

1 – THERE IS ONLY ONE SOURCE: GOD

2 – I SHALL HOLD NO IMAGES OF LACK

Week #1 of a 5-Week Series, "The 10 Commandments of Abundance"

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Alright; you ready?

I want to talk about the difference between belief and Truth. Because for some of us, we might have even said, *"I believe that's true."* And sometimes we even want it to be true! Have you ever believed in something that you knew really wasn't true, but you believed and you wanted it to be true, so you made it true in your head? Right? And you knew it wasn't true ... but it just felt better to think it was true.

And what I want us to do today is to start -- because I'm doing this series -- and I want to start with Truth. Because Truth is an activity of God. Beliefs are human invention. And where we spend most of our time is in the realm of beliefs.

And why this is important is: In beliefs, we are told that, *"As you believe ..."* What? *"... It is done unto you."* Right? So part of the human experience, then, is changing our beliefs from limited beliefs to greater beliefs. And as we change our beliefs, our life gets bigger and fuller and greater. But it's still at the human level. Beliefs are at the human level.

Now Truth is different. Because Truth is of God. And Truth (with a capital T) is those qualities that are found in God that are also being expressed in us.

So when we move into Truth, we actually have the opportunity to step out of the karma of beliefs. Because beliefs create -- and I am using karma -- but beliefs create a pattern: a human experience. Because we actually need that human experience to say, *"Oh! If I believe this, then this is my experience."* And what happens then is that experience gives us a window into saying, *"Ooh; this really doesn't really work for me anymore. I need to change it."*

But all that activity of beliefs still just keeps us at the plane of humanity. When we move into the level of Truth, Jesus said:

"You will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free."

Now, what level of freedom was he talking about? He was talking about this level of life; that level of human experience that is being created in karma, because you believe it, so it's being done unto you. But when you move into Truth, this [the cycle of karma] actually stops. And you begin to live in the level of Truth.

Now, what happens for us as spiritual beings is that we have to ask to live at the level of Truth. We have to entertain spiritual Truth. We have to be willing to move toward spiritual Truth, or we just stay in the realm of belief.

Now, there's nothing wrong; there's some really beautiful beliefs! You believe in things, and some things create greater karma; they create greater experiences than other things. But there's nothing wrong with that ... but the soul can never be truly satisfied at the level of belief. Because the soul came for the things that are of God.

The things that we call "Truth." And Truth clears the deck. It actually frees us from all the craziness of our past. And it actually shines the light even in the places where we don't want the light to shine ... like on all those places where we'd rather just be in our little, you know, *"I don't see ..."* You know, that place.

But the light of Truth transforms us. And as spiritual people, we need to be praying for Truth. Not only for ourselves, but for our world. We need to be praying for Truth: that the light of Truth alleviates the suffering of every limited belief so that we can truly know the glory of God. That we can stand and experience all that God is.

So where I want to start tonight is in John 18:37. And Jesus and Pontius Pilate are having a conversation. Well, it's not really a conversation; Jesus is on trial, right? So you really wouldn't say -- if someone is holding you -- you really wouldn't say it's a conversation, but you get where I'm going.

So Pilate says to Jesus:

"So ..."

I want to share it the way I hear it in my heart and my soul. And Pontius Pilate has his snarky voice on. [Congregation laughs] Do you have snarky voice? No, I'm sure you don't; you're all just too pure to have a snarky voice ...

So Pontius Pilate is in his snarky voice and he says:

"So ... You're a king."

And Jesus just kind of take a moment and says: "You say that I'm a king. For this, I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice."

And Pilate said back him: "What is truth?"

And I want us to start at that place. Because I believe, as a spiritual being -- as a child of God doing our spiritual life -- I believe that's a question that all of us need to be asking ourselves over and over and over again in every level of our life:

"What is Truth?"

Because I don't think that we can allow ourselves to just hang out any longer in beliefs that aren't soul-satisfying. That your soul did not come into this world to live on limited, old, dogmatic beliefs. Your soul came into this world to know the Truth and to allow the Truth to set you free of every limitation.

And so we have to be asking ourselves over and over again:

"What is the Truth?"

To know the Truth; to live in the Truth; to call forth the Truth. And to have the courage and the faith to ask for the Truth. To allow the Truth to be the guiding light. To lay hold of the infinite abundance of God, and to know the Truth that God is our Source and that all things are possible. And that we have access to the infinite abundance of God.

Now, sometimes we hear around here that God is infinite ... Or that life is infinite. Or that we have the possibility of being abundant. And what I want us to look at tonight is: Is that a belief or is that the Truth? Because if it is a belief, it will serve you. But if it's the Truth, it's going to set you free. Right?

So I want us to really look tonight: Do you believe that God is infinite? Do you believe that you have access to the infinite reservoir of God's good? Or is that spiritual Truth? Because both of them are helpful, but they are not the same. One will actually liberate your soul so that you can know the glory of God; you can have a direct experience of God. And one is a nice thing.

Like, if you live in a world where you believe there's not enough to go around, right? Has everybody experienced that at least at one point in your life? Where you experienced believing there's not enough to go around? And when you believe there's not enough to go around, the experience of that is not very rewarding. You know, people call you; they ask you for money. And they want you to find a new place to live. And your car's there one minute and it's not there the next. And it's not very enjoyable to live in a world where there's not enough to go around.

But to live in the abundance of God: that's a very different experience! Because it's transformative!

So I want to use the Ten Commandments over the next five weeks as a series on living in the goodness of God. And I'm using the book by Georgianna Tree West that was published by Unity in the 1940s. It's out of print now; you can find copies of it. It's called *Prosperity's Ten Commandments*.

And in this book, she gives us a new -- or a unique -- understanding of each of these Ten Commandments and invites us to look at the spiritual Truth. Not the beliefs, but the spiritual Truth of each one of those commandments, and how we can live with them in a more abundant context. Because for me, abundance is not just stuff. Abundance is life and health and wholeness and love and joy and peace. And abundance is goodness and richness and an abundant life.

So this all begins with the first commandment: Exodus 20:3 says this:

"You shall have no other gods before me."

Georgianna says it this way:

"We should see this as: You shall look to no other source but God."

But to look to no other source but God, at some level you need to have a belief and experience and know the Truth that there is a God at work in your life. And that activity of God that's at work in your life is for your good. And when we know no other source but God, we open our mind to this level of living that is beyond where most of us have played before. Where we can tap into the infinite reservoir of God's good, and lay hold of the infinite and bring it into our life!

That every time there's a need or a situation, I want you to look to God: the God of you; the God that expressed through you and as you and lifts you higher.

In Psalm 104:28 we read:

"When you open your hands, they are filled with good things."

Proverbs 3:5 says this:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight. In all ways acknowledge him -- acknowledge God -- and he will make straight your path."

Does anybody else find traveling a bit of an opportunity to practice trusting God? [Congregation laughs]

So the last three weeks, I've been traveling. And I think the airlines -- no offense! I think the airlines are an opportunity for deep spiritual practice. [Congregation laughs] Because in the airlines, you get to quickly decide: Do I know God? Or do I believe that American Airlines is my source? [Congregation laughs]

And this is the first time Jill and I have flown together in years. We went to Phoenix; we went to Kansas City; we had a great time. And we were in Kansas City, and we were traveling home. And they have a brand new airport; it's gorgeous. And we were waiting for our flight that was going to connect us to Dallas, and from Dallas we were going to travel home. And we had a late flight: 6 o'clock. And in the summertime, late flights are my least favorite, because the rest of the world has storms. And I'd really

like you to pray more for rain, but the rest of the world has storms, so late flights mean that somewhere there is a storm. Amen? [Congregation: "Amen."] And if there's a storm, then it's going to impact your flight. Right? It just does, right?

So there was a storm and apparently when the crew got there, they had timed out. It had been whatever -- their 10 hours, their 20 hours -- they timed out. And so they got on the PA system and said they were late getting there and ... they had timed out. So they got on the speaker and said, "*The flight's going to be a little later. We are looking for a crew.*" [Congregation laughs]

So at that moment, I realized that if I was better dressed, I could have flown that plane, right? [Congregation laughs] Because they're just grabbing people ... Like, "*Hey, you sir; you, ma'am! Would you like to be the crew for this plane?*" Right? They're just grabbing people. They've got an extra person on that flight; they're pulling them and they're walking down. They don't know anybody; they're just bringing them in. And we're just watching as the clock ticks in.

And we know that, in Dallas we have 45 minutes. Have you ever been to Dallas? They have so many terminals, they had to build a train. [Congregation laughs] The train takes you from terminal to terminal to terminal. So we had 45 minutes to get from our terminal to the next terminal. And we only had 45 minutes, and we're watching the minutes go by.

Now, I can be an anxious flyer. I know that some of you might be surprised by that. But I can be a little snarky and a little anxious as a flyer. But my wife; she is a "steady eddy." She is so calm. And so when I look at her and she's stressed, I know we're going down, right? [Congregation laughs]

So the time is going on, and it was literally an hour before we got on the plane. Now, did I mention that we only had 45 minutes to get across Dallas? Because part of the airport is actually in a separate county. They don't tell you that, but it is so big; it's huge, right? That was a joke. That's not really true. [Congregants laugh]

So we actually take off a little over an hour late. And I'm practicing:

"God is my source. God is my source; it'll be okay, whatever happens. God is my source; I trust God in this. I look to God in this. I practice God in this." And I think, "Well, if we miss our flight, we miss our flight. I trust God in this. I trust God in this."

And we take off and I think the pilot sprinkled magic dust. Because we left an hour late, and we were only 20 minutes late by the time we got to Dallas. I'm thinking, "*We're in! We've got 20 minutes to get across the airport; I think we can do it!*"

And we got to the airport. And we didn't check any bags, so we're dragging everything across the airport. We get up to the escalator; we get on the tram. We go two gates over; we were at B and we had to get to D. And we went two gates over. And we're running down the thing to get there. And by the time we got there, it was five minutes before the plane was supposed to take off. And we're sweating; it's ugly. It's just ugly!

And I said, "*Did we miss it?*" And she said, "*The flight's late. You have all the time in the world.*" [Congregation laughs] And I'm thinking, "*I just did this whole emotional experience.*" [Congregation laughs] Right? Where I went up and I was trying not to be freaked out; I was trying to trust God. I wanted to trust God. And when we got there -- when it was all said and done -- did we get on that plane with plenty of time? Yes!

So was my emotional ride necessary? No! It completely worked out! But what it teaches me over and over again is that when I don't trust my God, I take an emotional ride. I do! And I think we all do!

And your emotional ride may not be in airports, and it may not have anything to do with planes or rental cars or hotels. Those are just kind of my spot. But yours might be about finances or health or family members or politics. Or whatever your spot is. But the first principle to living abundantly is that we only get one God. And to the best of our ability, that one God has to be in charge of everything. And we have to be in a state of receptivity.

So the first principle -- the first commandment -- is that we will have no other god but God. Would you be willing to commit to that for the next five weeks? No other god but God. No matter what it looks like; no matter how freaked out you are; no matter how scared you are; no matter what American Airlines does or doesn't do, right? One source. One God.

Second commandment: The second commandment's a little bit longer. Also in Exodus. In Exodus 20, we read this:

"You shall make for yourself no graven images or likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water below. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I am the Lord your God and I am a jealous God."

So the idea was that we were not to have any images of God. Now, why were we told not to have images of God? Why would that make sense? Because we do it ... but why were we told not to do it? Because any image of God -- is that a complete expression of God? No! Any image of God is a limitation. It's a minimization of God. You can't have an image of God that is big enough for God. You can't put God in a box and have that box ever be big enough. So the idea was that you're not supposed to have any image of God. Because whatever image of God that you have, God is more than that!

How many of you were raised with an image of God that God was an old man up in the sky somewhere with a long beard or this or that. How many of you were raised with an image of God, right? So whatever image of God we have, God is -- by definition, because if God is infinite, the Truth is that God is infinite! -- God is greater than that! So any image that we have of God minimizes God and God really shouldn't be minimized. True? True.

So the second commandment is that we will hold no image of lack. For the next five weeks, we will hold no image of lack.

See, the moment you begin to worry about anything, are you holding an image of lack? The moment you're fearful of not catching your plane, are you holding an image of lack? Yes! Over and over again, our mind wants to create images. But every image -- no matter how big you think it is -- is an image of lack.

And for the next five weeks, we're only going to envision the greatest level of abundance that we can imagine. That no image of lack! That any image of lack is actually a distortion of Truth. It is a distortion of the infinite goodness of God.

So the first two commandments -- the two that we're going to work on this week -- is that we are only going to look to God as our source with no image of lack.

"God is my source; there is no lack!"

Together: [with congregation] *"God is my source; there is no lack!"*

Now, I really want that to be more than a belief for you. I want that to become the spiritual Truth that you live in.

"God is my source; there is no lack!"

Together: [with congregation] *"God is my source; there is no lack!"*

And some of you are going to say, *"Well, Richard, that's a negative. I don't even want to say a negative."*
So you'll say something like:

"God is my source; I live in complete abundance."

Together: [with congregation] *"God is my source; I live in complete abundance."*

One more time: [with congregation] *"God is my source; I live in complete abundance."*

And so over and over again, what I want you to see is that these commandments that she's tweaked a bit for us, so that we can focus on abundance ... And again, I want us to have a definition of abundance that's more than just money. I want it to be health; I want it to be love; I want it to be joy; I want it to be great family moments. Whatever your greatest vision of abundance is, I want that vision to be your vision.

And I want us to hold that so that we can hold these ideas one after another: That there is only one source in our lives: God. And that we only see the glory of God all around us.

Now, are any of you worriers? Like, we do that, right? So I posted something a couple of days ago on Facebook and it said, *"The places where you worry, I invite you to say to yourself: 'God is in charge of this.'"*

Will you say that with me?

[With congregation]: *"God is in charge of this."*

Now, is God in charge of that? Yes! But is there work that you have to do for God to be in charge of that? Yes! You have to ... what? Let it go! You actually have to put God in charge of that for God to be in charge of that. Because of free will, if you keep holding on to it, does God let you handle it? Yes! Because you have free will, anything you say, *"Cooties, cooties; you don't get to touch this, God!"* God will not touch. And you don't have to say, *"Cooties, cooties"* but you know what I mean. [Congregation laughs]

And when you put God in charge, it allows you to experience a higher level of God. So here we go; you ready? Two commandments we're going to live this week.

First one is: I only see God. I only look to God. I only know God. I only believe in God. That God is the focus of my attention, and my greatest desire is God.

Two: Any time your mind creates an image of lack about anything, you transform it. You do not allow your mind to rest in limitation. You don't scare yourself; you don't worry; you don't think of the worst possible scenarios. You actually focus on good and only good. You focus on God and only God.

Will you pray with me?

And I invite you to open your mind, your heart, your soul to the activity of God. That there is but one presence and one power: God the Good. And today we put our full focus on that presence and that power; on the activity of God. And we say, *"Thank you, God; thank you, God; thank you, God!"* And so it is. Amen.