

## Virtue Signaling

In American politics, the phrase “virtue signaling” is used to describe the public display of political and perceived moral positions, usually spoken to gain approval, praise, or acceptance at the expense of political opponents. It gives the appearance of saying the right words so others will see you as compassionate and morally superior. The goal of virtue signaling is not about solving problems or pursuing truths but rather being perceived as “on the right side” of political issues while a political opponent is wrong.

Virtue signaling focuses on appearances rather than substance and truth. Political issues are complex, but virtue signaling turns them into simple good verses evil, my truth verses your truth sound bites. Anyone who agrees is treated as virtuous; anyone who questions or disagrees is labeled as ignorant, hateful and immoral. This kind of thinking discourages honest discussion and replaces truth with emotional appeal. Facts that contradict the preferred message are ignored, dismissed, or distorted because they threaten the message being projected.

This approach produces negativity. Instead of addressing problems with real solutions, virtue signalers attack motives and character. Instead of seeking truth, they shout their imputed messages. Instead of seeking understanding, they seek applause. Over time, public discourse becomes less about truth and more about performance and false morality.

At the heart of virtue signaling is a problem with truth. Virtue signaling thrives where truth is treated as flexible, selective, or secondary to the performative message. When people are more concerned with being seen as right than with being right, truth becomes inconvenient, it gets softened, exaggerated, or ignored altogether to protect or advance a cause.

Jesus taught the opposite approach. He made it clear that real freedom, spiritual, moral, and personal, comes only through truth. He said, *“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* John 8:31-32. Truth, according to Jesus, is not something we perform or display. It is something we abide in, something we love by, submit to, and allow to shape our hearts.

Jesus went even further by identifying truth as personal and absolute, not situational. He said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* John 14:6. Truth is not whatever gains the loudest applause or the most approval, it is found in Christ Himself. When Christians anchor themselves in Him, truth becomes a guide rather than a tool.

Virtue signaling collapses under truth because truth exposes false motives. For Christians, truth is not a weapon to win arguments, nor a badge to display superiority. It is a foundation to stand on. When people commit themselves to telling the truth, they step out of the performance driven culture of virtue signaling and into the freedom Jesus promised.

~Ron Josselet (Assisted by ChatGPT)