

The Danger of Truth Dying

We had some especially good pizza the other night for dinner. But just about every time we have especially good pizza for dinner, I wake up in the middle of the night thinking my teeth are wearing little sweaters. It seems I almost always have to pay for good pizza with that fuzzy-toothed feeling sometime after midnight. Has it happened to you? You sort of picture your teeth molding.

You can't smack a few times and get rid of it. You can't even defuzz with a drink of water. No, if you want to get rid of it, the only way to unbutton the little tooth-sweaters is to brush. There have been times I've felt compelled to fight off pizza-sweater cavities by brushing at two o'clock in the morning. I head back to bed a little tired but at least feeling I've done my part to fight tooth decay.

"Truth decay" is pretty similar, though it's not actually the truth that decays. The truth is ever sure, never fuzzy, always unchanging. It's our personal honesty that can lose its sheen.

We can prevent personal truth decay by brushing up on God's Word and sinking our teeth into His eternal truths. Time spent in God's Word results in understanding more about His character, more about how we are to walk in Him, more about the life of righteousness lived in truth.

He tells us in His Word in no uncertain terms that our honesty is important to Him. There are no "little white lies" in God's book. Anything untrue is big and dark and ugly. The truth is completely nonelastic, so when we stretch the truth, it's not the truth anymore.

God hates lies. He hates them because they're opposed to His nature (He *is* truth) and because He knows lies hurt us and they hurt others. Ephesians 4:25 says, "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his

neighbor, for we are members one of another" (ESV).

In Zechariah 8:16, the Lord spells out our truth instructions: "These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace." Sometimes truth is work.

It's easier to make up an excuse about why we're late or exaggerate a success, leave out a fact here and embellish one there. The truth might even get about as tiring as midnight brushing, but His Word tells us it's our part. And God wants our truthfulness to be part of who we are, right down to our souls.

Psalm 51:6 says, "Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place" (NIV).

When we're respecting the truth in every way we delight Him. Proverbs 12:22 tells us, "The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy."

If you've been a little careless with the truth, maybe it's time to delight your Father by polishing up your commitment to integrity and complete honesty. You'll be refreshed in the truth and armed for right living. Armed to the teeth, even.

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