

CHAPTER 14

GOD

IS ABSOLUTE

TRUTH

A story is told about a banquet speaker who was introduced as a very smart businessman. His business growing and selling potatoes in Maine netted him \$25,000 the previous year. After a long introduction, he arose to speak. “Before I begin,” he said, “I must set the record straight. What was said about my business is only partially true. First, it was not Maine, but Texas. It was not potatoes, but oil. It was not \$25,000, but \$250,000. And it was not a profit, but a loss. And one more thing about this introduction—it was not me who lost the money, it was my brother.”

As the story illustrates, truth matters. And in some situations, it *really* matters. We all laugh at jokes about the doctor coming out of surgery to tell the waiting family, “I’ve got good news and bad news. Which do you want first?” But when one of our own loved ones faces a life-threatening illness or accident, we do not want jokes, we want medical experts to tell us the truth.

Josh McDowell, one of Campus Crusade’s most well-known ministry directors,

speaks to college students all over the world. One of his most frequent topics is “safe sex.” Josh was invited to give the concluding talk during “Safe Sex Week” at the University of North Dakota to 3,000 students in a jammed auditorium. When he began by saying, “You’ve been brainwashed,” a rumble spread through the crowd. Josh describes what happened next:

When the students settled down, I continued, “You’ve had an entire week of ‘safer sex’ indoctrination: speakers, experts, videos, films, classes, and symposiums. You’ve been challenged, motivated, encouraged, indoctrinated, and pressured about using condoms to ensure safe sex. To top it all off, you were given a ‘safer sex packet.’ But you’ve been lied to.”

At this point, the crowd was becoming a little indignant with me. Then I lowered the boom with one more question: “After all the information on ‘safer sex’ you have received this week, how many of you know the statistical failure rate of the condom?” *Not one hand went up!* Suddenly, the auditorium was as quiet as a cemetery. They looked at each other with expressions of astonishment.

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They realized they hadn’t been told the whole truth about safer sex.

Josh finds a similar reaction in every university crowd he addresses. Invariably, the students have been thoroughly coached about how to have “safer sex,” but are never told how unsafe “safer sex” really is. In essence, what they heard was a lie.

Read these statistics that fly in the face of “safe sex.” Research conducted by Planned Parenthood (a group advocating the practice of safer sex) states that within one year of using a condom to prevent pregnancy, the pregnancy rate is more than 10

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percent for all ages, and the rate is almost double for teens. Statistics also show that a girl who becomes sexually active at 14 years old and practices birth control has an 87

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percent chance of becoming pregnant before she graduates from high school. If she is your daughter, niece, or a friend’s child, does she not deserve to know the *whole truth* before she engages in risky behavior? Does shading the truth *really* matter to her—and consequently to her unborn baby? Of course!

But the consequences go even further. Physician Robert C. Noble writes in *Newsweek*:

I can’t say I’m comforted reading a government pamphlet called “Condoms and Sexually Transmitted Diseases Especially AIDS.” “Condoms are not 100 percent safe,” it says, “but if used properly will reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS.” *Reduce* the risk of a disease that is 100

percent fatal? That's all that's available between us and death? How much do
condoms reduce the risk? They don't say. So much for Safe Sex.⁴

In fact, all latex condoms have microscopic holes that are *fifty times larger* than the HIV virus. The oil-based lubricants used with condoms can also damage them. If a
condom is too old, or has been exposed to heat or cold, it may be less effective.⁵

What comfort is the lie of "safe sex" to the young man who contracts gonorrhea or to the young woman who develops herpes or to the newborn who is born with AIDS? Telling incomplete "truths" can change a life—or cause death. It is vital that we know and tell the absolute truth.

THE WHOLE PROBLEM WITH ABSOLUTE TRUTH

Most Americans believe in absolute truth, right? Wrong! Truth has been a major casualty in our modern culture. In a study by George Barna of Americans between ages 26 and 44, only 20 percent of those surveyed strongly disagreed with the statement: "There is no such thing as absolute truth; different people can define truth
in different ways and still be correct."⁶ Shockingly, only 27 percent of those who described themselves as born-again Christians strongly disagreed! Fifty-two percent
actually agreed at least somewhat with the statement!⁷

If we look at the phrase "there is no absolute truth," it is logically inconsistent. It states an absolute truth about absolute truth while claiming there is no absolute truth!

The whole idea that truth is relative contradicts God's Word. Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do
what is right."⁸ For example, the Bible teaches that homosexuality is wrong. Yet I recently read that a school board in Massachusetts voted unanimously to teach pre-schoolers (ages 3–5) about homosexual lifestyles. Pre-schoolers! This is a symptom of a culture that has rejected absolute truth.

Many people argue that even religious people cannot agree on what is absolute truth. As Christians we say that the Bible is true. The Hindus reject that, preferring the writings, or Vedas, of their holy men. The Muslims put their faith in the Koran, claiming Mohammed received it as a prophet of God. The Mormons are convinced that

Joseph Smith got his messages straight from God.

To make the situation more confusing, other people claim to have received absolute truth. Today, more than a million people have purchased the bestseller *Conversations with God, Books 1 and 2*, which the author, Neale Donald Walsch, insists were dictated to him by God. Listen to the “absolute truth” that Walsch’s god advocates: “I do not love ‘good’ more than I love ‘bad.’ Hitler went to heaven. When you understand this, you will understand God.”

In his column in *The Wall Street Journal*, Charles Colson writes, “Mr. Walsch’s God liberates us from traditional authorities—rabbis, ministers, parents, the Bible... He confidently attempts—in dialogue form, with his own questions and comments and God’s replies and explanations—to repeal or modify every known religious truth and propound his own version of God’s message as authoritative.”⁹

A famous New Age believer made a statement in a television interview with Kathie Lee Gifford that everyone goes to Paradise after they die. Then with a question uncharacteristic of the media, Kathie Lee, a strong Bible believer, asked, “Are you saying you believe that the same thing happens to Hitler as to Mother Teresa?” The New Ager stuttered and stumbled and had no reply. Kathie Lee’s poignant question demonstrated the ludicrous nature of those who reject truth.

WHAT IS ABSOLUTE TRUTH?

If you were asked to describe absolute truth, what would you say? By what standard can we measure truth to determine if it is truth? If you do not believe there is such a thing as absolute truth, how do you find anything to be true and trustworthy? Following are three qualities of absolute truth.

Absolute truth is internally consistent. No matter which way you approach a true statement, it remains unassailably true. When we say that our God is absolutely truthful, we mean above everything else that He is internally consistent in His character and being. Proverbs 30:5 says, “Every word of God proves true.” In fact, the Hebrew word for *truth* means conformance to a standard—God’s standards.

Internal consistency of character is vital to all of God’s attributes. If you can prove that God is not truthful in any aspect of who He is and how He acts, then His other qualities have no validity. If He were not absolutely consistent, then God’s unlimited power, for example, could be compromised by His love. He would be like a powerful president of a country who fails to take action against evil because he lets his emotions, his wrong understanding of love, negate his power.

Absolute truth is true for all people in all places at all times. Not everything qualifies as absolute truth. For example, if you said, “Today, the interest rate for home mortgages is at 6.5 percent,” that could be true for you living in America. But for someone living in Brazil, the interest rate might be 50-plus percent. And a month from now, the interest rate for you could change to 8 percent. Because interest rates fluctuate, the percentage rate is not true for all people in all places at all times. The rate is not an absolute truth.

On the other hand, if you say, “Adultery is always wrong,” you would be stating an
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absolute truth. Whether you live in Bangladesh, Japan, or the United States, adultery is still wrong. Adultery was just as wrong a thousand years ago as it is today. Adultery is wrong for the wife living with the alcoholic husband, or the business or military person separated from a spouse by extended travel.

Absolute truth has its source in our holy God. No human can think up or discover a new truth. Truth has always existed in God’s nature; He is the author of truth.

We must always measure our beliefs by the truth in God’s Word. Since He is the author of truth and since absolute truth resides in Him, He is the only One who can guide us to absolute truth. With Him, we see truth face to face. Any other guide will only lead us into confusion and deception.

Moses said, “God is not a man, that He should lie. He is not a human, that He should change His mind. Has He ever spoken and failed to act? Has He ever promised

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and not carried it through?” Whatever God says is absolutely right. Whatever He promises will always be fulfilled.

NOTHING CAN CHANGE GOD’S ABSOLUTE TRUTH

Have you ever heard the phrase, “written in stone”? This usually refers to some statement that cannot be changed. The phrase comes from the Old Testament account of when God gave the Ten Commandments. About two months after the Israelites had left their slavery in Egypt, they reached Mount Sinai where God revealed Himself to the people. God’s holiness and power were very evident:

All Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in the form of fire. The smoke billowed into the sky like smoke from a furnace,

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and the whole mountain shook with a violent earthquake.

Moses went up the mountaintop into a cloud that looked like a devouring fire and

stayed forty days and nights. During that time God wrote the Ten Commandments with His own finger on tablets of stone. God required His people to obey these timeless gems of absolute truth.

Meanwhile, the people, under the leadership of Moses' brother, Aaron, began to think that Moses would never return. So Aaron built them a golden calf to take God's place.

Aware of the peoples' disobedience, God told Moses to go back down the mountain. As Moses strode downward clutching the stone tablets, he heard noises like the sounds of celebration. When he got near, he saw God's people worshipping a golden calf. The people who had promised to obey all of God's law had already broken one of the Ten Commandments. In anguish and anger over the sight, Moses hurled the tablets to the ground, shattering them.

Then God said to Moses: "Prepare two stone tablets like the first ones. I will write on them the same words that were on the tablets you smashed."¹³ Once more Moses climbed that cloud-covered mountain; once more God etched the Ten Commandments into stone with His finger.

Do you see the picture of absolute truth in this account? God wrote the commandments in stone. No one can erase or alter them; they are absolute truth. Moses, in his anger, shattered the stone tablets. As humans we can break God's commandments, but we cannot change them. The broken laws are not any less true. Once shattered, God just wrote them on stone once more. Nothing we can do will ever change God's absolute truth.

GOD'S ABSOLUTE TRUTH LASTS FOREVER

A woman received directions to a home for a baby shower, complete with the street name and the house number. But she never found the correct house and went home embarrassed. The next day she discovered some pranksters had switched several street signs in the area. She failed to reach her destination *even though she had true directions*.

If you have ever had an experience like that, you may be skeptical whenever you receive directions to an unfamiliar setting. That is how many people approach what God has said. They are not at all sure that His truth is absolutely accurate or applies to modern life. *Maybe He has forgotten about a turn, a detour, or a switched street sign, they think. Times change, so how can we rely on truth given centuries ago?*

Because God knows the end from the beginning, not one of His statements ever

turns out to be a misdirection. He does not shade the truth or leave out an essential part. His absolute truth applies to every situation in history.

I encourage you to read Psalm 119, the greatest chapter in the Bible, about the endurance and truth of God's Word. Verse 160 says, "All Your words are true; all Your just laws will stand forever." Not only is God's truth absolute, but it lasts forever! We can count on it for eternity.

HOW GOD REVEALS HIS ABSOLUTE TRUTH TO US

God wants us to know the absolute truth, so He has taken the initiative to show us truth in several ways: in His Word, the Bible; by the life, death, and resurrection of His Son; and through His Holy Spirit.

God recorded truth for us in the Bible.

The Bible is God's absolute truth in written form. Jesus tells us, "Your word is truth."¹⁴ We can read it, memorize it, and meditate on it. God uses the Bible to reveal

truth about Himself, ourselves, and about life.¹⁵ There is no way anyone can live a holy, satisfying, fulfilled life without spending regular time in the Word of God.

It has been my practice for years to read through the Bible each year. My most important priority every morning is to read God's Word, even before I eat breakfast. Somehow the time I spend with God in the morning is more than compensated in the way the rest of the day unfolds.

God manifested truth to us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Truth is not just a concept, it is embodied in a person—Jesus Christ. While many people claim to *know* the truth, only Jesus could honestly claim to *be* the truth. Jesus explains, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me."¹⁶

John Wesley writes: "The word of His truth and wisdom is more ardent and more light-giving than the rays of the sun, and sinks down into the depths of heart and mind." The words of God put into human form by Jesus purify us when we let them sink into our hearts.

God guides us into truth through the working of the Holy Spirit.

As Christians, we have the Holy Spirit living within us. One of His primary responsibilities is to reveal truth to us. Jesus calls Him “the Spirit of truth.”¹⁷ The Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative who communicates directly with us, illuminating God’s truth, and giving us the power to obey that truth. In fact, when we worship God, we are to

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worship Him in spirit and in truth.

I often use the illustration that the Holy Spirit represents one wing of an airplane and the Word of God represents the other. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the pilot. No airplane will fly with just one wing. If we do not rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us and also saturate ourselves with God’s truth—His holy, inspired, inerrant truth—then our holy life will not fly. We must also allow Jesus to be the navigator of our plans, desires, wills, and emotions, for He is the truth.

We do not need to be confused about what is right or wrong—we can look to God’s Word. We cannot complain that we do not have an example of how to put God’s truth into practice—we have the truth in the flesh, Jesus Christ. And we cannot excuse ourselves from knowing and following God’s truth—we have the power of the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth.

Spirit-filled worship leads us to a reverence for God’s truth, which in turn leads us to daily obedience. We put our worship into action when we say “yes” to God’s truth in each and every decision of our lives. If you find yourself misrepresenting the truth to an employer, ask God to help you be completely honest out of respect for Him. The following Life Application gives more suggestions to help you worship God in Spirit and in truth.

LIFE APPLICATION

EXALT YOUR GOD—The Bible states in Hebrews 6:18, “It is impossible for God to lie.” Praise your heavenly Father that He is truth. Thank Him that in this world of “half-truths” and “double speak,” His Word can always be trusted.

REFLECT HIS IMAGE—Jesus stated, “I am the truth.” Are you known as a truthful person, someone whose word can be trusted? In God’s book, there are no such things as “fibs” or “white lies.” Our God of truth wants His children to be reflections of His character. Ask Him to help you tell the truth in situations you face where it would be easier to compromise.

SHARE HIS MAJESTY—Prayerfully ask God to show you an area in your church or ministry where you can stand up for God’s absolute truth. Perhaps you can help high school students to understand the importance of God’s command to be sexually pure. Or maybe you can explain the importance of being truthful to your spouse during a couples’ Bible study. Be sure to back up your teaching with God’s Word.

CHAPTER 15

GOD'S TRUTH SETS US FREE

On February 3, 1998, Karla Faye Tucker died. She had known the date of her death since December because she was scheduled to be executed in a Texas prison for the double murders she had committed.

Karla Faye Tucker was the first woman since the Civil War to be executed in the Texas prison system. In 1983 after three days of non-stop drug taking, she and Daniel Garrett broke into a Houston apartment and killed Dean and Deborah Thornton. Karla Faye was the one who swung the pickax. If anyone deserved a sentence of death, she did.

But something miraculous happened to Karla Faye during her fourteen years on death row. Soon after her arrest, she learned the truth that God loves even the vilest sinner and that He pardons completely the person who asks Him for forgiveness. Karla Faye said in an interview a month before her execution, “I asked [God] to forgive me and I knew I needed forgiveness. And I knew I had done something really horrible. But I think right at that moment what mostly hit me was His love. His love. It

just surrounded me.”¹ In that moment, the murderer became a child of God.

Although she would never again set foot outside a prison, God’s truth had made her free. George Sechrist, who represented Karla Faye in her appeal process, saw her change as she grew in her faith. He says, “I’ve represented a number of folks on death row. All of them certainly are deserving of their day in court, regardless of what they’ve done, but I’ve never seen anyone who has genuinely transformed in any way as she has. And, quite frankly, I doubt I’ll ever see it again!”²

Karla testified to the power of the Holy Spirit to change a life that had been ruined by sin. Her testimony was broadcast over radio and television to millions.

No one can commit a sin so rotten that God cannot transform that life into one which brings glory to Him. Although Karla reaped the consequences for her crime with the death penalty, she also influenced thousands of others for Christ with her testimony before she died.

Every day, we make decisions based on beliefs and values that we assume are true. Too often, we later discover our beliefs were an illusion of truth projected by our corrupt society. As John the apostle explains, “They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them.”³ The world’s viewpoint is based on wrong values and misguided purposes, not absolute truth, and its ideas fluctuate with the time, the person, and the culture. Eventually, the world’s viewpoint enslaves us to sin. But as we read in John 8:32, God’s truth sets us free.

God’s liberating truth is our anchor point for life. Solomon writes, “Truth stands the test of time; lies are soon exposed.”⁴ God’s truth has endured for thousands of years. Man’s “truth” has not. And since God’s truth lasts for eternity, its power to free us from sin will never diminish.

WE CAN TRUST GOD’S WORD

Most of us have at least one friend we consider very honest. When we ask that person for his opinion, we find out what he really thinks. If we ask him to take care of something important for us, he will be open about whether or not he can complete the job. We would not consider him a faithful friend if there were areas of his life where he acted dishonestly.

That is even more true of our holy God. We can trust His Word—completely and implicitly. The psalmist writes, “All Your commands are true. Long ago I learned from

Your statutes that You established them to last forever.”⁵ It would violate God’s truthfulness if His Word could not be trusted.

During the first centuries of the Church, false teachers tried to argue that the Bible was not completely truthful. Paul quickly defended the Bible.⁶ He proclaimed that all Scripture is God’s truth! That assurance is what gave Paul such incredible confidence as he traveled about the Roman Empire proclaiming the Good News of Jesus’ death and resurrection. His life of service through incredible pressures and persecutions is proof that God’s Word has power to sustain us.

We can absolutely trust God’s Word—to the last period on the last page. After more than fifty years of studying the Bible, I am convinced beyond any shadow of doubt that it is the holy, inspired, and inerrant Word of God. During these years, I have anchored my life of service to Jesus Christ on a God who is faithful and stands behind His holy Word. God has never failed me, and never will.

GOD’S PROMISES ARE TRUE

If God’s Word can be trusted, we can be sure that the promises in His Word are also true. The writer to the Hebrews encourages us: “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope

we profess, for He who promised is faithful.”⁷ God’s truthful nature backs up His promises; therefore, we can immerse ourselves in His promises, applying them to our life situations. For example, consider Jesus’ promises:

- “When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with Me where I am.”⁸
- “The truth is, anyone who believes in Me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.”⁹
- “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn’t like the peace the world gives. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”¹⁰

The Bible is full of thousands of other wonderful promises from God, for every imaginable occasion. They mean so much to me that years ago I wrote a devotional

book called *Promises: A Daily Guide to Supernatural Living*. The promises highlighted on each of the pages are still blessing the lives of those who read them. I encourage you to read through the Old and New Testaments, highlighting the amazing promises of God. You will be greatly blessed with what you find! Memorizing them will bring an invaluable source of encouragement.

GOD’S TRUTH EXPOSES DECEPTION AND IGNORANCE

Because our secular society has rejected God’s holy inspired Word as the absolute standard for truth, we have lost our reference point for reality. Now our society often defines truth based on public opinion polls. We live in a media culture of sizzle and hype which influences public thinking. Advertising hucksters and spin-doctors are constantly at work to influence our thinking about events and issues. Educational institutions promote diversified views at the expense of truth. Even many journalists are no longer satisfied with reporting the facts. Instead, they slant the news to fit their own, often anti-God, interpretation.

This is the nature of the world system controlled by Satan, who is the father of

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lies. These masters of deception, distortion, and manipulation take truth out of context or give only half-truths. Anyone who accepts this world system becomes bound up in deception, manipulation, lies, and ignorance. Many Christians have bought into these lies.

But God’s truth is a light that shows us the difference between falsehood and truth. Jesus taught, “I am the light of the world. If you follow Me, you won’t be stumbling

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through the darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.” Without His truth, we are left to grope about in spiritual darkness. But His light frees us to see and do what is right and good.

Consider some of the deceptions promoted by our culture and the contrast of God’s truth, as shown in the following table. Of the six options, which of the two columns are you tempted to base your life on? Every day, each of us makes choices about what we want to do or perceive to be true. Only God can free us from the deceptions and distortions of the world system. He has given us the Bible as a handbook for identifying truth and His Spirit, the Counselor of Truth, within us as our Guide.

Do your decisions and lifestyle demonstrate that you are listening to God through

His Word and His servants? Or are you living in the darkness of the lies of society and popular culture? Like a powerful floodlight, God's truth will expose for us the foolishness and destructiveness of every myth promoted by the world.

HOW GOD'S TRUTH SETS US FREE

God's truth frees us to live as God has intended. On the other hand, the Deceiver wants us to base our lives on false assumptions. Jesus said to His followers, "You are truly My disciples if you keep obeying My teachings. And you will know the truth, and the

truth will set you free."²⁶ Here are several ways God's truth sets us free.

We are free from death and eternal damnation.

Jesus said, "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch

them away from me."²⁷

Paul wrote to Titus about the certainty of eternal life: "a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the

beginning of time."²⁸ Paul knew that way back in eternity past God had promised salvation for those who believe in Him. That promise became reality in Paul's life, as it will for all of us who accept the message of Jesus' death on the cross for sin. The Book of Hebrews assures us:

God also bound Himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that He would never change His mind. So God has given us both His promise and His oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is

impossible for God to lie."²⁹

That is why the hope of eternal life based on God's promises is so firmly anchored for us.

We are set free from bondage to sin and guilt.

Our society has tried to cleanse itself from guilt by removing the Ten Commandments from our public schools, buildings, and courts so that no one will be reminded of breaking them. Those who sin try to rationalize all kinds of wicked behavior by blaming it on their background, circumstances, a parent or spouse. With society saying, "Don't worry, it's not your fault," why are so many guilt-ridden people filling

up psychiatrists' couches? Because we are all born in bondage to sin and guilt, and only God can break those bonds. Only He can break the chains of blame shifting, bad habits, and addictions.

Nick Smith, a 17-year-old who participated in Josh McDowell's "Right From Wrong" campaign, understood this principle. By attending the meetings, he prepared himself to make godly decisions. While he was at an out-of-town track meet, he discovered several teammates glued to a less-than-wholesome movie on the HBO channel. He had two choices: to follow the biblical guidelines he had learned about keeping himself pure or to go along with his friends. Nick said, "Y'all shouldn't be watching that. It messes up your mind."³⁰

One of the boys agreed with Nick and left the group. Not only did Nick resist the temptation to do something wrong, he also influenced another young man to do the same! If you turn your temptations over to God and trust in His power, He will help you step out of that pile of chains as a free man or woman.

Paul writes in Romans 6:22, "Now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life" (NIV). In Jesus we can live freely and joyfully.

We are set free from self-centeredness.

If you want to take a test to see how self-centered you are, note your instinctive reaction the next time you see a photograph showing a group of people including yourself. Whose face do you look at first? Your best friend's or your own? How about when you hear good news about someone close to you? Do you immediately think about how your friend is feeling or wonder why you do not get the "lucky breaks" in life?

You are not alone. We all have a self-centered nature. It's part of the human condition.

Jesus told His disciples, "If any of you wants to be My follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross, and follow Me. If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for Me, you will find

true life."³¹ Only Christ can free us to be more other-centered as we walk in the power of His Spirit. He fills us with His powerful love, which "does not demand its own

way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged."³²

We are set free from bondage to fear.

Paul informs us, “You did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but

you received the Spirit of sonship.”³³ Yet many Christians still live in fear. It robs us of joy and limits what we can do for our Lord. But God enables us to live in freedom through the power of His Holy Spirit—if only we will trust and obey Him!

We are set free from a life of mediocrity and insignificance.

God, the creator of over 100 billion galaxies, also created us in His image and has a

wonderful plan for our lives.³⁴ Nothing the world offers can even come close to what God has planned. We will only be significant to whatever degree we are willing to fulfill the plan for which God has created us.

YOU CAN BEGIN TO LIVE FREELY IN GOD’S TRUTH

Many years ago, a young missionary from Africa came to see me for counsel. He told me that he had little knowledge or experience of the Holy Spirit. He had spent several years on the mission field with no tangible results and felt like a miserable failure.

As we sat together, I explained that his ministry had been fruitless because he did not draw on the power of the Holy Spirit to help him. I further explained how important it is that we confess all known sin to God, turn from our sin, and walk in obedience to Him. Then as we surrender to the Lordship of Christ, we can by faith ask

God to fill us with His Holy Spirit.³⁵ We can claim His promise to fill us knowing

that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.³⁶

In response, the man exploded in anger. He said, “I have spent my life serving God at great sacrifice. I have faced death and all kinds of persecution on the mission field. And now you offer me this simplistic solution to my problem?” He was irate and stormed out of my office.

A few days later he called me for another appointment. He said, “I don’t agree with you. I believe that your explanation of the Spirit-filled life is too superficial and simple, but you obviously have a quality in your life that I don’t have and I want very badly. I will ask God to show me if what you say is true.”

I will never forget a letter I received from him a few weeks later. He wrote out of a

joyful heart overflowing with praise and thanksgiving to God. He said, “I now understand what you have been trying to tell me. I did what you told me to do and now I want to return to the mission field and teach other defeated believers what you taught me. I’ve been liberated. I’m free!”

The choice is ours. Every day we must choose whom we will believe, God or Satan. Those who diligently seek truth in the right places will find only God’s truth. Base your life on it because His absolute truth will set you free.

LIFE APPLICATION

WRITE IT ON YOUR HEART—Memorize the following statement and verses, and as you encounter the temptation to lie this week, claim them as promises from our God of truth.

- Because God is absolute truth, I can believe what He says and live accordingly.
- John 18:37—“I came to bring truth to the world. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”
- John 8:31,32—“You are truly My disciples if you keep obeying My teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

COUNT ON GOD—God’s Word can always be trusted because He never lies. Is there something that you have difficulty trusting God with in your current situation? Claim a promise from one of the following Scriptures and commit your concerns to God today.

- Romans 8:28—“God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.”
- Philippians 1:6—“I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.”
- 1 John 1:9—“If we confess our sins to him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.”

OBEY GOD—Is there something in the last few weeks that you have been untruthful about? First John 1:6 says, “If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth” (NIV). Confess it to the LORD and tell the truth to the one you misled. Then determine to always speak the truth.