

Truth passages

The truth of Jesus is our first and most important influence. There will be people in our lives who we are swayed. People who might seem to hold a greater presence of God, People who have had amazing experiences with God. Be careful even with these that the word is always the greatest influence

Illust – Rick _____ - amazing coach and influencer of the Lord, 2 times saw at least 200 youth come to Jesus in a high school. Because of that, I wanted to learn whatever I could from him. But at the same time, I had to keep the word of truth planted in me as my primary influence. About 6 years after I met Rick, he walked into a meeting with his elders and told them he was leaving the ministry and his wife because he had fallen in love with the secretary from the sister church down the road.

Matthew 22:15 Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. ¹⁶ They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷ Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax^a to Caesar or not?"

¹⁸ But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, ²⁰ and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"

²¹ "Caesar's," they replied.

Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

²² When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

When she saw she was found out, came forward and told Jesus the whole truth. There is a value to verbally telling the truth to God. And at times telling the truth to others, so that you will be freed, or healed. Sometimes the secret can work as a form of bondage. In our lives. This woman shared the truth of her story, Even though she was already healed physically, (I believe) she now was able to be healed emotionally also.

Mark 5:32 A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd

and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰ At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

³¹ "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?' "

³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

When the truth of Jesus is in me, my life becomes a light. God uses me to influence others toward the light (Jesus). Truth always points us back to Jesus. If Jesus is not the focus of my life. If someone or something or even a spirit takes the place of Jesus, then something is wrong because Jesus is always the focus. He is center. My life now is "Christocentric" or Christ centered.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But **whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.**

Our worship of God is not regulated to a building. It is not limited to certain places. Now that we have the truth of Jesus, we can worship him wherever we go. There are all sorts of illustrations in the NT where Jesus and the disciples spent time with God. On a mountainside, in prison, in a house, in the temple, in court just before being stoned to death, on the cross, in a chariot, in the wilderness, everywhere you go can be a place of worship. In those places we can worship Jesus in truth.

John 4:21 "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not

know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

John the Baptist was a huge influence in his day. Some think he was like a Billy Graham of the first century, leading thousands to the Lord God. But it is important for us to know that John pointed people, not to himself, but always to Jesus. He even said that Jesus must become greater while he became lesser.

There are counterfeit religions in our world. Some claim Jesus, who do not keep Jesus front and center. Their faith is not Christ centered. Consequently, there is a deception. Some in fact point to other spiritual leaders more than they do Jesus. By definition they are a cult. Even the Holy Spirit points to Jesus. These are key to know and remember so you do not get pulled away from the truth of the gospel. When you are drawn away, there is a deception, so you will not know it, You will be so caught up in something that has got your attention and Jesus is no longer center.

This can happen even in ministry, where the ministry becomes more important than Christ. It can happen when I desire something supernatural from God, where that supernatural longing becomes more important than Jesus. In my quest to love others as much as I do myself, If those I love become more centered than Jesus, then I am being deceived. When that happens I am losing the truth of Christ.

John 5:31 "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. ³² There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is true.

³³ "You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. ³⁴ Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. ³⁵ John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

This scripture is breaking into the middle of a conversation with some who did not believe in Jesus as the truth. They claimed Abraham as their father that was their source of validity. Jesus was confronting them and telling them their father was Satan.

Satan will use some truth, but will eventually come to lies and deception. It has been said that a cult is 95% truth and 5% poison. This is why they are so dangerous. The bible warns us that in later times, many Christ followers will be deceived into following other spiritual leaders who are in effect deceivers and are not Christ centered.

You can tell them, because the focus will shift. Eventually you will notice that you will lose freedom that only Jesus brings.

John 8:39 "Abraham is our father," they answered.

"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do what Abraham did. ⁴⁰ As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. ⁴¹ You are doing the works of your own father."

"We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."

⁴² Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. ⁴³ Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴ You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! ⁴⁶ Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? ⁴⁷ Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

The Holy Spirit is important in our Christian journey. Jesus tells us and his disciples tell us to invite and claim the Holy Spirit into our lives. When he comes in we receive the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These are amazing blessing we can possess to love God and others. The holy spirit also brings spiritual gifts. Often as we move through the transforming walk with Jesus, the Holy Spirit brings amazing supernatural experiences,

These help us supernaturally to love and serve others and worship God. As important as the holy Spirit is, we always must remember that Jesus is still central, not the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that the Holy spirit does what Jesus tells him and the holy spirit points us to Jesus. Even with the Holy Spirit, Jesus is central. No gift takes the place of Jesus, no supernatural experience takes the place of Jesus.

I have known many well meaning Christians who lost their Christ focus and became so focused on a supernatural experience. They became supernatural adrenaline junkies. Jesus being at the center was replaced with an experience. The real problem was, they were deceived and could not see it.

When this happens, there is a certain point that the holy spirit is replaced with another spirit not of God. We know this because the Holy Spirit always points is back to Jesus.

John 15:26 "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

John 16:12 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you."

Paul reaffirms to us when talking about the Holy spirit that Jesus is center. He also shares that pagan religions (religions not based on Jesus) are still supernatural. Sometimes in the Christian worldview, we get this idea that if there is a spiritual experience, it is always from God. This is not true and can be a deception. Over the years, there have been many illustrations of people who have been led astray by deceiving spirits. These are supernatural. If they were not, Paul would not have taken so much time in Ephesians 6 to tell us how to stand against them.

I Corinthians 12:1-3
