
Help Fight Truth Decay

Scripture: JOHN 8: 31, 32

Supporting Scripture: Matthew 24:4, 5, 10, 11; 2 Tim 4:2-4; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 2:15; Proverbs 18:2; Acts 19:13-16; 1 John 2:3-4; 1 John 1:5, 6; John 8:31, 32; Luke 4:16; 2 Tim 2:15; Psalm 1:1,2; 1 John 2:3-6; James 1:23-25.

³¹To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus Said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the TRUTH, and the TRUTH will set you free.”

Introduction

In Burlington, Wisconsin there is a special club called: THE LIAR’S CLUB. All one has to do to become a member is pay \$1.00 and tell a good lie.

Some of the lies people told to get into the club were real doozies!

-One guy Said, “His wife was so cold the furnace kicked on every time she walked in the room.”

-Another guy Said, “One day it was so foggy that when he cut a tree down it didn’t fall till the fog lifted.”

I doubt seriously if any of us are gullible enough to ever believe TALES that TALL! But what about those more subtle lies? What about those half-truths and twisted truths that are being preached and taught by many today?

Jesus warned us in MATTHEW 24 that prior to his Second Coming, the CHURCH would be plagued with TRUTH DECAY.

(MATTHEW 24:4, 5, 10, and 11)

⁴ Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming “I am the Christ, and will deceive many...¹⁰

At that time MANY will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive MANY people.

Paul warned of this terrible TRUTH DECAY in II Timothy 4: 2-4

2 PREACH THE WORD; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage---with great patience and careful instruction. 3

For the time will come when men will not put up with SOUND

DOCTRINE. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around

them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to

hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the TRUTH and turn aside to myths.

Peter also warned of TRUTH DECAY in his Second Letter:

(2 PETER 2: 1, 2, 3)

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bring swift judgment on themselves. MANY will follow their shameful ways and will bring THE WAY OF TRUTH into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up...

In light of these warnings from JESUS and the Apostles Paul and Peter...I believe it is very possible there are many people who sit in church pews every week who are plagued with TRUTH DECAY and they don't even know it.

There are TWO thoughts I want us to consider as we think about this subject of TRUTH DECAY.

First of all. How to Pinpoint Truth Decay

And secondly. How to Prevent Truth Decay

First let's consider.

HOW TO PINPOINT TRUTH DECAY

When you visit a dentist for a checkup, there are several things your dentist looks for to see if you are showing signs of early tooth decay.

-First of all your DENTIST will look for CAVITIES.

† A tooth that has a CAVITY or a deep pocket in it.....is a tooth that is in decay.

† -BREAKS or CRACKS in teeth is also a pretty good indication DECAY has set in.

† -THE LOSS OF THE ENAMEL COATING covering the teeth is another indication DECAY may be setting in.

† -BLEEDING OR SWOLLEN GUMS may reveal the on-set of some GUM disease.....which could lead to serious TOOTH DECAY or TOOTH LOSS.

CAVITIES...BREAKS...CRACKS...LOSS OF ENAMEL...BLEEDING OR SWOLLEN GUMS...Any or all help a Dentist PINPOINT TOOTH DECAY.

Likewise there are some early warning signs of TRUTH DECAY. See if any of these warning signs apply to you.

WARNING SIGN 1: When Worldly Priorities Cause Me to neglect God's word I have TRUTH DECAY.

(1 John 2: 15) “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him”.

Isn't it strange?

† We have time to read the newspaper, but we don't have time to read the BIBLE.

† We have time to watch TV, but we don't have time to read the BIBLE.

† We have time to TALK ON THE TELEPHONE, but we don't have time to read the BIBLE.

† We have time to SURF THE INTERNET, but we don't have time to read the BIBLE.

† We have time to read ROMANCE NOVELS, but we don't have time to read the BIBLE.

† We have time to read CHRISTIAN BOOKS, but don't have time to read the Bible.

You see when we get so wrapped up in worldly things that we neglect the WORD OF GOD we are setting ourselves up for some serious TRUTH DECAY.

WARNING SIGN 2: WHEN MY OPINION OUTWEIGHS GOD'S WORD I HAVE TRUTH DECAY

(Proverbs 18: 2)

A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.

“I know that’s what the Bible says, but I think...”

“Well I can read what it says, but in my opinion it means...”

OPINIONS are just like NOSES...everybody’s got one!

But when it comes to GOD’S WORD...my opinion or your opinion doesn’t matter!

Illustration: The Speed Limit signs on the highway says 55.....

- † One guy looks at the sign and in his opinion 55 miles an hour really means 60.
- † Another guy looks at it and in his opinion 55 miles an hour really means 62.
- † Another guy looks at it and in his opinion 55 miles an hour only applies to non-experienced drivers who can’t handle driving 75 miles an hour like himself.

DO ALL THOSE OPINIONS CHANGE THE TRUTH ON THE SIGN?

The Christian who’s OPINION outweighs the TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD.....is playing with “fire.”

WARNING SIGN 3: When I seek a RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE more than I seek the WORD OF GOD I have TRUTH DECAY.

(ACTS 19: 13-16)

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon possessed. They would say..."In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

One day, the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know and I know about Paul, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding."

These Seven Sons of Sceva were looking for a religious experience instead of the truth. We all probably know someone who always talking about their "religious experiences"...**VOICES** they heard...**SIGNS** they saw...**FEELINGS** they felt...**VISIONS** they had. Sadly, many who claim to have had such experiences put more "stock" in those experiences than they do in God's Word...and rather than searching God's Word, they keep searching for A NEW, MORE EXHILIRATING RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

Folks.....JESUS didn't say, "Blessed are they who SEEK SIGNS...He said, "It is a wicked and adulterous generation that seeks after a sign."

JESUS didn't say..."Blessed are they who have seen un-believable VISIONS and had un-believable religious experiences." JESUS said..."Blessed are those who have NOT SEEN and yet believe.

WARNING SIGN 4: When I live my life in DISOBEDIENCE to GOD'S WORD I have TRUTH DECAY.

I John 2: 3-4 "We know that we have come to know him if WE obey His commands. The man who says, "I know him" but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the TRUTH is NOT in him".

One of the surest signs a Christian has SERIOUS TRUTH DECAY is when "their walk" doesn't match "their talk."

Any Christian whose lifestyle and habits are a total contradiction of God's Word is in the "advanced stages" of TRUTH DECAY.

I JOHN 1: 5, 6 "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth".

Dear Family GOD'S WORD is TRUTH.

† NO MATTER what I think!

† NO MATTER what I feel!

† NO MATTER what my opinion may be!

† NO MATTER what religious experiences I may claim to have had!

GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH!!!

Well; now that we have looked at HOW TO PINPOINT TRUTH DECAY. Let's consider:

How to Prevent Truth Decay

When your dentist detects signs of TOOTH DECAY he goes into a POSITIVE PLAN OF ACTION to prevent further decay.

That plan of action may include:

- † More frequent flossing and brushing.
- † More frequent checkups.
- † He will fill the cavities to prevent further erosion.
- † He might have to scrape your gums
- † And in some cases he might even have to pull a tooth that is especially decayed

Whatever course of action your dentist takes...the goal is to STOP THE DECAY before it's too late

Likewise when you see any WARNING SIGNS OF TRUTH DECAY you have to go into a positive plan of action to PREVENT further decay.

3. In our original text from JOHN 8: 31, 32 Jesus said...To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will KNOW THE TRUTH and the TRUTH will set you free.”

4. KNOWING THE TRUTH of GOD’S WORD is the Secret to Preventing TRUTH DECAY.

Well how can I KNOW THE TRUTH?

(A) I Can Prevent Truth Decay by READING GOD’S WORD

In **LUKE 4: 16** Jesus demonstrated by his own example the importance of READING GOD’S WORD.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom, and he stood up to READ.

What did Jesus read.....The Jerusalem Gazette or the Wailing Wall Street Journal? NO.....He read from the Scrolls of Scripture.

One reason many Christians suffer from TRUTH DECAY is they never even OPEN their BIBLES to read.....except during the Sunday Sermon.

If you’ve got time to read the SPORTS section or NEWS section of your newspaper, you’ve got time to read your BIBLE.

If you've got time to read READER'S DIGEST or LADIES HOME JOURNAL or THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER you've got time to read your BIBLE

Helpful Suggestion: Something I have found to be especially helpful is to read the Bible out loud.

Hearing the scripture out loud reinforces its truths in my mind and heart. Also when you read silently it's much easier for your mind to wander and you start getting sleepy.

Not only must we READ GOD'S WORD to fight TRUTH DECAY, we must also.

(B) I Can Prevent Truth Decay by STUDYING God's Word

(II TIMOTHY 2: 15)

Study to show yourself approved unto God a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.

Studying God's Word requires more effort and more thought than simply reading God's word.

- † To study God's Word requires that you look at it more intently, searching for commands and promises and admonitions.
- † Think of a mechanic carefully looking under the hood of a car or putting a car up on a lift and carefully inspecting the underside of the car with a trouble light.

That is literally what we do when we STUDY GOD'S WORD ...we get "under the hood". " We carefully inspect beneath the surface" in order to get a better understanding.

STUDYING GOD'S WORD HELPS PREVENT TRUTH DECAY!

But not only must we READ GOD'S WORD and STUDY GOD'S WORD.....we must also

(C) I Can Prevent Truth Decay by MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD

(PSALM 1: 1, 2)

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners or sitting the seat of mockers.....But his delight is in the law of the Lord , and on his law he meditates day and night.

That word "meditate" means to "ponder or imagine."

I hate to use this analogy, but I think it makes the point.

When a criminal "pre-meditates" a crime....."he imagines" himself carrying it out before he commits it.

When we "meditate" upon God's Word.....we PONDER what it means to you and me personally. We IMAGINE ourselves carrying out God's Word before we even do it.

When you and I make A DAILY HABIT of MEDITATING on God's Word.....it helps prevent TRUTH DECAY.

We must READ GOD'S WORD and STUDY GOD'S WORD and MEDITATE UPON GOD'S WORD.....and we must:

(D) I can prevent truth decay by LIVING IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD

(1 JOHN 2: 3-6)

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him" but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if any one obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him:

Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

This is the ULTIMATE protection against TRUTH DECAY. It doesn't do any good to READ GOD'S WORD.....and STUDY GOD'S WORD.....and MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD.....If you aren't going to LIVE BY GOD'S WORD.

(JAMES 1: 23-25)

Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks

intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but DOING IT.....he will be blessed in what he does.

The best way to PREVENT TRUTH DECAY in your life is to:

READ GOD'S WORD.....STUDY GOD'S WORD..... MEDITATE UPON
GOD'S WORD.....and LIVE BY GOD'S WORD

CONCLUSION

Several years ago someone sent the following letter to DEAR ABBY.

It read: DEAR ABBY, A young man from a wealthy family was about to graduate from High School. It was the custom in that affluent neighborhood for the parents to give their graduating son or daughter a brand new car.

Bill and his father had spent months looking at cars and the week before graduation they found the perfect one. On the eve of his graduation, Bill's father handed him a GIFT WRAPPED BIBLE instead. Bill was so angry, that he threw the BIBLE down and stormed out of the house. He and his father never saw or spoke to each other again. It was only the news of his father's death that brought bill home.

And as he sat one night going through his father's possessions he was to inherit, he came across that BIBLE his father had given him. He blew off the dust and opened it, to find a cashier's check dated the day of his

graduation, in the exact amount of the new car had they had chosen together.

Christian.....God, your Heavenly Father, has given you a BIBLE. It may not seem like much of a gift, but inside your BIBLE is the TREASURE OF GOD'S TRUTH.....THE TRUTH THAT WILL SET YOU FREE.

And remember! Only you can prevent truth decay!

It is written ***Eph 6:10-18** I do not battle against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual host of wickedness in heavenly realms. So I will take my stand and put on the Full Armor of God. **Rom 12:21** I will not be overcome by evil, but will overcome evil with good **Luke 10:19** for I have been given power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. **Isa 54:17** And no weapon formed against me shall prosper. **Rom 16:20** And my God will crush satan under my feet. **Rom 8:37** I am more than a conqueror, through Him who loved me **Jos 1:9** So I will be strong and courageous, never terrified never discouraged, because my God is with me. **Ps 91:5** I will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day. **Ps 119:114** because my God is my shield and my refuge. **Mark 16:17** and in the name of Jesus I will drive out demons. **Lev 26:8** Five of us shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of us shall put ten thousand to flight, and our enemies shall fall by the sword before us. **Duet 28:7** When my enemies come against me one way, they shall flee before me seven ways. **Esther 9:1** And on the day my enemies hope to*

overpower me, the opposite will occur and I will overpower them. **1 John 4:4** for He who is in me, is greater than he who is in the world **1 Cor 15:57** Thanks be to God, who give me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ. **Luke 20:43** God will make His enemies a footstool for his feet. **Mal 4:3** and the wicked shall be ashes under the soles of my feet **1 John 5:4** for whoever is born of God overcomes the world **2 Cor 2:11** so no advantage will be gained over me by satan; for I am not ignorant of his schemes **Eph 4:27** I will not give the devil a foothold **2 Cor 10:3-5** The weapons I fight with are not carnal, but powerful in demolishing strongholds so I will take captive every thought and make it obedient unto Christ. **1 Sam 17:47** The battle belongs to the Lord **Heb 13:5** and my God will not leave me nor forsake me **Rom 8:31** so if God is for me who can be against me **Pro 21:31** surely Victory rests with the Lord. In Jesus Name, **It is finished**