

## Belt of Truth - Week 3 (Live Truthfully) – Eph 6:14

We're in week three of our Armor of God series, and we continue to focus on the belt of truth. As a reminder, the belt for a soldier holds everything together and allows the soldier to stand firm and fight against the enemy and his schemes.

In our first week, we saw the necessity of believing truth in a culture full of lies. In the second week, we focused on cultivating love for truth. In our third week we will see how believing and loving the truth allows us to live truthfully.

We can believe the right things and say we love the truth, but if our daily lives are built on falsehood, the belt loosens and our lives begin to come apart. Every place where falsehood rules in our lives is a place where the belt is loose.

So, what does it look like to live truthfully? Living truthfully is not just about avoiding lies. To live truthfully our emotions, our speech, and our actions must be brought into alignment with the truth of God. We have an enemy that loves to expose and widen the gaps between what is true and how we feel, what we say, and how we act. That gap is where falsehood takes root and destruction begins. The enemy desires to destroy us, if we give him an inch of falsehood in our emotions, speech, or actions he will take a mile. The enemy is actively working to create and enlarge gaps in our lives for our destruction.

The good news is that the Spirit of God is at work in our lives for His glory and our good by exposing the gaps in our lives and then healing and closing them. So, let's jump into how we can live truthfully by feeling rightly, speaking truthfully, and acting with integrity. (What we feel, what we say, how we act.)

**A. Feel Rightly – Do your emotions find their rightful place under God's truth?** Emotions matter immensely in our relationship with God. However, when our emotions are untethered from God's truth, the belt of truth is loosened in our lives. For the belt of truth to remain tight around us we must have our emotions shaped by God and His word. Pastor, Pete Scazzero is helpful here when he says that we cannot be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature. Scripture has been teaching this long before our modern language of emotional health. The Psalms teach us to bring our emotions honestly before God. Jonah teaches us that our emotions can be deeply sincere and deeply wrong simultaneously. Jesus teaches us what holy emotion looks like—we can have anger without sin, we can experience grief without unbelief, we can be compassionate without compromise.

- Emotions are real but not always righteous - Emotions tell us something is happening inside us, but they do not always tell us the truth. Many voices today rightly remind us that emotions should not be ignored, denied, or stuffed down. That is true. But our culture often goes further and treats emotions as self-validating—as if the fact that I feel something means I am right to feel it, right to trust it, and right to act on it. Scripture tells us that we should pay careful attention to our emotions, but we should not enthrone them. We can't stop with 'that's just how I feel,' because our emotions, like everything else in us, are fallen and need to be brought into alignment with God's truth and God's heart. You can feel angry and be wrong. You can feel afraid when God has called you to trust Him. You can feel justified in bitterness when God has calling you to forgive. You can feel indifferent toward someone God calls you to love. So we do not deny our emotions, and we do not enthrone them. We bring them into the light before God, to be aligned with His Character.

o The enemy loves to take our real emotions and twist them toward sinful responses. Anger into bitterness. Fear into control. Hurt into withdrawal and victimhood. Concern into gossip.

o But the word of God and The Spirit of God brings our emotions into the light, not to shame us, but to sanctify us. To close the gaps in our emotions by aligning them with the heart and mind of God. We need to learn to ask, “Lord, is what I am feeling true? Is it holy? Is it shaped by Your Word? Does this emotion reflect Your heart, or does it reveal something in me that needs to be corrected, healed, or surrendered?”

- Application - Living truthfully with our emotions means we express ourselves sincerely, but not sinfully. Living truthfully with our emotions means we bring what we are feeling into the light before God, asking Him to reshape them, and then respond to God and people out of a renewed heart. So often we hurt ourselves and others with our raw emotions by going to people with our emotions before we go to God. We trust our emotions far more than we should.
  - o Maturing Christians desire their emotions to be in alignment with the heart of God. Over time, as we bring our real emotions before God, our loves, hates, griefs, joys, fears, and desires are increasingly shaped by His truth and His heart. Therefore, we should not dump our raw emotions on people in the name of “authenticity.” So, before we fire off the next text or email, or seek to give someone a piece of our minds, or clam up and seek a dark room to hide in, we must first bring our real and raw emotions into the light before God, ask Him to reshape them, and then respond out of that renewed heart.

B. **Speak Truthfully – Who are your words working for?** Whose work are you joining with your words? What does your speech reveal about your heart? Jesus said, ‘Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.’ Our words show what is going on in our hearts and whose work we are joining.

- Lying is joining Satan in his work. (John 8:44 – Satan is the father of lies.) When we lie, we are speaking Satan’s ‘native language,’ not the language of our Father. When our words distort the truth, or destroy others, the belt of truth is loosened in our lives.
  - o One of the ways the enemy likes to loosen the belt of truth in our lives is through gossip. Gossip is joining Satan in his work. Gossip is talking about someone, not to someone, in a way that damages their reputation, even if it is true. Under the disguise of “truth”, Satan tears apart people, families, marriages, and churches with gossip. Sometimes we justify gossip by saying, ‘But it’s true.’ Even if the information is true, if it’s not needed and/or it harms their reputation, it’s gossip.
- Speaking truthfully is joining God’s work. (Titus 1:2 – God cannot lie. It is impossible for Him to do so.) God always tells the truth. We combat the enemy’s lies about God, ourselves, and others by speaking what is true. If we believe truth and love it, we don’t engage in lies. Speaking truthfully requires at least three things.
  - o Truth Speaking Requires Wisdom –If we believe the truth and love it, we don’t just listen to one side, we seek facts. The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him. (Prov 18:17) So when you hear a story—about a person, a

friend, a church member, a pastor, a work colleague, slow down. Reserve judgment until you've heard the other side.

- o Truth Speaking Requires Love - Truth speaking is not enough, how we speak truth matters. We must speak the truth in love—not harshly, not carelessly. Why? Because speaking the truth in love leads to it being received in the life of a brother or sister in Christ. It leads to maturity. Instead, “speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become...mature in Christ. (Eph 4:15). Speaking the truth in love to one another is necessary for our spiritual growth individually and congregationally. Sadly, the truth speaker who lacks love often lives in the delusion that they are mature as they go around and harm people.
- I. Truth Speaking Requires Restraint – Truthful people do not merely tell the truth; they steward truth faithfully. Living truthfully means we wisely steward when, how, and to whom we share information. We don't weaponize truth to harm others, but steward it to bless them. Make it our habit to steward truth well. Restraint is the ability to use truth the right way, at the right time instead of slinging it around and creating a mess.

C. **Act With Integrity** – To live truthfully, we need to be people of integrity. Does your public and private life match? Does it all look like Jesus? Integrity means you are the same person everywhere, with everyone, because you know that you're living before the face of God. When our public lives and private lives do not match, the belt of truth is loosened. A Christian with integrity is one without duplicity. This does not mean sinless, it means living honestly.

- No duplicity of faith – Don't be the guy or gal who changes your opinions or beliefs based on who you are around. Do you believe the same gospel and hold the same convictions in every room you walk into? Don't pretend. Don't let your relationship with the truth you believe to be formed by your surroundings.
- No Duplicity in actions - Christians are to be people of holiness and integrity. Maturing Christians don't live double lives. Maturing Christians don't pretend to be all put together when we are not. Hypocrisy should not belong to a Christian—because it does not belong to God. When we sin, we confess instead of hiding and pretending. We are called to walk in the Light of Christ. We all stumble and sin, but sin in the life of a maturing believer should be decreasing over time as the Spirit changes us.
  - o Hypocrisy happens when we hide and protect our sin from God and others. We need to get (the right) people close enough to us that they can call us out in love when we are living hypocritically. Not everyone can be trusted in that circle. Look for people who are walking in the light themselves and who will restore you in a spirit of gentleness. Rejoice when people who love you call you out in love. It is for your good. Be real, authentic. Don't hide.

Close: Where are the gaps in your life right now? (Feelings, Actions, Words) Those gaps are where we need to tighten the belt of truth. Tony Evans Illustration (300 acres. Give one acre to Satan he will trample over the rest to get to it.) We need to pull that belt tight over the very places you are tempted to live deceitfully. Bring your gaps to Jesus this morning by confessing and repenting. The God who cannot lie has promised mercy and cleansing to all who come to Him. Let Him expose, heal, and close the gaps so that you become a person who doesn't just believe and love the truth, but lives it.

Title: Belt of Truth - Live Truthfully

Points:

1. Feel Rightly - Do your emotions find their rightful place under God's truth?
  - Emotions are real, but not always righteous. Don't enthrone your emotions.
  - The enemy loves to work in the gaps between what we feel and what God says is true.
2. Speak Truthfully - Who are your words working for?
  - Lying is joining Satan's work.
  - Telling the truth is joining God's work.
  - Speaking the truth requires love, wisdom, and restraint.
3. Act with Integrity - Does your public and private life match?
  - No duplicity of faith or values.
  - No duplicity in actions.