not mean we need to tell everybody everything. There are times when it is right to keep a confidence. There are places that are inappropriate to say certain things.

Being truthful means that when we do speak, truthful words come forth. So, how are we to know when it is appropriate to speak the truth? When does wisdom tell us to keep silent? Before you speak, you can always ask yourself these three questions, and then check your heart against the guidelines that follow.

1. Will my words pass the test of pleasing God?

(Always the most important question)

(2 Corinthians 5:9 NKJV) "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him."

We have to ask some additional questions to answer this first one. For example, these two questions will help you to know if what you want to say will please God.

- **Is this the right time** to say what is in your heart, or should you wait until another time?
- **Are these the right people** to hear what you have to say? God's timing and the situation of the moment are always important considerations.

2. I know it is true, but why do I want to say it?

This question helps us to check the motivations and conditions of our hearts. God will judge us for the intent behind the words. If the truth is unnecessarily hurtful, it is best to keep silent and wait until the Holy Spirit convicts and directs you. Then you can *speak the truth in love*.

3. Will my words drive away darkness and bring light... or will they bring more darkness?

GUIDELINES



Here is how the process of turning thoughts into words works. (The thought can be evil, or it can be good. The process works in either case.) [1] We receive a thought. [2] We meditate on it. [3] We give it a place in our hearts. [4] We speak what is in our hearts.

- If we refuse to meditate on it, then it will not find a place to develop in and darken our hearts. It will not be able to influence us.

- If we do meditate on it, then it plants itself deeply in our hearts and, ultimately gains influence and power. If it has been given time and a place in our hearts, it will find its way out of our mouths... into somebody else's heart.

We understand that we cannot always keep thoughts from entering our minds, but there is a God-given method for keeping them from having a home in our hearts. It is out of the abundance of the heart that we will speak. Even the revealing of truth has its appropriate time and place.

Additional Guidelines from Philippians 4:8

There are eight tests we can use to judge whether we are to speak our thoughts at a particular time and place.

(Philippians 4:8 NKJV) "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things."

1. Are they completely true?
2. Are they noble thoughts? (decent, righteous, good)
3. Are they just? (honest, morally honorable)
4. Are they pure? (Can they stand in God's presence?)
5. Are they lovely? (Do the thoughts reflect God's divine design for them... or do they have an unholy designer?)
6. Are they a good report? (Will they result in something good and edifying for the body of Christ? This may also mean a word of correction is forthcoming in someone's life – a good thing!)
7. Are they virtuous? (The original Greek word and its root words for "*virtue*," used in Philippians 4:8 mean "*excellence*" or "*strength to be able to bear up to a heavy load*." Will the truth you speak have the strength to bear up to whatever load they receive?)
8. Are they the kind of thoughts that when spoken, will be praiseworthy in heaven?

(Colossians 1:21-22 NKJV) "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled {22} in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight;"

(Colossians 4:6 NKJV) "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."

IV. FINAL THOUGHTS ON TRUTH

☑ There is no place to hide from the truth.

You can always find it. It can always find you. It is like light and it cannot be hidden. It will always drive out the darkness of falsehoods and lies.

(Psalms 57:10 NKJV) "For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens, And Your truth unto the clouds."

☑ The truth is to be an instrument of ultimate good that will have a favorable effect on God's people.

(Ephesians 4:29 NKJV) "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."

☑ The Scriptures instruct us to fill our minds with truth. We are to do this as a habit so it becomes second nature.

*(Philippians 4:8 NKJV - again) "Finally, brethren, **whatever things are true**, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things."*

Paul placed truth first on this list of things worthy of our constant attention. We are to meditate on it.

☑ Only the truth sets us free.

It is the agent of freedom for believers. It keeps us from bondage. It is linked forever to the Word of God.

(John 8:32 NKJV) "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

☑ God expects us to walk in the truth. It is a command from God. It is not optional.

(2 John 1:4 NKJV) “I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father.”