

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Speaking with Credibility,” the High School Sunday school lesson for July 5, 2015. The lesson is found on page 29 of *High School Teacher* by Standard Publishing.



Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

Actor Ben Affleck was the subject of an episode of PBS’s TV series *Finding Your Roots*. It aired last fall.

The TV series helps celebrities and other famous public figures trace their family trees. And the staff says they have always openly revealed whatever they discovered in their research. But that was the problem. Affleck had learned that producers had found that his great-great-great-grandfather was the owner of slaves. He was “embarrassed” to be related to a slave owner and wanted the TV producers and host to cut that part of the information from the show. Which they did.

But a recent investigation by PBS’s review committee found that the producers/host had violated the integrity of the program—that “improper influence” had been exerted to control the show’s content.

The show’s host, Henry Louis Gates Jr., offered an apology: “I sincerely regret not discussing my editing rationale with our partners at PBS and WNET and I apologize for putting PBS and its member stations in the position of having to defend the integrity of their programming.” And Gates admitted, “Once we open the door to censorship, we lose control of the brand.”

Ben Affleck spoke of the issue on Facebook, admitting that he’d asked Gates to omit this information because, he said, “I didn’t want any television show about my family to include a guy who owned slaves.” Affleck seemed to think it was reasonable to pick and choose what to reveal about his ancestors, stating that the show, after all, isn’t “a news program.”

According to the *New York Times* report of June 25, the show’s research also unearthed other “interesting ancestors” in Affleck’s family tree, “including a relative from the Revolutionary War and an occult enthusiast.”

As of now, the network said, “PBS will not run the show’s third season until staffing changes are made, including hiring a fact checker.”

*As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:*

**Do you think a TV show like *Finding Your Roots* loses credibility if it reveals only the admirable characters in people’s family trees? Why, or why not?**

**If there was no promise that every person in the family tree would be mentioned, was it dishonest of the producers to withhold the information about one of Ben Affleck’s ancestors? Defend your answer.**

**If you think someone is being completely open with you and then learn that he hasn’t been, would you have a hard time trusting that person in the future?**

**How do we as Christians get people to believe what we say, to trust us? Let’s see what Jesus had to say about credibility.**



MEETING GOD FACE-TO-FACE

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