

## ***Spiritual Practices for Thriving Life***

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# Unbelievable Truth

What knowledge is in you that drains you of life by causing emotions that captivate your thoughts and steal your time and energy?

What would have to change in your view of the world to replace that knowledge with the Truth?

How would you act differently if you reordered what you know as answered above?

**John 8:44-47** – <sup>44</sup>You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup>But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. <sup>46</sup>Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? <sup>47</sup>Whoever is from God hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear them is that you are not from God.

### **I) Breathing Death...**

Like it or not, you are like your parents and those before them. Maybe you're not as tall—or you tower over them—but you have their eyes, their nose...their likeness. You were trained by them in their understanding of existence. Yes, even you who were abandoned, ignored and unloved—despite the depth of pain that understanding conveys. Unaltered, you will perpetuate the desires of their heart. The particulars will be different, minor choices of unconscious rebellion of independence, but not the essentials. You are your father's child. How does that feel?

♦**King of the graveyard:** Apprehending the implications of this relationship begins with knowing the father. Specifically, his nature and the ways in which he trained you. Jesus describes the devil's

nature as that of a liar, saying, “When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44).” Jesus is speaking of the devil’s being, not his actions. He *is* a liar. Jesus made that point just prior, saying he “does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him (v44).” He is one whose nature is to deceive, and he trains his children in falsehood. Jesus is unsatisfied with this alone. He first says that the devil is “a murderer from the beginning (v44).” Jesus is equating the devil’s acts of deception with murder. As “the father of lies,” Satan is the originator of murder, the king of the graveyard. Those who follow in his ways are guilty of filling it.

♦ **Agent of death:** God is Truth. Jesus characterized the devil as one separated from Truth, from God. In Satan, the flesh reigns. So too for his children. The flesh, the part of our being that is impermanent, changeable, the host of our feelings, and only perceives creation. We adopted the nature of the devil when we decided that our feelings are proper and his deceptive explanation of them is true. This decision denies our soul, killing it. Having the nature of one mastered by the flesh, we are prepared to be trained in his ways. Jesus accuses us as “from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father’s desire (v44).” We spread Satan’s lies, the very same toxin that killed us, agents of death.

## II) Pain of Resuscitation...

During our unconsciousness we often dream. We perceive ourselves existing *within* the dream and that it is reality. A reality in which our situation is different. In which the fundamental rules of reality are different. There are no laws of physics in dreams. We believe the false is true. The less conscious we are, the more real the imaginary. Coming to is disorienting. It can be psychologically painful to accept that the world just inhabited never really was. Particularly if the new one, the true one, arrives with bad news.

♦ **Blacking out:** Our soul is rendered unconscious when we take the devil’s poison. We perceive a reality in which existence is temporary, pleasure and pain are everything, and must fight one another for their sources. We love and hate conditionally, changing our minds whenever we feel like it. The guiding principle of life is to do what makes us happy. Jesus’s words of Truth are hands shaking our unconscious body...unfelt. He is speaking to those still captivated by Satan’s lies when He says, “But because I tell the truth, you do not

believe me (v45).” It’s not an intellectual denial, it is an incapacity of awareness. We are blacked out.

♦ **In others’ hands:** The true pain of resuscitation is the awareness of our desperate situation. In the dream we were not sufficiently unwell to need rescue. We were in control of ourselves, but here our care is in others’ hands. Drifting back into the dream would be more comfortable. Like a doctor saying *stay with me*, Jesus reaches for our attention in asking, “Which of you convicts me of sin (v46)?” It stimulates thought, rousing us to alert, opening our mind to His next question, “If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me (v46)?” The answer is that we would have to reject everything we know and accept we are on the operating table.

## III) Speaking Life...

The devil’s lies tempt us into an unreality, the nonexistence of dreams that were never true and will fade forever. Death. Telling Truth in a way that is grasped and can be inhabited is speaking life. This bit of Truth Jesus tells is shocking and painful, like being shaken out of unconsciousness. It is also lifegiving because it offers a possibility to those willing to rebuild their world on a new reality. One that starts with having been adopted.

♦ **Foreign language:** Words that should mean something are sound to those who don’t know the language. We have been raised by the devil, who taught us the language of lies. Words like shame, hatred, rejection, violence, punishment, and death. We are fluent in them. We do not hear the words of grace, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, and love because they are mere sounds out of context. Jesus speaks life to us as He tells us these are words, words of a language He knows, and that “Whoever is from God hears the words of God (v47).” Maybe we can learn this language and be from God, too.

♦ **Native tongue:** Language is built on knowledge of the world. Words symbolize the things of reality. There is no word if there is not first a thing or idea. The nonexistent reality in which we have lived does not contain things and ideas of God. No things and ideas, no words of God. “The reason you do not hear them is that you are not from God (v47).” Our native tongue prevents us from seeing the world as it is. Those of us wanting to hear the words of God need to learn the things of God so we can be taught the words. We need to know God for who He is. Good News! He will teach those of us willing to wake up from the dream—no, nightmare—and learn the language of love.