

also promises judgment for every one of our words:

“But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:36-37).

“For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops (Luke 12:2-3).

There is no getting away with untruth. If it does not bring trouble for us in this life, it will bring trouble for us in the judgment—unless we repent and turn from it now:

For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged (1 Corinthians 11:31).

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-9).

For “He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it (1 Peter 3:10-11).

There are those who suffer and die from being truthful (Hebrews 11), but they are promised a great reward for efforts. Jesus Christ goes as far as stating He is “the way the truth and the life” (John 14:6), and that “truth” is the thing that sets apart His people from others.

Set them apart in the truth; your word is truth (John 17:17).

We should want to be truthful because God is the Creator of the universe and of us individual-

ly. We should want to be like Him so we can be fulfilling His righteous purpose. We should experience what it is like to live not worrying who will find out about the lies we are telling. We should realize truthfulness is the secret to having many long-lasting friendships.

### A Plan for You

If you have read this whole article this far, you are to be commended for your interest in truth. You have hope that God will hear your prayers. The Bible says that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), so He cannot answer your prayers for situations where lies are involved.

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 John 5:14).

To know God's will, so you can receive an answer, read the Bible. It is worth reading the whole thing, but for a quick summary read the Old Testament books of Genesis, Exodus, Judges and Proverbs, then the New Testament books of Matthew, Luke, Acts, and the rest of the short books that follow Acts. Pray for understanding. Your life will never be the same.

When you reach the end of the book of Revelation, you see those who follow God pictured as dwelling with Him “inside the city” and those who are sinful “outside the city”. The last caution is against lying:

Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. <sup>15</sup> But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie (Revelation 22:14-15). 

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TRUFRE01

# The *Truth* Will Set You *Free*

Jesus Christ said:

“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

What does that mean? How does the truth set a person free? We will find out!

The way most people see it, wealth and power sets one free. The common saying goes more like this, “If you have money and power, you don't have to do what others want you to do, rather you can pay them or force them to do what you want.” This has been tried for centuries, and the wealthy and powerful as well as the poor and weak all end up angry and frustrated.

The historical figure Pilate was the Roman governor in the country where Jesus lived. Even though he was the most powerful man there and certainly very wealthy, he was not free. He found himself being forced to decide whether to execute Jesus, whom he knew was innocent, or risk a revolt among the Jewish religious leaders—which would probably end both his political career and his riches. Here is how it went:

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

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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 no fault in Him at all” (John 18:37-38).

Governor Pilate did not know what the truth was. He could find no fault in Jesus. But if he declared Jesus guilty, the entire Roman government, the subservient Jewish government and the religious leaders would all consider Him guilty. Isn't that enough to make it “truth”?

No, it is not. Even if **everybody** claims something is true, that does not make it truth. Truth is only what God sees as truth.

...Even if everyone else is a liar, God is true. As the Scriptures say about him, “You will be proved right in what you say, and you will win your case in court” (Romans 3:4, NLT).

*He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A **God of truth** and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He (Deuteronomy 32:4).*

Pilate did not know the “God of truth”. He believed in the Roman gods of his day, which were pictured as divine beings that lied to and deceived one another to get something they really wanted. The Bible records numerous details about Pilate trying to persuade the Jewish leaders to let Jesus go, to put the decision off to King Herod and to wash his hands of the matter (Matthew 27:11-26; Mark 15:1-15; Luke 23:1-25; John 18:29-19:16). With all of his power, Pilate did not have the faith to do what was right and trust God to take care of him. He was not free.

### Slaves to Sin

The Bible clearly teaches that either we are slaves to sin or we are servants of God in righteousness. Without faith in Christ and His power to change our lives, we will not be able to escape

the slavery of lies and other sins:

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading to* death, or of obedience *leading to* righteousness? But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness (Romans 6:16-18).

And the Lord's slave must not engage in heated disputes but be kind toward all, an apt teacher, patient, correcting opponents with gentleness. Perhaps God will grant them repentance and then knowledge of the truth and they will come to their senses and escape the devil's trap where they are held captive to do his will (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Those who do not know God are often trapped in compromises. They do not know when to tell the truth and risk the consequences or lie in an effort to protect themselves—and later possibly risk even worse consequences.

### True Freedom—in Political Captivity

Daniel, chapter 6, contains a situation opposite to Pilate's. Daniel was one of the top three officials in the Babylonian government and the king was considering setting him over the whole empire. So many of the other politically astute officials set a trap for him by convincing the king to pass a law against making a petition to any person or god except the king, for the next 30 days. The penalty? Death in a lion's den!

Daniel could have easily not prayed, pretended not to pray or claim he wasn't praying and escaped the king's law. But what happened?

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he

knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days (Daniel 6:10).

So the politicians who wanted to entrap Daniel were present to catch Daniel in the act of prayer, haul him off and have him thrown in the den of lions. Was this a great act of faith, or a foolish act of truth-telling? How did it turn out?

Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.” Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and **no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.** And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den (Daniel 6:21-25).

Daniel was free to do what was right, even though he was subservient to a king who was manipulated by corrupt politicians. These “clever” politicians who set a trap for Daniel were slaves to sin. They should have been happy to work with a righteous man, but they saw him as an obstacle to their desires. And they died.

### Does God Always Defend the Truth?

Probably everyone can think of a situation where they told the truth, something bad happened to them because of it, and God never intervened on their behalf. We can also think of situations where we lied about something and it appeared to deliver us from trouble. And the Bible acknowledges this (Ecclesiastes 7:15). But it