

Four Pillars of Leadership - Four "T"s

031 Truthful

The next four classes will be on four important subjects concerning the character of a leader. These subjects are (1) Truthful, (2) Transparent, (3) Teachable, and (4) Tender. These are four significant pillars of integrity that support a successful Christian and are vital to every leader.

JOHN 8:33-37

(John 18:38 NKJV) Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"

I. WHAT IS TRUTH?

1. Pilate, a leader and a man in authority, was confused about what truth was. Today, people are confused about what truth is.
2. Much of the world's belief systems define, or redefine truth, without any verifiable basis for their definitions. Modern society and its philosophies say truth is personal and subjective. If it is true for you, it is truth.
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 encounter such people.
 - 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?

ACTS 5:1-3

Verse 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



Pontius Pilate

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.

Truth spoken is life spoken. Lies are spoken to deceive. They cut the speaker’s reputation to pieces. They are killers.

2. Ananias and his wife Sapphira 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.”* Our words are always directed toward God’s ear, in addition to those to whom we speak them. Are we sensitive to the fact that God is always listening? 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” is boldly lying as an affront to God. There is no “fear of the Lord” in liars. They presume to test God. You cannot test God. “Presumption” can be described as an attempt to take dominion or authority away from God. Satan was thrown from heaven for the sin of presumption. Truth never tests God. Only liars and their lies try to do this.

- Lies are selfish, self-centered and self-serving. Truth is Christ-centered! (It serves others as well as the one who speaks it.)
- The lie is designed to protect the speaker. 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; and the moment the lie was spoken, it was exposed to God.
- 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 it to God.

3. Truth is the clear, complete and pure expression of the way things really are.

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-TRUTH

Half-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 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 tries.

- Truth becomes a lie when it is mixed with deception, manipulation or misrepresentation! It will never fool God! It will not fool people for very long either.
- The person whose lips speak the lie loses integrity and wholeness with every word spoken.
- 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 speak the truth gives evidence of an 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.

Lying is a sin. It will close the windows of heaven. It will open the windows of confusion and fear.

- 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 they way things really are.
- **WHAT YOU SAY IS WHAT THEY GET!**

II. FIVE MORE BIBLICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF TRUTH

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)** 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.

- 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: 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. Your words set you 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 it is spoken, truth matures us. 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. Speaking the truth establishes our credibility and trustworthiness. A leader must be credible and trustworthy!

LYING

Nowhere in God's Word is lying recommended or approved of. 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."

7. Truth is something to be worn. You wear it for two reasons: First, to display it for others to see and want for themselves. 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.

(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."

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.

Mark Twain said "Always tell the truth. That way you don't have to remember what you said."

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.

Pilot said, “What is truth?” Thank God we know!

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. When does wisdom tells 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.”

- 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?** 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 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.

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 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 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.
- 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. In Philippians 4:8, 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."