



Family Values

Virtue Realities

Truthfulness

Bruce Strade, Chief Officer of Organizational Delight, Lutheran Community Services NW

In a world of “spin,” truth is sometimes hard to determine. Right now, corporate deceit is commonplace. Fiction is on occasion disguised as fact in reputable newspapers. Prescription drugs are presented as the solution to all of life’s ailments. Advertisers insist that the road to happiness is paved with the purchase of the right products. One could easily become cynical like Pontius Pilate and question: *“What is truth?”* (John 18:38)

Truth is part of God’s nature. In Deuteronomy 32: 4 we read: *“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”* The word for truth in some versions is translated as “faithful.” God embodies truth in that He is reliable and can be counted on. His will is constant and cannot be altered by changing circumstances. His truth is reflected in justice. For the Psalmist the people who are closest to God are those who *“speak the truth from their hearts.”* (Psalm 15:2) For this reason, the Psalmist asks God *“to lead me in your truth.”* (Psalm 25:5)

Jesus also embodies truth. In the opening verses of his Gospel, John tells us that *“grace and truth came through Jesus Christ,”* (1:17) who presents himself as *“the way, and the truth, and the life.”* (14:6) We connect with the Father through Christ. Again and again in the Gospels, Jesus emphasizes: *“I speak the truth,”* and punctuates his message with, *“very truly.”* In contrast he calls the scribes and Pharisees “hypocrites” or pretenders, implying that they do not embrace or live the truth. He says to those who believe in him, *“If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you know the truth and the truth will make you free.”* (8:31,32). There is no need for pretense or deception.

To assist in this process, Jesus promises and sends the Spirit of truth who becomes our Advocate. (14:16,17) Through the Spirit who abides with us and in us, we are able to testify to the truth,

which is exemplified in our love of God and one another. That is the essence of worship. Within that context, *“speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”* (Eph. 4:15)

Truthfulness is more than simply saying a bunch of words that are true. To be truthful means to have integrity. It means to live your life consistent with your values. It means to avoid pretense and to “tell it like it is” without inflicting hurt. It means accepting responsibility for your behavior and not hiding behind excuses. It means letting your head inform your heart without taking it captive. It means relying on facts rather than fabrication. It means being someone who is reliable and can be counted on. It means giving voice to the Spirit of Truth that dwells within you. It means testifying to the truth by what you say and do and who you are.

The following are ways to practice truthfulness:

1. **Pray for the Spirit of truth.** Take God at His word and hold God to it.
2. **Be honest with yourself.** Be clear about who you are and rid yourself of any pretense. God is not asking you to be someone you are not.
3. **Speak the truth in love.** Do not confuse bluntness or brutal honesty with the truth.
4. **Model truthfulness.** Let your life reflect your values. Do what you say, especially for the sake of your kids.

Affirmation: Let the truth be known today!

Family Values is provided as a service to our partner congregations by



Portland Office
605 S.E. 39th Avenue, Portland, OR 97214
503-231-7480

If this article has been helpful to you, please let us know by calling us or e-mailing us at feedback@lcsnw.org. For other articles in the Family Values series, and other helpful information, please visit our web site at www.lcsnw.org.