

# How to Avoid the Idolatry of UnTruth

## by Chaplain Frank Wm Nagy

### Truth is Essential to Life

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in **truth**.

Jesus said, “**The truth** will set you free (John 8:32).”

1 Timothy 2:3 ...God our Savior; :4 would have all men be saved, and to come to **the knowledge of the truth**.

### Problems Start When Truth is Not Respected and is Then Rejected

Idolatry starts with those who have a fundamental problem with the truth. All idolatry starts with a denial of the truth of who God is, as He shows himself to men.

Jeremiah 6:10 To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken. Behold, **the word of the LORD** is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.

### God's Anger is Kindled When People Knowingly Refuse to Acknowledge Him

Micah 5:12 I will cut off **witchcrafts** out of your hand. You shall no longer have soothsayers [**psychics**, fortune-tellers]. <sup>13</sup> Your *graven images* [**IDOLS**] also will I cut off and your *standing images* out of the midst of you. *You shall not worship the work of your hands any more.* <sup>14</sup> I will pluck up your groves [where you practice **witchcraft and idol worship**] out of the midst of you, so also will I destroy your cities....

Isaiah 5:12 ...**They do not regard the work of the LORD**, neither do they consider the operation of his hands. :13 So, My people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge...

Hosea 4:6 **My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because you have rejected knowledge** I will also reject you. You shall not be priest to me: seeing **you have forgotten the law of your God**, I will also forget your children. :7 As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will **I change their glory into shame**.

In John 8:43 Jesus addressed the Jewish believers of his day in saying:

“Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot hear my word. :44 You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father will you do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and did not live in the **truth**, because there is no **truth** in him. When he tells a **lie**, he speaks of his own: for he is a **liar**, and the father of it. :45 And because I tell you **the truth**, you do not believe me.”

Paul said even those, who are in the church are not immune from turning their hearts from the truth:

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. :3 For the time will come when they will not endure **sound doctrine**; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. :4 **They shall turn away their ears from the truth**, and shall turn to fables.

### **More Than a Few Hold the Truth in Unrighteousness**

Isaiah 48:1 Hear this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and have come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the Name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but **not in truth, nor in righteousness**.

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Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who **hold the truth in unrighteousness**....

#### **Alternative Translation:**

The RSV has it as those who “**suppress the truth.**”

Jesus had some dealings with leaders of his day that clearly show how they played pretty fast and loose with the truth. Matthew 21:23-27 shows a case where Jesus confronted those, who refused to play by God’s rules in dealing with the truth:

When [Jesus] went in the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching. They asked, “By what power can you do you these things? Who gave you this power?”

24 Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one thing. If you tell me, I’ll tell you by where my power comes from. 25 The baptism of John, where was it from? Heaven, or from men?”

They reasoned with themselves, “If we say, ‘From heaven.’ He will ask us, ‘Then, why didn’t you believe him?’ 26 But if we shall say, ‘From men,’ we fear what the people will do. For all think of John as a prophet.” 27 So they answered Jesus, “We cannot tell.”

He told them, “Neither will I tell you by what power I do these things (Matthew 21:23-27).”

Men often take what is true and twist it into a pretzel. Here these men endeavor to deflect the truth. They were not about to let Jesus change them or any aspect of their status quo.

If, like them, we don’t respond correctly, we will only have ourselves to blame.

Romans 1:25 [They] **changed the truth of God into a lie**...<sup>28</sup> Even as **they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind**...

Problems immediately spring up for those who reject the truth God shows them. They become subject to lies and liars as a result. As deceived deceivers they find themselves

in no end of trouble. How many of our troubles directly result from our rejecting some truth God has shown us?

While God would have all come to know the truth (1 Timothy 2:3-4)...

...If **they don't receive the love of the truth** (2 Thessalonians 2:10) God further deceives them: With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those that perish...

...If they resist the truth (2 Timothy 3:8): like Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, these also **resist the truth**: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. :9  
...They shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men...

2 Thessalonians 2:12 That they all might be damned who did not believe the **truth**, but had pleasure in **unrighteousness**.

2 Thessalonians 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those that perish; because **they did not receive the love of the truth**, that they might be saved. :11 For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a **lie**.

Those who don't accept the truth, who feed on their own falsehoods, will be given over to delusion. God will make them believe a lie. Ultimately they will be unable to recognize the truth and so as it says in 2 Timothy:

2 Timothy 3:7 Ever learning, they will never be able to come to **the knowledge of the truth**.

### **The Way Some Hold the Truth Blocks the Way for Others**

Matthew 23:13 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for **you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men**. You neither go in yourselves, neither let those who are entering to go in.

Luke is even clearer in a parallel passage:

Luke 11:52 Woe to you, lawyers! **You have taken away the key of knowledge**. You did not enter in yourselves, and those that were entering in you hindered.

What is the fate of those who block God's little ones from entering the kingdom by **suppressing the truth**, by **holding it back from them**? Matthew 18:6-7 gives us a ballpark to the fate they can expect:

Matthew 18:6 Whoever offends one of these little ones who believe in me, it would have been better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. :7 Woe to the world because of offenses! for offenses must come; but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

**The Good News:**

**Whatever Men Do Attempting to Corrupt the Truth will Ultimately Fail**

2 Corinthians 13:8 We can do nothing against the **truth**, but only for the **truth**.

**But What Can We Do for the Truth?**

**How Shall We Gain, Regain and Retain Truth?**

**Get to Know Him, Who is True:**

**Gain Truly Good Results from God the Son, God the Father, and the God the Spirit**

John 8:32 **The truth** will set you free and if the Son sets you free you will be free indeed.

John 14:6 Jesus said, “**I am the truth...**”

Ephesians 4:21 **The truth** is in Jesus.

John 17:17 [Father, God,] sanctify them through **Your truth. Your word is truth....**

The Holy Spirit will guide into **all truth** (John 16:13).

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1 John 2:27 But the anointing you have received from [the Spirit] lives in you, and you do not need any man to teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you all things. **It is truth**, is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in him.

1 John 5:6 **The Spirit is truth.**

Ephesians 5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and **truth**.)

**Humbly Seek God's Help with the Truth: Pray for True Wisdom**

Psalms 25:4 Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. 5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me: for you are the God of my salvation; on you do I wait all the day.... 8 Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will He teach sinners in the way. 9 The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. 10 All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.... 12 What man is he that fears the LORD? him shall He teach in the way He shall choose. 13 His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth. 14 The secret of the LORD is with those who fear him. He will show them his covenant.

Psalms 43:3 Send out Your light and Your truth. Let them lead [guide] me. Let them bring me to your holy hill and to your tabernacles.

Psalms 119:29 Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me your law graciously.

James 1:5 If any lack **wisdom**, let him ask it from God, who gives to all men liberally, and does not scold. **Wisdom** shall be given him.

**Get Prayer Support to Gain True Wisdom**

Paul prayed for the Ephesians and the Colossians:

Ephesians 1:15 So, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints, :16 I also do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, :17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you **the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.**

Colossians 1:8 ...[Due to] your love in the Spirit. :9 For this cause, since the day we heard it, we also do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; :10 That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and **increasing in the knowledge of God.**

**Decide to speak and act truthfully and avoid anything that does not seek that end.**

Proverbs 8:7 For my mouth shall speak **truth**; and **wickedness** is an **abomination** to my lips.

Ephesians 4:14 Do not be like children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; :15 But speaking the **truth** in love, grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

Titus 1:1 Paul was a minister "...**acknowledging truth**, which goes after godliness."

Titus 1:14 Do not give heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the **truth.**

James 3:14 If you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, do not glory in this, and lie against the **truth.**

2 Peter 3:17 Therefore, beloved, seeing you knew these things before, beware lest you be led away with the error of the wicked and fall from your own steadfastness. :18 Instead grow in grace and **the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.

**Choose the Way of Truth, Focus on God's Word and Turn from Everything Else**

Psalms 119:30 I have chosen **the way of truth**: Your [just] judgments have I laid before me.

The maladies Romans 1 mentions would be dealt with by anyone obeying Ezekiel 20:6-7 and 2 Corinthians 10:5:

Ezekiel 20:6 In the day I lifted up My hand to them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands: :7 I then told them, Every man cast away the abominations of your eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

2 Corinthians 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, we bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ....

By casting down falsehoods, we counter both wrong thinking and, call folk to become obedient to Christ. They now may replace their idolatry with worship in Spirit and **truth**.

1 Peter 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin; :2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

### **Our Obeying the Truth Will Purify Our Soul**

1 Peter 1:22 Seeing you have purified your souls in **obeying the truth** through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently.

### **Do Good Works, Add to Your Faith with Due Diligence to Show True Love**

Proverbs 14:17 ...A man of wicked devices is hated.... 22 Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and **truth shall be to them that devise good**.

John 3:21 Jesus said, “**He that acts out the truth comes to the light**, so his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”

2 Peter 1:3 According as his divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to glory and virtue: :4 Whereby exceeding great and precious promises are given to us: that by these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped corruption in the world through lust. :5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; :6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love. :8 For if these things are in you, and abound, they make it so you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in **the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not **love** in words only; but **in deeds [works] and in truth**. 19 By this we know **we are of the truth** and shall assure our hearts before [God].

### **A Spiritual Man Recognizes the Truth and Grows in Discernment of It**

1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this cause we also thank God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God you heard from us, you did not receive it as the word of men, but as it is, in **truth**, the word of God, which effectually works in you who believe.

Hebrew 5:13 Every one that uses milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness. He is a babe. :14 But strong meat belongs to those of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; so we might know the things freely given to us by God. :13 We speak of these things, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. :14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

### **Then We Can Help Others**

2 Corinthians 4:2 [Since] **we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty**, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but **by manifestation of the truth**, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.... :5 We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and portray ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

2 Timothy 2:24 The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, :25 in meekness *instructing those that oppose themselves*. Perhaps God will give them repentance to the **acknowledging of the truth**; :26 so those who are taken captive may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil and his evil will.