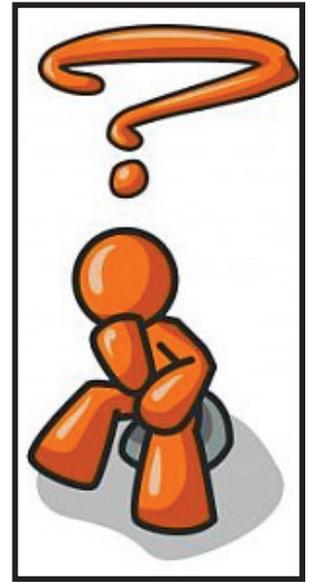


# What About ... the Truth... Will it Really Set You Free?

BY DR. DAVID A. DEWITT

In **John 8:31-32**, Jesus said to those Jews who had believed Him, “*If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.*” Later, in the Upper Room, He prayed, “*Sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is truth*” (John 17:17). Jesus was talking about the truth of His Word, and because His Word is revelation from God, it will make them free. But is it always the case that *the truth will make you free*? I want to suggest that it is.



I recently watched an episode of the newer version of “The Beauty and the Beast” (and I am not necessarily recommending it), which had an interesting line. The Beauty is talking to the Beast, about whom she had to lie to everyone she knows to protect him, and she said something like, “Being with you is the only place where I can live in the truth.” There is something very purifying, refreshing, and attractive about the truth, even for unbelievers who have a perverted idea of the truth. Actually, one of the reasons chaotic people like to make sin acceptable is so they can be truthful about it.

Many secular heroes and heroines in our books and movies also lie “to protect” someone from the truth, and that becomes part of the plot. But it is interesting that the writers often can’t deliver the heroes and heroines without the lie becoming a prison of guilt or anxiety until the truth sets them free.

Jesus said something else about the truth: *This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed* (John 3:19-21).

The reason we don’t want to confess our lies is because of the difficult consequences and possible losses we will have to face. It seems like the truth about our sin is a punishment, not something that sets us free. So we often choose the prison of lies over the freedom of truth. But the difficulties we will face are because of the lie, not the truth. Whatever the consequences, facing the light is the only way out of the dark prison of the lie.

So why do unbelievers follow Satan, who *does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies* (John 8:44)? I suspect the answer has something to do with the fact that we are all sinners and most sin is accompanied by lies. I recently heard an attorney say this to a group of people, as a reason for defending a guilty person. “Which one of you could say, ‘I have never done anything wrong’? Since we all do wrong things, we all deserve a defense.” That’s an amazing philosophy. “Wrong” deserves to be defended because we all do it? How is the fact that evil is universal make it defensible? Anyway, a defense in court is never about truth, it’s about what makes a client look good or innocent. If you stay out of prison with a lie, you enter the prison of the lie.

Chaotic people don’t tend to come to grips with their sin and repent of it. So they live in a prison of lies. Mature people understand the freedom that follows the truth and progressively rid their lives of lies. And when they catch themselves in a lie or are tempted to lie, they confess it quickly and get back on the path of truth. Only *truth in the innermost being* will make us free (Psalm 51:6).