

# “I Am Telling You the Truth”

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## Foreword:

In Paull's epistle to the Philippians, he introduces the closing sentence of chapter 3 with this comment:

**Philippians 3:20** Our citizenship exists in heaven, from which we eagerly anticipate the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ at the Rapture. (EXT)

1. This verse reveals the final destination of the believer in Jesus Christ. The status of any individual's spiritual advance has nothing to do with his membership in the heavenly community.
2. When anyone places his personal faith in Christ, that person immediately becomes a citizen of heaven and his ultimate destination and future arrival in that eternal state is a settled issue.
3. Until that day arrives, he remains a citizen of a terrestrial community here on earth.
4. The circumstance Paul refers to in this verse is revealed by a key word in its text, the noun, **πολίτευμα (políteuma)**, indicating one's citizenship in a community, state, or nation.
5. Paul is informing Philippian believers that having believed in Jesus Christ for their salvation, their citizenship is now in heaven although they remain temporarily in an earthly community called Philippi, a city of Macedonia.
6. James refers to the individual believer's privileges that are associated with his continued function in an earthy community while also being a citizen of the heavenly community:

**VISUAL #1:**  
1st Century  
Greece

**James 2:12** In light of these things, keep on speaking or communicating and keep on applying just as those who are about to receive judgment by the law of freedom [ νόμος ἐλευθερία (**nómos eleuthería**) ]. (EXT)

7. The key virtue in life is learning how to properly use one's volition—free will. There are two major environments in which the believer is designed to function, and he is tasked to learn about them and function honorably in each.
8. In some English Bibles the translators of this verse use the word “liberty” instead of “freedom” to translate *eleuthería*.
9. There is a difference between the two words. Establishment viewpoint orients to “liberty” while divine viewpoint orients to “freedom.” Let's first address the concept of “liberty” with this definition:



**Liberty.** Permission. Exemption or release from captivity, bondage, or slavery. *Natural liberty:* the state in which everyone is free to act as he thinks fit, subject only to the laws of nature. The condition of being able to act in any desired way without hindrance or restraint; faculty or power to do as one likes. Unrestrained action, conduct, or expression; freedom of behavior or speech, beyond what is granted or recognized as proper.

10. Now let's define the word, "freedom":

**Freedom.** Exemption or release from slavery or imprisonment. Liberation from the bondage of sin. Exemption from arbitrary, despotic, or autocratic control. The state of being able to act without hindrance or restraint, liberty of action. The quality of being free from the control of fate or necessity. The power of self-determination of the will. Exemption from a specific burden, charge, or service; an immunity, privilege. The right of participating in the privileges attached to: a. membership of [the royal family of God]; b. citizenship of a town or city [the heavenly *πολίτευμα (políteuma)*]; often conferred upon eminent persons [always conferred by faith alone in Christ alone].<sup>2</sup>

11. In the debates leading up to the colonies' ratification of the Declaration of Independence, our Founding Fathers often spoke of "liberty." This word was used to describe the hoped-for environment in which free men were independent of government except for agreed upon and established restraints codified by law.
12. Patrick Henry, in his stirring rhetorical address to the members of the Virginia Convention of Burgesses in March 1775, concluded his peroration with the proclamation, "Give me liberty or give me death!"
13. Thomas Jefferson began his argument for Independence from England with his exordium, "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are, Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."
14. John Adams spoke of both "liberty" and "freedom" in that same year with the following argument referenced by Russell Kirk in his book, *The Conservative Mind: from Burke to Eliot*:

<sup>1</sup> "For our citizenship [*πολίτευμα (políteuma)*] is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20).

<sup>2</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), s.vv. "liberty, freedom."



The happiness of society, Adams wrote, is the end of government. “From this principle it will follow that the form of government which communicates ease, comfort, security, or, in one word, happiness, to the greatest number of persons, and in the greatest degree, is the best. All sober inquirers after truth, ancient and modern, pagan and Christian, have declared that the happiness of man, as well as his dignity, consists in virtue [integrity].”

Adams used the word “liberty” less frequently than did most public men of his age, for at the back of his mind was the conviction that human weakness confounds liberty and license. As nineteenth-century French conservatives spoke with emphasis of “justice” as the aim of society, rather than “liberty,” so Adams preferred the concept of virtue [integrity] to the concept of freedom. But he did not think the first excluded the second; on the contrary, enduring liberty is the child of virtue. Liberty is not to be got by simple proclamation; it is the creation of civilization and of heroic exertions by a few brave souls. (p. 86)

Adams knew that true liberty is appreciated only by a few; the mass of men are indifferent to it, except when an appeal to “liberty” will serve their immediate material interests. He feared for freedom in New England itself, since “commerce, luxury, and avarice have destroyed every republican government.”

Liberty, in short, cannot be discussed in the abstract as if it were totally independent of public virtue and the framework of institutions. Adams’ realization that freedom is a delicate plant, that even watering it with the blood of martyrs is dubious nutriment, impels him to outline a practical system for liberty under law. Liberty must be under law; there is no satisfactory alternative; liberty without law endures as long as a lamb among wolves. Even the compass of the civil laws does not sufficiently hedge liberty about: under cover of the best laws imaginable, freedom may still be infringed if virtue is lacking. “I would define liberty as a power to do as we would be done by.” What sort of government, then, will stimulate this indispensable private and public virtue comprehended in the golden rule?<sup>3</sup> Generally speaking, a republic.<sup>4</sup> (p. 87)

15. Adams draws distinctions between liberty and freedom: “Liberty,” he asserts, “must be under law; there is no satisfactory alternative.” Liberty is what remains when established standards, or laws, are imposed upon the entire population. Those things that are not prohibited the citizen is at liberty to do.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Kirk links the “golden rule” with “liberty” which is applicable in the commonwealth of a client nation. However, when applied individually to the believer, the “golden rule” refers to “freedom” with emphasis on volition functioning in concert with truth recalled and applied from the doctrinal inventory of his soul.

<sup>4</sup> Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: from Burke to Eliot*, 6th rev. ed (South Bend: Gateway Editions, 1978), 86–87.



Adams believed that enduring liberty is the child of virtue, therefore, “Liberty ... cannot be discussed in the abstract as if it were totally independent of public virtue and the framework of institutions.”

Therefore, liberty within the Zeitgeist of a commonwealth cannot be maintained if the citizens do not have personal virtue.

Integrity is a synonym for “virtue” as is defined by *The Oxford English Dictionary*:

**Integrity:** In moral sense. Unimpaired moral state; freedom from moral corruption; innocence, sinlessness. Soundness of moral principle; the character of uncorrupted virtue, especially in relation to truth; uprightness, honesty.<sup>5</sup>

**Virtuous:** Possessing or showing virtue in life and conduct; acting with moral rectitude or in conformity with moral laws; free from vice, immorality, or wickedness; good, just, righteous. **Virtuousness:** The state or condition of being virtuous; virtuous quality or character; moral rectitude; probity.<sup>6</sup>

The status expressed by the word “liberty” defines the environment that exists externally in a nation of laws with which the citizen is free to make independent choices as long as establishment laws are not violated.

The status expressed by the word “freedom” defines the environment that exists internally in the soul of the believer who is free to make personal choices from his volition.

James, in the Greek text of James 1:25, speaks of the “Law of Freedom” [ τῆς νόμον ἐλευθερίας (*tēs nómon eleutherías*) ] and does so with the desire that believers must become “doers of the Word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” (1:22).

In James 2:12, the believer is to use the Law of Freedom to make decisions based on the righteous standards of Scripture and ultimately judged righteous at the Evaluation Tribunal of Christ.

The Law of Liberty is used to define volitional decisions directed outwardly by one’s function under establishment principles while the Law of Freedom is used to define volitional decisions that originate inwardly from the soul’s resident inventory of righteous standards.

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<sup>5</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. 1 (1971), s.v. “integrity.”

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, s.vv. “virtuous,” “virtuousness.”



Application of the Law of Freedom accomplishes the mandate in James 2:8 of “fulfilling the royal law” which states, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

The application of these words may be summarized as follows: The Law of Liberty is associated with one’s decision-making under the laws of divine establishment within a client nation.

The application of the Law of Freedom is the believer’s execution of the Royal Law from his inventory of righteous standards retained in his *kardía*’s stream of consciousness.

By growing in grace, the believer is able to acquire a large inventory of divine viewpoint with which he can make good decisions from a position of doctrinal strength.

This strength is developed over time by the acquisition of personal integrity. The integrity of God is based on the veracity of His righteous standards which are guarded and defended by His justice. These two attributes of divine essence are certified by His omniscience and result in the establishment of truth, the Hebrew noun, **אֱמֶת** (*’emeth*), and the Greek noun, **ἀλήθεια** (*alétheia*): “truth.”

The believer, by growing in grace, is enabled by consistent Bible study to systematically acquire this integrity. The Royal Law is enabled to function by the development of personal integrity which is based on absolute truths of divine righteousness contained in Scripture.

This inventory of righteous standards is protected by the believer’s submission to that truth by consultation with his conscience.

The Greek word for “conscience” is **συνείδησις** (*suneídēsis*): “to have knowledge based on an inventory of norms and standards acquired from the study of *’emeth* and *alétheia*.”

From this advancing inventory of divine absolutes, the believer’s conscience is able to certify that his thinking, decisions, and applications line up with the integrity of God.

God is absolute perfection; we are flawed by the sin nature on the one hand and ignorance on the other. The sin nature can only be brought under control by the inculcation of truth that exposes the lie.

**VISUAL #2:**

**Essence of  
The Soul**

The believer’s conscience is that mental faculty by which one distinguishes between right: the truth, and wrong: the lie. The conscience urges the individual to do what he recognizes is right and to restrain him from doing what he recognizes is wrong.



Over the course of one's spiritual growth, his personal integrity advances by an ever-growing inventory of divine viewpoint based on biblical norms and standards through the filter of his conscience.

Therefore, the conscience becomes the police department of the soul. It contains righteous standards which must be applied in order to maintain integrity.

The believer's conscience is the key attribute that links righteous standards in his stream of consciousness with his volition to produce personal integrity with which he can then apply the Royal Law.

### Doctrine of Morality Compared with Integrity

We will approach this subject from Scripture under two concepts:

1. A code of conduct to which all humans, believers, and unbelievers alike, agree to submit for the purpose of preserving order in society. The person who loyally submits to this system is classified as moral.
2. The true function of morality is observation of the Laws of Divine Establishment by subscribing to the Law of Liberty.
3. In the United States, common law is constantly evolving through case law. Here is an evaluation of common law in the United States which has developed from its institution in England:

**Common law is the law that was developed in England after the Norman Conquest (1066), by judges who ruled in individual cases in the light of precedent or custom, with minimal recourse to statutes or enactments. This body of customary law continued to evolve through the end of the 18th century in England and its overseas colonies.**

**By the 16th century the Roman law of continental Europe was beginning at last to influence the English legal system. During the 17th century one of the strongest supporters of common law was Sir Edward Coke, whose writings reformulated the common law and largely served to preserve it. In the 18th century Sir William Blackstone wrote his *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, a work that had a major role in the dissemination of knowledge of the common law, especially in America.<sup>7</sup>**

4. Secondly, Scripture is the code of conduct to which all believers agree to submit for the purpose of executing the Christian way of life. We define the individual who loyally submits to this system as a person of integrity.

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<sup>7</sup> *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia* (2010), 3:492–93.



5. Christian integrity is based on the biblical Law of Freedom which develops within the soul of the believer. Submission to this system begins with one's volition: the freedom to choose from options made available in one's stream of consciousness.
6. This freedom emphasizes one's personal autonomy to make independent choices from his free will. Done rightly, the person's volition submits to his inventory of divine viewpoint resident in his soul. This inventory contains categories of righteous standards learned and retained in the *kardía*.
7. The key for correct application is for volition to submit to the guidance provided by divine viewpoint related to the situation being addressed.
8. Righteous standards, certified by free-will submission to divine viewpoint, result in personal integrity.
9. Thus, there are two systems to which the believer must honorably rely in order to make good decisions from positions of strength: (1) morality and (2) integrity. We must submit to both based on biblical evaluations of each.
10. Let's begin by noting dictionary definitions of morality and integrity:

**Morality: Treating of or concerned with virtue and vice, or the rules of right conduct, as a subject of study. Of an agent or his attributes: Capable of moral action; capable of volition for the rightness of which he is responsible. Conformity to the moral law; behavior conformed to the moral law.**

**Integrity: The condition of not being marred or violated; unimpaired or uncorrupted condition; the character of uncorrupted virtue, especially in relation to truth; uprightness, honesty, sincerity.<sup>8</sup>**

11. We will learn what morality is and then apply its definition to those the Bible identifies as moral.
12. We will learn what integrity is and then apply its definition to those who the Bible identifies as people of integrity.
13. Dictionaries and general society use these two words as synonyms, we shall not.
14. The unbeliever is limited to mere human power and restricted to a human level of conduct, e.g., morality.
15. The believer has available to him divine power and may not only develop human morality, but also the rarefied atmosphere of spiritual integrity.

<sup>8</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), s.vv. "moral," "morality," "integrity."

