

# Truth Decay

By Pastor Keith Johnson





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## Introduction

### **Exodus 20:16**

**"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour."**

God's way is to tell the *truth* all the time. Telling the truth isn't always easy...and in the short run it might seem like telling the truth would be detrimental to the *Outcome*. But this is where God's Wisdom passes our human *Understanding*.

In a recent survey 66% of those surveyed believed its okay to *lie*...and only 31% believe that *honesty* is always the best.

Every *relationship* in life is based upon truth. Truth is the foundation for all relationship and truth is the main component of *character*.

Every one of God's Ten Commandments was given to *protect* something, and what is being protected here in this 9th Commandment is our personal character and the reputation of others.

People in every generation have struggled with truth – at the mock trial of Jesus – Pilate asked Jesus (the rather cynical question), "*What is truth?*" Pilate had no idea he was looking right into the face of *truth*.

### **John 17:13-19**

**"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified."**

### **John 14:6**

**Jesus said, "I am the truth..."**

So you are never more like God; you are never more like *Jesus* than when you are "telling the truth." And the antithesis of that is also true...when you are not telling the truth you are taking on the *character* of your adversary – the devil, because he is the author of untruth. Satan has always tried to cast a shadow of *doubt* on God's Word.

### **Genesis 3:1-7**

**Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.**



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We're 6,000 years this side of Adam & Eve's decision to believe a *lie* rather than to believe the truth, and I want to ask you – did their decision to believe a lie over the truth increase their quality of *life*? And did the results of their decision to believe a lie only affect *them*? So the affects of believing a lie are huge to the person making the decision; and also on those people they influence.

The Apostle Paul said in **2 Timothy 4:4**, that in the last days, “*people would turn their ears away from the truth...*” Anytime you turn your ear away from the truth you're susceptible to every lie that comes along. Lies were what sentenced Jesus to His *death* upon the cross. It should be easy for every Christian to see why God wants to *promote* & protect truth. The advancement of God's kingdom is based upon the proclamation of the truth.

### **1 Timothy 3:14-15 (The Message)**

**I hope to visit you soon, but just in case I'm delayed, I'm writing this letter so you'll know how things ought to go in God's household, this God-alive church, bastion of truth.**

So we can see why Jesus wants His Church to remain *strong* because it's the vehicle God has chosen to use to advance His truth in the earth. You've heard me preach that the Church is the conscience of a *society*. Someone may ask, “*How can that be?*” Well, the answer is simple; God's *Word* is truth. So when the Church is preaching the unadulterated Word of Truth from the *pulpit* it will show people in what way their lives are wrong. If the people who hear that Word will continue to allow the Word to *correct* them and change them...they will experience the truth and the truth will make them free.

The danger is when people allow a spirit of *offense* to develop into a root of bitterness in their heart – because they cease to work the Word of truth. The Word of Truth shows you *what* to do when a spirit of offense comes.

### **Psalms 119:165 (KJV)**

**Great peace have they which love thy law [Word]: and nothing shall offend them.**

The devil is *constantly* trying to deceive us so we will err or stray from the truth. Then he can bombard us with lies so we'll fall into his trap of *deception* and get disconnected from our life *source*. Satan uses all kinds of lies in an attempt to get us to err from the truth. So right up front I want to mention a few *common* lies that the devil uses, and we must avoid if we're going to prevent Truth Decay.



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## Six Common Lies

### 1. Spreading *Rumours*

People do this all the time without checking the legitimacy of what they heard...or they repeat a rumour that does not build up or edify anyone, and once the rumour is *repeated* there's no telling where it will go. You need to know this about rumours – they are *never* benign... they are always malignant. Rumours are always *damaging* to the truth.

### 2. *Flattery*

The Bible warns against flattery in...

**Proverbs 26:28 (The Message)**

**Liars hate their victims; flatterers sabotage trust.**

**Proverbs 29:5 (The Message)**

**A flattering neighbour is up to no good; he's probably planning to take advantage of you.**

This is not saying that we can't pass on *sincere* compliments. It's always right to *affirm* and encourage people; but flattery is a form of *manipulation*; and anyone who flatters is trying to take advantage of you.

### 3. *Insinuations*

Or, what the Bible calls *whispering*. This is to introduce an *idea* or point of view stealthily – slyly or in a covert way.

**2 Corinthians 12:20 (AMP)**

**For I am fearful that somehow or other I may come and find you not as I desire to find you, and that you may find me too not as you want to find me—that perhaps there may be factions (quarrelling), jealousy, temper (rivalry, divided loyalties), selfishness, whispering, gossip, arrogance (self-assertion), and disorder among you.**

**Proverbs 16:28 (AMP) A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.**

### 4. *Slander*

Or another word we're more familiar with that is synonymous is *gossip*. I beg you in the Name of Jesus...don't be a gossip monger or a slanderer!!! Don't be a party to spreading *stories* about someone's children that you've heard from your own children. But you might say, "*It's true...so I'm not lying!!!*" But is it a good report? If the shoe was on the other foot, would it be something you'd want others to say about you or your *child*?

These are the *questions* we ought to ask ourselves before we pass on the poisonous darts of slander & gossip. Now why do people always come to you with their *gossip*? Is it because somehow you've made them think that you are like them? If you don't want to become a garbage dump for gossip & slander, you *must* tell those people that you don't appreciate them telling you what they just told you. And then immediately start *praying* – out loud – for the person that's being gossiped about.



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## Six Common Lies

### Galatians 5:7-10 (The Living Bible)

You were getting along so well. Who has interfered with you to hold you back from following the truth? It certainly isn't God who has done it, for he is the one who has called you to freedom in Christ. But it takes only one wrong person among you to infect all the others. [Pastor Nichols translation "It only takes one skunk to make the whole forest smell like skunk"] I am trusting the Lord to bring you back to believing as I do about these things. God will deal with that person, whoever he is, who has been troubling and confusing you.

In natural law, you can be prosecuted for receiving and passing along *stolen* goods. According to God's law, you will be *judged* and rewarded for receiving and passing along gossip & slander.

### 5. Silence

Not speaking up for truth when someone is *opposing* God's Word. Silence is really nothing more than accommodation or *tolerance* and they both lead to acceptance. Not standing up for what we say we *believe* is one of the worst positions we could ever take. Silence is disobedience...believing and obeying God's Word is what *demonstrates* to a lost and dying world that we are Christians. A true Bible believing Christian can't be silent.

### 6. Hypocrisy

This is lying with your *life*. You act one way around Christians and then another way around *sinners*. Hypocrisy is one of my greatest concerns in working with *young* people in our church. They grow up in our church and academy, therefore they know the *language* and they know what they are supposed to say but they don't possess the *conviction* of what they say they believe in their heart. And when they get to be teenagers & young adults, it shows in their *actions* - the way they conduct themselves in the *presence* of God, the way they treat the *Word*, and the way they relate to spiritual authority. When our youth don't possess godly convictions, they war against any *restraints* the Word, parents, or spiritual authority places on their life. They'll start referring to restraints as rules & *legalism*.

### Deuteronomy 30:15 Message

**"Keep His rules & live."**

**1Tim. 1:9** Tells us that laws/rules are not given to control people who *obey* but for the disobedient. In the New Covenant we keep God's rules because we want to...not because we have to.

### 1 Timothy 4:1-2 (NLT)

**Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from what we believe; they will follow lying spirits and teachings that come from demons. These teachers are hypocrites and liars. They pretend to be religious, but their consciences are dead.**

### 1 Timothy 4:2 (The Message)

**These liars have lied so well and for so long that they've lost their capacity for truth.**

Not practicing what we say we *believe* causes Truth Decay.

All lies are untruth; therefore they are *sin*. Sin is any selfish decision that violates God's Holy Word. Sin is always directed against God, and sin is always *offensive* to God.



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## False Freedom

### Matthew 16:23 (AMP)

**But Jesus turned away from Peter and said to him, Get behind Me, Satan! You are in My way [an offense and a hindrance and a snare to Me]; for you are minding what partakes not of the nature and quality of God, but of men.**

Now notice carefully what Jesus said here in this verse. Sin is what pertains to the nature & quality of man, with the exclusion of God, and that's the root of what we're dealing with in our 21st Century *culture*. People want to throw off all godly restraints and be free to express themselves where & how they choose. Anyone who restricts their free *expression* is viewed as hard or controlling. Now what most people are unaware of is that this *humanistic* world-view began to work at displacing the Biblical world-view held by most people in North America...as early as 1920. The goal of the humanist was to achieve absolute *freedom* from controls; and to be totally free from all forms of godly restraint. By 1980 the humanists achieved their goal by gaining control of the *media*, the public education system, and the *entertainment* industry.

From the beginning of time, every *culture* has had to confront a similar problem, and the problem is this: if there is not a proper balance between control & *freedom*, then society will move into either of the two extremes:

- a) Freedom without a proper balance of controls will lead to *chaos* and to the total breakdown of society.
- b) Control without a proper balance of freedom will lead to authoritarianism, and to the *destruction* of individual and social freedom.

We've taken for granted the impact that the Christian Reformation had on society as a *whole*. Not only did the Reformation produce a clear preaching of the *gospel*, but it also gave shape to *society* as a whole. The multitudes that were brought to Christ held to the beliefs of the Bible, and those beliefs spread through the culture as a whole – including *government*. These newfound beliefs helped to shape society's world-view.

But something happened in the last 30 years – since the humanistic world-view became the dominate *thought* pattern of the masses. The freedoms that were once founded on *biblical* principles and Christian values have now become autonomous freedom, cut loose from all constraints. Here we have the world spirit of our *age* – autonomous Man setting himself up as God, in defiance of the knowledge of *truth* which God has given. This is why we are facing *moral* breakdowns in every area of life. The awesome freedoms we once enjoyed as a result of the Christian Reformation have been cut loose from their Christian restraints. The last several *generations* have trampled upon the truth of God's Word and upon everything those truths created.

### Romans 1:24 (NLT)

**So God let them go ahead and do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies.**



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### Romans 28-32 (NLT)

When they refused to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their evil minds and let them do things that should never be done. Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, fighting, deception, malicious behaviour, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They are forever inventing new ways of sinning and are disobedient to their parents. They refuse to understand, break their promises, and are heartless and unforgiving. They are fully aware of God's death penalty for those who do these things, yet they go right ahead and do them anyway. And, worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.

This passage accurately describes our own culture *today*. Bent on the pursuit of autonomous freedom – freedom from restraint, and especially from God's truth and moral absolutes, our culture has set itself on the course of self *destruction*.

Autonomous freedom! How the voices of our day *cry* out! “*I don't need to submit to spiritual authority or any authority for that matter. I know how to hear from God and I must be allowed to follow my own heart without any accountability.*”

### Proverbs 18:1

**An unfriendly man pursues selfish ends; he defies all sound judgment.**

### Ecclesiastes 8:9b

**There is a time when a man lords it over others to his own hurt.**

**Footnote:** “*without accountability to others one will sooner or later inflict damage on himself, as well as on those he rules/leads.*”

When people quit allowing God's Word to *direct* their life, they become independent, unprincipled and are capable of outrageous *conduct*. These are some of the first steps down in the deterioration of a *culture*. You don't take one quantum leap down to anarchy – it's a progression. So after several *generations* of “freedom from godly restraints,” is it any wonder we have people crying out; “*I must be free to kill the child in my womb. I must be free even to kill the newborn child if I don't think he or she measures up to my standards of 'quality life.'* *I must be free to desert by husband or wife, and abandon my children. I must be free to commit shameless acts with those of my own sex. I must be free to euthanize the sick or elderly so they can 'die with dignity.'*”



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## The Spirit of our Age

**Proverbs 29:18**

**Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.**

Autonomous freedom is the spirit of our age. It defines freedom and “being free from all restraint and especially freedom from God’s *truth* and moral absolutes.” Since 1980 the predominate philosophy of our culture in North America has shifted from one that was largely *Christian* to a philosophy that stands in total antithesis to Christian truth at every point – including the denial of the supernatural, the belief in the all sufficiency of human *reason*, the rejection of the fall; the denial of the deity of Christ and His resurrection, the belief in the perfectibility of Man, and the destruction of the *Bible*. Now is it any wonder that we are seeing the fruits of this prevailing philosophy in today’s *society*?

**James 4:11 (The Message)**

**Don't bad-mouth each other, friends. It's God's Word, His Message, His Royal Rule, that takes a beating in that kind of talk. You're supposed to be honouring the Message, not writing graffiti all over it.**

Autonomous freedoms are not really *freedoms* at all.

**Galatians 5:13 (The Message)**

**It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows.**

**Romans 6:14-19 (The Message)**

**[Sin] can't tell you how to live. After all, you're not living under that old tyranny any longer. You're living in the freedom of God. So, since we're out from under the old tyranny, does that mean we can live any old way we want? Since we're free in the freedom of God, can we do anything that comes to mind? Hardly. You know well enough from your own experience that there are some acts of so-called freedom that destroy freedom. Offer yourselves to [sin], for instance, and it's your last free act. But offer yourselves to the ways of God and the freedom never quits. All your lives you've let [sin] tell you what to do. But thank God you've started listening to a new master, one whose commands set you free to live openly in his freedom! I'm using this freedom language because it's easy to picture. You can readily recall, can't you, how at one time the more you did just what you felt like doing not caring about others, not caring about God the worse your life became and the less freedom you had? And how much different is it now as you live in God's freedom, your lives healed and expansive in holiness?**

It’s my firm belief that most Christians haven’t been aware of this on-going *battle* – not just a heavenly battle, but a life and death struggle over what will happen to men & women & children in both this life and the life to come. Never in my lifetime has the exhortation that Jude gives the Church in his short letter been more *urgent* to believers than it is today...

**Jude 3 (NLT)**

**Dearly loved friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, [urging you] to defend the truth of the Good News. God gave this unchanging truth once for all time to His holy people.**

If the truth of the Christian faith is in fact the truth; then it stands in antithesis to

the *secular* humanistic philosophy of our age, and it (the truth) must be practiced both in teaching and practical action.



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## The Demands of Truth

Truth demands *confrontation*! Sadly to our own detriment we must admit that this seldom happens. Most Christians have not been *active* in the battle, or even been able to see that we are in a battle. Thus, when it comes to the issues of our day concerning Truth Decay – most Christians say *nothing*; or worse yet – say nothing different from what the world would say. This is a great travesty – when Christians refuse to *stand* for truth as truth. We’ve allowed the secular humanist to intimidate us with their shouts of *intolerance*! All “religious- minded” people know that Christians can’t afford to be seen by the secular humanist as being *bigots*! So most Christians are more inclined to bow down to the intimidating tactics of the secular humanist than to obey the *scriptures* in defending the truth of the Holy Scriptures to a lost and dying world. You need to know that to be tolerant of the secular humanist philosophy in the face of absolute truth is the grossest form of *worldliness* that a Christian could commit.

Making Jesus Christ Lord in our lives means taking a *stand* in very direct and practical ways against the secular humanist spirit as it continues to gain momentum in our culture – crushing everything that we cherish in its path. As Christians we must do all we can to lead people into the *knowledge* of the truth of God’s Word. We must “defend the truth!” The *soft* days for New Testament Christianity are past, and only a strong stand for TRUTH will enable a Christian to withstand the *pressures* of an indoctrinated humanistic society demanding autonomous freedom.

We must remember that it was the early church’s *passionate* conviction of the truth of God’s Word that enabled them to *withstand* the pressure of the Roman Empire. Without a strong commitment to God’s absolutes, the early believers would never have remained *faithful* in the face of the constant harassment and persecution they faced every day from the Roman culture. Our situation is remarkably *similar* as our own legal, moral, and social *structure* is based on an increasingly anti-Christian, humanistic philosophy.

For those of us who are *serious* about our walk with God, and don’t want to get swallowed up by this secular humanist spirit; it’s not optional if we read our Bibles and spend time in *communion* with the Lord and come to church every time the doors are open...it’s a *vital* necessity! Church, we are at a time when humanism is coming to its natural conclusion in morals, in values, and in *law*. We are presently experiencing what the Holy Spirit *warned* us about in...

### 2 Timothy 3:1 (CEV)

**“You can be certain that in the last days there will be some very hard times.”**

### Ephesians 4:17-19 (The Message)

**“And so I insist—and God backs me up on this—that there be no going along with the crowd, the empty-headed, mindless crowd. They’ve refused for so long to deal with God that they’ve lost touch not only with God but with reality itself. They can’t think straight anymore...”**

Church, we are surrounded by a society with no *fixed* standards and “no fault” everything! Absolutes are psychologically pushed away or explained away so that there is no *right* or *wrong*. As with the “happiness” of the mother taking precedence over human *life*, so anything that interferes with the “happiness” of the individual or society is done away with.



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While the absolute truths of God's Word are being destroyed by theological and cultural *compromise*, will we have the courage as Bible-believing Christians to confront? Will we have the courage to confront and, if necessary, do it *publically*? If we do not have the courage to confront the lies of satan, we will by default allow satan to take away the *future* of our children. We will destroy any hope of our children being the redeeming salt and light of our dying *culture*.

We cannot wait for someone *else* to defend the truth! I know it will not be easy, and for many it may be *costly*. One thing is for sure; it certainly will not be popular. But if we truly believe that God is who He says He is, that Jesus is His Son, and the Holy Spirit is His life force...and if we truly love His Word and His *church*, we have no other choice. We must stop the decay of truth by taking our stand to defend the truth!