

THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE

It has been applied in different contexts. The truth will free your mind from the prison of a guilty conscience. The truth will free you from the damage of a relationship caused by being deceptive. There is a sense of liberty that comes from being honest. It is freeing. But that is not the meaning of the quote which we find in John 8.32.

First, it is important to note that the two times Jesus uses the word “truth” it is attached to the article, “the.” Jesus was not referring to truth in the sense of honestly, but “the truth.” This was a specific truth that was in reference to the gospel. In 1 Peter 1, the Holy Spirit tells us that we have purified our souls “in obeying the truth.” Once again, we are reading about a specific truth indicated by the definite article, “the.” If you keep reading, this truth is identified as “*the gospel*” (1 Pet. 1.25). Jesus tells us that we will know the gospel, and it is the gospel that will make us free.

Second, notice that the truth is understandable. Jesus says that “*you shall know the truth.*” The word translated as “know” is the Greek word “ginosko.” It is the word that describes accumulative learning. It is possible to read, study, and understand the teachings of the gospel. Paul described the gospel as being within our grasp (Rom. 10.5-8). To understand the gospel, it needs to be taught by those who understand it. When Philip asked the Ethiopian Eunuch if he understood what he read, he replied, “*How can I, unless someone guides me?*” (Acts 8.31). But as we are taught the gospel and understand it, we can then teach this gospel to others (2 Tim. 2.2).

Third, notice the freedom that is promised. From what does the gospel free us? If you keep reading the words of Jesus, He explains that “*whoever commits sin is a slave of sin*” (John 8.34). When I break the commandments of God, I become a slave to the eternal consequences of that sin. But it is possible to be set free from the guilt of my past and the eternal condemnation in my future. The sacrifices of the Old Testament Law of Moses left the children of Israel with a reminder that they were still sinners (Heb. 10.1-4). But with the sacrifice of Christ, “*we have been sanctified...once for all*” (Heb. 10.10). That freedom comes when I obey the truth.

It is the gospel that makes us free. When we understand it and obey its teachings, we are made free from the bondage of sin. CLP

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“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”
-Mark 16.15

January 7, 2024

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:30 PM

PURE IN HEART

Our hearts represent the essence of our character and personality. Peter wrote to wives saying that they should worry less about their outward appearance and more about “*the hidden person of the heart*” (1 Pet. 3.4).

Just as the heart consists of four chambers, the heart represents four parts of man which together make up his character. 1) The heart refers to the intellect, the way that a person thinks. 2) The heart refers to the emotions, the way that a person feels. 3) The heart refers to the conscience, his moral compass. 4) The heart refers to the will, his ability to make free volitional choices.

In the beatitudes, Jesus said, “*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*” (Matt. 5.8). How does one become pure in heart? Peter explained it like this: “*Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth*” (1 Pet. 1.22). What truth are we to obey? Paul warned that the wrath of God was coming on those “*who do not obey the gospel*” (2 Thess. 1.8).

Obeying the commands of the gospel takes away the sin from my life and transforms the way I think, the way I feel, the direction of my moral compass, and the way I make decisions. Paul put it this way: “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation*” (2 Cor. 5.17). CLP

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PROVING YOUR DISCIPLESHIP

JOHN 15:8

INTRODUCTION:

1. Many claim to be the disciples of Jesus. But how do we prove our discipleship? Is there enough evidence to convict you?
2. If we are going to make disciples, we must first be disciples.

I. ANALYZING THE TEXT

- A. **JOHN 15.8:** *“By this My Father is glorified.”*
1. Our purpose is to bring glory to God, but we fail to glorify Him when we sin. (1 Cor. 10.31; Rom. 3.23)
 2. **JOHN 15.8:** *“that you bear much fruit.”* We glorify God by living a life full of good works. (Col. 1.10).
- B. **JOHN 15.8:** *“so you will be My disciples.”* Bearing much fruit is how we prove our discipleship.

II. APPLYING THE TEXT

- A. We glorify God by being a positive influence in the world.
1. **MATTHEW 5.16:** *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works...”* (cf. v. 13)
 2. How can we be a positive influence? (Matt. 5.3-11)
- B. We glorify God by getting along with others.
1. **ROMANS 15.7:** *“Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.”*
 2. In context, we are to get along with those who have differing opinions. (Rom. 15.1; 14.1-3; cf. John 17.23)
- C. We glorify God by expressing gratitude.
1. **2 CORINTHIANS 4.15:** *“grace, having spread to the many, may cause thanksgiving to the glory of God.”*
 2. Paul was suffering for Christ. (2 Cor. 4.13,14)
 3. By expressing gratitude, you are giving glory to God.
- D. We glorify God by loving one another.
1. **PHILIPPIANS 1.9:** *“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more.”* Very emphatic!
 2. **PHILIPPIANS 1.10:** *“that you may approve the things that are excellent.”* Our love proves the gospel!
 3. **PHILIPPIANS 1.11:** *“to the glory and praise of God”*
- E. We glorify God by serving one another. (1 Pet. 4.10,11)

CONCLUSION: Are you a disciple of Jesus?

MAKING SIN A TRIVIAL THING

The world (and even many of the Lord’s people) measure the severity of sin by its injurious nature and deviancy. How much is sin going to cause harm to someone and how far does a sinful action deviate from what we consider normal behavior?

Murder, rape, robbery, and similar sins are considered to be severe because of the great harm they bring into the lives of those it affects. Sexual immorality and homosexuality are also considered severe because they deviate far from normal behavior (though it is becoming more and more accepted as normal by our culture).

In contrast, sinful behavior such as drunkenness, lying, and covetousness, are thought of as minor infractions because they do very little if any harm to others and do not deviate that far if at all from normal behavior. Alcohol and drunkenness is normal by the world’s standards. Lying is so common that most believe that everyone lies. It is only when these behaviors become harmful that society starts to see them as serious problems. Think of the outrage from someone who killed a family in a drunk driving accident.

In 1 Kings 16, we are introduced to a new king of Israel. His name was Ahab. Read closely how Ahab is described. In verse 30, we are told that *“Ahab...did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him”* (1 Kings 16.30). The Holy Spirit tells us that there has never been a king as evil as Ahab. A few verses later, we read that *“Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him”* (1 Kings 16.33).

Ahab killed all the prophets of God with the exception of a relative few who has been secretly put in hiding by Obediah (1 Kings 18.4). It was Ahab who was challenged by Elijah in a battle on Mount Carmel to prove that God is the only God (1 Kings 18.20ff). But in the introduction of Ahab, we are told that Ahab *“as though it had been a trivial thing...he took as wife Jezebel”* (1 Kings 16.31). Marrying someone who was not of the children of Israel was a violation of the law of Moses (1 Kings 10.1-4). Furthermore, the one he chose to marry was herself wicked and idolatrous (1 Kings 18.4). Yet he considered marrying her and thus breaking the commandment of God as a trivial thing.

Sins might be considered trivial if you measure them by their degree of harm and deviancy. Yet there are no trivial sins in the eyes of God, because all sin separates man from God and results in spiritual death. (Isa. 59.2; Rom. 6.23). Whether you have committed adultery or told a lie, you have separated yourself from God. But through the blood of Jesus, forgiveness to which we all have access (1 John 1.7). CLP