

## Truth in the Inward Being

Our world is crying out for something – truth in the inward being. About 3000 years ago, David wrote in Psalm 51:4:

*“Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.”*

David wrote this Psalm in confession over his sin with Bathsheba. Everything about that sin had been a lack of integrity – a lack of truth in the inward being. David had lusted after Bathsheba from his palace when he thought no one was looking. David had slept with Bathsheba, and then tried to cover it up. He tried to get her husband drunk so he would sleep with Bathsheba, and so make her pregnancy seem normal. When that did not work, he sent Uriah into battle so he would be killed, and he could then marry Bathsheba and cover it up. Furthermore, he continued to hide and conceal this sin till God confronted him through the prophet Nathan. Now David, in repentance wrote: God, you desire truth in the inward being – truth that is a part of our very soul, not simply an outward conformity to rules.

What are we talking about? Integrity – truth in the inward being. All around us, people cry out for integrity from our politicians, from our businessmen, from our sportsmen, indeed from our pastors and religious teachers. We have government corruption; scandals, endless corruption and bribery in the various forms of national, regional and local government, there are calls for integrity. Businesses lose millions upon millions of rands through the stealing of employees. The economy cries out for integrity. And sadly, through the immoral double-lives of many televangelists, and through the shameless profiteering of many in church leadership today – there is a call for integrity in the ministry. They are calling for truth in the inward being. Integrity is what you do when no one is looking. Integrity is your attitude toward what is right, when no one is there to see it. That’s truth in the inward being.

What does it look like? Truth in the inward being is not taking stationery from your work to your home and never returning it. Truth in the inward being is when you do not use the office photocopier or fax machine for personal copies and faxes without paying for it or without permission. Truth in the inward being is when you do not purposely go on lunch early and come back late. Truth in the inward being is when you do not come to work late on purpose, and leave early on purpose. It’s when you do not waste your company’s money and time by surfing the Internet for things unrelated to work. It’s when you do not sit and secretly play computer games, or chat on the Internet, or sit on private telephone calls.

Truth in the inward being is when you do not fudge your reports at work, and exaggerate the results to make them look better, or omit truths to hide what is bad. It’s when you do not lie on your CV, or make bold claims that you know you cannot keep in a job interview.

Truth in the inward being is refusing to copy your schoolmate’s homework, or another’s assignment. It’s choosing to rather go with a lower mark with what you do know, rather than cheating and getting a higher mark.

Truth in the inward being is refusing to accept exam answer sheets illegally circulated before the exams; choosing to study and work honestly. I remember in Bible college, where honesty was supposed to be a given, one young man who would take advantage of the trust of the lecturers, and sit with his notes hidden under his exam sheet, to answer the questions. I used to think – who do you think you are fooling? Truth in the inward being was a foreign concept to him.

Truth in the inward being is refusing to buy stolen goods, simply because the price is so much cheaper. Truth in the inward being means buying your computer software legitimately, and refusing to illegally copy, or accept, or download or, borrow illegally made copies. It means the same thing for music tapes and CDs, for DVDs and videos. Truth in the inward being does not boast in having a collection of games, movies, songs or software copied illegally.

Truth in the inward being means never accepting a bribe, no matter how low your salary might be. Whether the bribe is seeking to buy a legitimate or illegitimate favour, truth in the inward being will say no.

Truth in the inward being means repaying what you have borrowed – not trying to get out of it, and ducking out of sight altogether. It means settling your debts properly.

Truth in the inward being means obeying the traffic laws of the land. It means not jumping red robots just because no police are nearby. It means respecting and abiding by the laws, even when there is no one near to punish you. And it certainly means never offering, or accepting a bribe offer when dealing with a corrupt traffic officer.

Truth in the inward being means paying all your taxes. It means declaring all of your income, and not hiding portions of it. It means paying what the government has called for, and claiming legitimate tax deductions, not falsified ones.

Truth in the inward being is not selectively obeying the laws of the land – it is obeying all of them.

Truth in the inward being is when a politician avoids the private favours and deals to sweeten them up, and legislates what is right and true. It is when he loves his job as ruler and lawmaker more than money.

Truth in the inward being means that you do not steal the ideas of others and pretend they are your own. That applies to preachers writing sermons; to software developers writing programs; to musicians writing songs; to comedians writing jokes; to artists creating paintings or sculptures; to script-writers writing screenplays; to scientists doing research; to businessmen writing business plans – the list is practically endless. Whenever something needs to be written or created, truth in the inward being gives credit to the author from which the idea sprang.

Truth in the inward being is when you have knowledge of a crime and tell the relevant authorities, instead of hiding it, for fear of being hurt yourself.

Truth in the inward being is when you are watching television or surfing the Internet in your own time, and when something containing violence, profanity, blasphemy,

nudity or any thing even bordering on sexual suggestiveness comes on – you switch it off. It means you do not surf porn sites, or sites containing other fleshly, wicked content, simply because no other human is there to watch you.

Truth in the inward being is when you are travelling alone and find yourself in a town or city where no one knows you or would know what you did, and you choose to avoid all possible immoral situations – be they prostitution, a casual affair, or watching something sexually explicit on TV or otherwise.

Truth in the inward being means, when we have done something wrong and are questioned about it, we do not lie, fudge the truth, blame-shift or tell half-truths. We say what is true and what needs to be said. It means we do not communicate in half-truths with our spouses, hiding our true motives, desires, and activity

Truth in the inward being means companies do not secretly ignore or overlook certain safety specifications required by the authorities.

Truth in the inward being means athletes avoid taking steroids and performance enhancing drugs. It means they avoid fixing results for money.

Truth in the inward being means not lying about a product or hiding its flaws, or defrauding customers.

The list of all the areas of life where truth in the inward being is needed is as long and varied as life itself. Everywhere you turn, integrity is needed, but is lacking. Our laws seek to produce honesty from man by constraint, through threat of punishment. So man is honest with other men when he is being watched, when he thinks he cannot get away with an act of dishonesty. But when he thinks he can, when he thinks he will not be found out or caught – it is almost as if he leans toward dishonesty. Threats, laws, and punishment might produce some semblance of truth outwardly. But it cannot produce truth in the inward being. This is something only God can do. One would think that integrity was not a problem for Christians, but sadly, the results of research show that those who claim to be born-again are very often not too different from the world when it comes to a lack of integrity.

We might first ask why do we lack this truth in our inward being? Why are we so prone to all these different forms of dishonesty? Well, the answer lies in our hearts. As people born with a sinful nature, our hearts are prone toward dishonesty. Jeremiah wrote:

*“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”*  
(Jer 17:9)

Above all things our hearts are deceitful – given to lying, cheating, and deceiving. Now, let's take it one step further. Why? Why should we love dishonesty more than honesty? Why, if we have this God-given conscience that knows that lying is wrong, why should we prefer lying to truth? The answer is that sin has made us utterly self-centred, to the exclusion of all else. The heart of sin is to reject God as the centre of life, and to replace His value with our own value. We live for self, follow self, try to enjoy self, and try to have everyone else act in the same way about ourselves. Now

lying is simply how this corruption interacts with the world. Since we love ourselves more than anyone or anything else, we think that lying will further this cause of loving ourselves. We think that lying will somehow advance us in life. We will have more money, more pleasure, more respect from others if we fudge the truth, or lie, or cheat, or steal. We believe that we are doing good to ourselves. Other times, it is because we believe that lying will protect us. It will save us from loss, or harm, or danger, or accusation, or investigation, or scrutiny – so we lie. In both cases, the one offensive, the other defensive – we are knowingly acting in a dishonest way because we believe it will be better for us.

Now here is the real problem. Our love of self is so corrupt and warped that we believe that reality can be twisted to serve ourselves. Truth is simply reality as it is. But in lying, we treat reality like a pliable, unfixed thing that can be moulded to suit us – as if we are the only and final reality. So the facts that something doesn't belong to us, or that there are laws of the land, or that we ought not to copy or hide the truth, or an infinite number of fixed realities – these become abstract ideas to the selfish mind. The only reality to the sinful mind is that I must get ahead, I must be protected. My lying, cheating, stealing, my adultery, my unlawful behaviour is not wrong, so long as it helps me. And it doesn't take much thought to know that if every man views life this way – we soon have total anarchy and chaos.

So what is the cure to this total drought of integrity? Well, the answer is for us to have truth in the inward being – we need a total transformation of the inward being. A man must first come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ before he can be anything but dishonest. In fact, continual rejection of Christ is called dishonesty in Romans 1- where people are said to be suppressing the truth. Before a man is saved he is slave to one thing – himself. His desires rule him. He has no higher law than his own value. Therefore, when faced with the choice between his own advancement and the laws of the company, or the land, or of God, he will by default choose his own advancement. Water cannot rise above its own level, so a man cannot rise above himself when he is unsaved.

So the first step is for a man to come to repentant faith in Christ, embracing all that God is for us in Christ through His death and resurrection. Once this takes place, there is now an inward principle written on the heart:

*“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2Co 5:17)*

Now a man is no longer a slave to himself. He has been freed to seek something much higher than himself – God's glory. He has been unshackled to know the surpassing worth not of his own value, but of God's. He has been emancipated to know a joy greater than loving himself – that of loving God. As such, he can now focus on reality. Formerly, when faced with reality and his own advancement, he could do no other than seek his own advancement. Now, he becomes increasingly fond of reality as it is. He can now choose truth in spite of himself. He is no longer pretending to warp reality to fit himself, he now sees he must fit himself into reality. Since God has saved him, he is now far more concerned with what is, than with what he wants it to be to suit himself. He is becoming a reality-lover, or to put it another way – a truth lover. He increasingly prefers truth over lies.

But being saved does not guarantee integrity, or truth in the inward being. It simply makes it possible. Now, there must be a work of the Spirit, as we yield to His commands in the Word, that brings the fruit of integrity – of truth in the inward being.

What is the Bible's program for developing integrity – truth in the inward being?

**Firstly, we must embrace God as the Grand Reality.** When a Christian watches pornography because no one is looking, he displays what he truly believes – that even God is not looking. I assure you if God physically manifested himself to that man there is no way he would go on watching. But the fact that he continues means he inwardly denies the reality of God. When we are honest and truthful and fair and law-abiding simply because of man we are man-fearing. We are being outwardly honest only because we know that being caught will be more negative for us than the gain we get from being dishonest. But as soon as that possibility of being seen or caught is removed, we indulge. Here, the version of reality that we are acting in accord with is the one where my wants are the most important thing. God is not watching. I can get ahead. This kind of thinking denies that God is the Grand Reality. Because He cannot be seen with physical eyes does not make His presence any less real. That would be as silly as acting like there was no wind or no gravity simply because you cannot see them. God is the Grand Reality behind all reality. David realised this when he wrote Psalm 139:

*“O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*  
(Psa 139:1-12)

Now David is making the point that he cannot escape God. He cannot escape God geographically, God is everywhere. He cannot escape God mentally; God knows everything, including all David's thoughts. David is saying God's Presence is the Grand Reality of His life. Such a continual awareness of God's presence is a part of the fear of the Lord. To continually acknowledge God is here. You could say that it is realising that God is your environment. God is your atmosphere. He is always here. You might take some practical steps to help you form the habit of always remembering that. You might write out little cards that say things like: “God is here” or “God is my audience”, or particular Bible verses dealing with God's presence and attach them to the top of your computer screen, or put them in a prominent place at your desk, or on the fridge, or on a mirror, or on your car's dashboard. Mentally train yourself to know that God is the Grand Reality.

**Secondly, we must embrace God's Person as the Goal to Reflect**

It is one thing to know that God is here. It is quite another to know what that means. God is not just here, like a blind grandfather sitting in the corner. He is here, and He is Lord. He is not just here; He is here the way the traffic officer is here on the highway. He means to see His laws enforced. To acknowledge God is here, and to continue in dishonesty is worse than pretending He is not here. God is here, and He is Lord, and He loves truth in the inward being. He is displeased when we cheat, steal time or money or belongings, watch things we ought not to, exaggerate; tell half-truths, and any number of other things. Just like we would not openly break the law in front of a traffic officer for fear of punishment, so we need to fear God enough to not openly sin in front of Him. God wants His children to be like Him.

His commands to be truthful are rooted in the fact that He is truthful. His command to not cheat is rooted in the fact that He does not cheat. God cannot act in any other way than in accordance with Himself. God always acts in harmony with reality, with Himself. God is truth – the ultimate truth. Therefore God wants man, and especially His children to act in a way which reflects this. Man must act in accordance with reality. When a human grows increasingly out of touch with reality and begins speaking to invisible people and talking to himself, we eventually send him to an insane asylum, because he cannot function in the real world anymore. Well, humans that continually act without integrity are out of touch with the true reality – God. And the more they do that, and the longer they do that, the more they become unable to function in a universe created by God. They are out of touch with the greatest reality of all, and therefore can never enjoy life as it was meant to be lived.

So, I am to carry before me not only the fact that God is here, but that He is here, and He expects me to be like Him - truthful in the inward being. Lies will be punished. Falsehood will eventually be exposed. Deceit and dishonesty will come up at the judgment of God. To pretend otherwise is to be spiritually insane. Writing out verses dealing specifically with honesty and truthfulness may help here. Some suggestions are Proverbs 6:16-19, Ephesians 4:25, Romans 13:13, I Thes 4:12, 2 Cor 4:2, Proverbs 20:23, Proverbs 12:22 and a host of other verses from Proverbs. Truth in the inward being is what God is, and it is what He commands from us.

**Thirdly, we must embrace God's Promises as the Good Reward.** Having truth in the inward being means we must focus on something more than immediate reward, we focus on God's Promises of reward for righteousness. We must love truth more than our own immediate good. What motivates dishonesty is spiritual short-sightedness. We think that doing something dishonest will bring us gain; we do not see that God will ultimately judge that sin. Likewise, we often avoid the truth because it appears to us, in the short term, that being truthful will harm us more than it will help us. Doing things the honest way, in a world where everyone else is taking shortcuts, just doesn't seem to make sense. But that is short-sighted. God will overturn every lie, and reward every truth. If you were surrounded by counterfeiters, who were printing billion-rand notes, it might seem foolish to go out and dig for hours for a gold nugget. Their dishonesty seems to work for them. But eventually, when their scheme collapses, they have nothing, while the gold mined for in truth will stand and be valuable. God's Promises of reward for honesty is what keeps us honest when no one is looking. By faith, we focus on what is not yet revealed.

Truth is not related to pragmatism – what seems to be working at the time. Truth is related to the Grand Reality – what is ultimately true – even if it doesn't seem to be working in my favour at the moment. Psalm 15 speaks of this when it answers the question – who shall abide in God's tabernacle. It describes the righteous man who speaks truth in his heart – not just outwardly. Then it has the interesting phrase:

*'He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.'*  
(Psa 15:4)

This man makes a promise and oath, and keeps it, even when it hurts him. Here is truth in the inward being. When you keep to an oath, even though the immediate consequences are not in your favour, it means you have risen above pragmatic honesty, truth in the outward only. There is a principle within. Here is a man who is clearly living for something greater than his own advantage, because his oath is hurting him instead of helping him. Thus his allegiance is to truth itself, not just truth that works for him.

Now obviously no one works to harm themselves in the long run. The reason this man takes the negative consequences of sticking to his integrity, is because he wants the greater, and bigger and better reward of abiding with God. Being truthful is harming him in some way now, but he knows the ultimate reward is far greater. See, lying, dishonesty, a lack of integrity, is like all sin – it is short-sighted. It likes short-term benefits, and ignores long-term destruction. Faith in God's Word will endure short-term pain, for long-term pleasure.

It takes faith to be truthful at all times. It means believing in the unseen reward of God. It means embracing the promise of future reward. It means reaping the quieter reward of a clean conscience. Above all, it means reaping the reward of experiencing a closer walk with God, a sense of His pleasure and presence.

Truth in the inward being embraces God as the Grand Reality –He is my audience and environment and atmosphere. Truth in the Inward Parts embraces God's Person as the Goal to Reflect. He cannot lie, and the more we become like Him, the more we must walk in the light as He is in the light. And then truth in the inward being embraces God's Promises as the Good Reward.