



TRUTH DEFINED

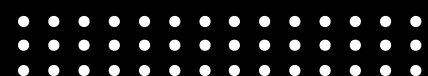


READING PLAN



WEEK 1

What is Truth?



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Read

Romans 1:18-23, Romans 6:23

DAY 1:

Truth is anything that agrees with what God has said in the Bible and what God has created.

Truth is cut and dried, black and white, and it does not change. So how can something so static and immovable evoke such powerful waves of emotion, both positive and negative?

The truth can bring order to chaos. It can settle long standing arguments and it can set you free from the bonds of deception. The truth can also be viewed as harsh because there is no room for compromise or negotiation. Truth can be painful to accept.

You are loved. You were created with a purpose. Nothing you do or say can disqualify you from God's mercy unless you choose to remain separated from him. **Truth.**

God is holy and righteous. He has revealed himself through everything he has created and no one can claim that they have not seen his nature. His anger burns against those who are wicked and who worship anything other than him. **Truth.**

In the first of today's verses, the Psalmist writes that God reveals his glory and power through his creation.

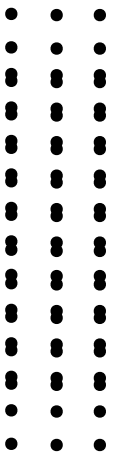
We can understand truth from God's created order and this should lead us to praise God.

In the second passage from Romans, Paul gives us a snapshot of the condition of those who pursue wickedness and who choose to worship false gods. The truth is that sin earns death.

You might catch a glimpse of yourself in these verses. If you do, don't be alarmed. God offers each of us a chance to reject that path, make a u-turn, and accept his free gift of a relationship with him through Jesus.

If you hadn't confronted the truth about your sin and the reality that it separated you from God, you might not have ever recognized just how incredible the gift of forgiveness, restoration, and eternal life really is.

Think about how you would define truth. Why do you think the truth about God's anger against evil is just as essential to his nature as the truth about his love and mercy? Could a true god who tolerated even the smallest bit of wickedness, sin, or evil ever really be considered loving?



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Read

1 John 1:5-10, Psalm 19:7-11

DAY 2:

When you go swimming in the ocean, it's quite common to look up and discover that you're no longer lined up to where you left your towel and shoes on the beach. In fact, you realize that you got caught up in a current without even realizing it, and you've drifted pretty far from where you were when you started.

It's possible to experience the same kind of drift in our relationship with God. Instead of ocean currents, the forces that move you away from where you started can simply be a busy schedule or as complicated as bitterness over what you think God has either done or failed to do.

So, what's the biblical equivalent of making your way back to where you started at the beach? In today's verses, the Psalmist lays out the steps to getting lined up again with God and his purposes.

First, praise him. Start to name the attributes or qualities of God. If you can, write them down or say them out loud. Declaring the nature of God reminds us how good and trustworthy he is.

Second, recognize and respond to God's truth. Truth is anything that agrees with what God has said in the Bible and what God has created. Acknowledge that you have drifted and that you want to return to where you were.

And third, commit to making the additions or deletions in your life—relationships, habits, thoughts, or actions—that will keep you lined up with God's truth and purposes.

1 John 1:5-10 reminds us that God is true and when we confess our sins that cause us to drift, he forgives us and we live in light and truth.

What is one area of your life where you realize you have drifted away from God? What is something you can do immediately to reverse that 'drift' and get back to where you need to be?

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Read

John 14:6-7, Ephesians 4:11-13

DAY 3:

When you go swimming in the ocean, there are few things that feel worse than feeling totally isolated and alone. Regardless of our personality type, ethnic or regional background, or age we're biologically wired for connection because we are made in the image of God. From the wildest extrovert to the most introspective introvert, we all want to connect and to belong.

We love the camaraderie that comes from discovering someone who shares a favorite sports team, movie, or artist. It is also a common heart desire that we search for someone we can trust enough to share our most intimate thoughts.

When it comes to Christianity, God declares that he's not a distant, unknowable being.

We can have access to him one-on-one.

The Bible also says that God's character is reflected most accurately in his Church— not a denomination, a building or campus— but in his people.

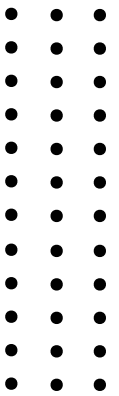
Today, you can know the creator of the universe and trust that he knows

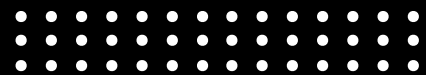
you completely. God is trustworthy, because he is the author of truth. Truth is anything that agrees with what God has said in the Bible and what God has created.

In his time on earth, Jesus reflected God's compassion, mercy, and willingness to pursue the outcast and the overlooked. Jesus saw past people's position, status, and condition and reached into their deepest brokenness with love and healing.

John 14 talks about how your trust in God gives you a place in Jesus' Body, the Church, because you've seen the Father. You have been given gifts and the Holy Spirit that enable you to join with other believers to reflect God to a hurting world.

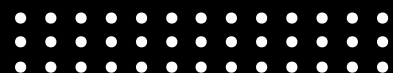
Take a moment to express to God something you have not been able to tell anyone else. What is one thing you can do today to “do his work and build up the church”?





WEEK 2

Why Does Truth Matter?



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Read

John 8:31-32, 1 Corinthians 6:12, 2 Corinthians 3:16-18

DAY 1:

The curious thing about freedom of choice is its ability to complicate life. Most people assume that they'll be happier with more choices, but science proves the opposite is true. We actually become overwhelmed when there are too many options.

The more choices we have, the more likely the options will undermine our confidence that we will make the right decision. We can become paralyzed wondering if there is another option to consider and then another one after that. This overwhelmed feeling is called decision fatigue and it can rob us of our certainty.

Faced with too many choices, we often find ourselves stuck, making no choice at all.

The reverse can also be true. Having only one option can feel restricting. Confining.

So what about when there is only one choice, one option, one path, to determine truth? When faced with the truth that there is only one way to God, and only the things done

according to His ways are right and true, we have a choice to make. We can either dismiss the truth as rigid, or to take comfort in the simplicity and clarity of Jesus' invitation into true freedom. Freedom to be kept in God. Freedom of eternal life. Freedom to have the Holy Spirit lead us in making decisions and to comfort us in hard stuff.

When it comes to something as important and big as spending eternity with God and as simple as having a teacher and friend to help us every day, isn't it a relief that the path to a relationship with God has been so clearly explained?

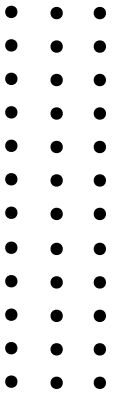
Take a moment to reflect. Is there something in your life that you have the freedom to choose, but that you recognize is not good for you? What can you do today to remove it from your life?

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Read

1 Peter 1:13-19



DAY 2:

Today's Scripture challenges us to be holy as God is holy. Once we are born again, we are to live our lives as those who have been transformed by God's grace, and by His power.

Out of context and without the understanding of how God loves and empowers us, being holy sounds impossible...and honestly, it is.

One of the first lessons a person learns when they start to drive is: whatever you focus on determines where you go. This truth can be found in the Bible too— we become what we behold.

Focus on the past and your mistakes, and you'll find yourself headed back toward that same dead end. Focus on God, His holiness, and what His Holy Spirit gives you the grace to do, and you will discover that you are equipped to live a changed and joyful life.

It's common sense to recognize that something is worth whatever someone is willing to pay for it. No one would really argue that, right?

When you stop and remember that God looked at you and considered you worth His son, Jesus, as a ransom, you can see just how much He loves and values you.

The phrase “reverent fear” can seem a little...intense, so let's break it down. How would you define “reverent” in your own words? What about “fear” (think Bible, not scary movie). Do you feel like you have a reverent fear towards God? Why or why not?

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Read

John 2:24-27

DAY 3:

A common theme throughout Scripture is the abiding relationship God makes available to us.

This type of relationship is the kind God wanted with Adam and Eve before they chose to try life apart from God. But their choice to disobey God's instructions, His laws, created a disconnection between humanity and God.

In His goodness, God already had a plan—Jesus—to restore what was broken between Him and His creation.

What you'll read today is a plea by a man named John, who was a disciple of Jesus, a learner of Jesus' ways, writing to people being pulled away from God.

Knowing that God's desire is an eternal connection, John wastes no words when it comes to challenging His readers not to abandon what they know to be true about God. Today, His Word serves as an excellent

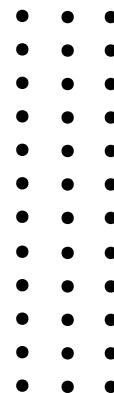
reminder to be on guard against sneaky lies masquerading as truth.

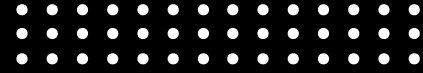
Lies can come to us looking like advertising, song lyrics, overheard conversations, or even your own thoughts. The danger they represent can take a while to see, but they still put us in danger.

Both believing a lie or living a lie will lead you away from the truth and the peace that God offers.

As a follower of Jesus, God has promised that His Holy Spirit lives within you. You can trust that what the Spirit and the Word of God reveal is the truth— the Spirit will teach you everything you need to know.

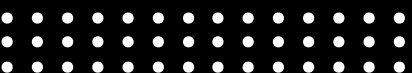
Is there a lie that you have believed about yourself or about God? What Bible verse reminds you of the truth?



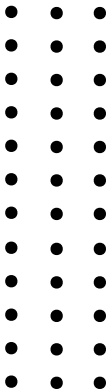


WEEK 3

Are Truth and Love in Conflict?



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Read
1 Corinthians 13:4-7

DAY 1:

Comparison is the thief of joy.

When we consider ourselves in competition with people around us, people like classmates, neighbors, or friends on our sports team, it can steal the new life that God has given us in Jesus. When we are gripped by envy or insist on feeling less than enough, we miss out on the truth God proclaims. Jesus came as a man to show us that the kingdom of God was like nothing we had ever experienced or expected.

He challenged the religious to rediscover their love for God. He chased after those who felt like their circumstances or decisions disqualified them from God’s love. In a world with hundreds of laws, Jesus looked into the eyes of a child and said we could learn from them on how to love God.

His words are exhilarating and confusing at the same time. In today’s verses, discover the truth about the nature of God as you replace the word “love” with “God.” Then discover who God is transforming you into by re-reading the verses again and replacing the word “love” with “I”.

What do these verses remind you about God? About yourself? What can you do today in response to what you’ve read?

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Read

John 17:13-19, Ephesians 4:11-15

DAY 2:

God has an enemy who is continually trying to disconnect God from His people. While pop culture suggests this enemy is a little horned guy in a red suit carrying a pitchfork, He is much more subtle. The enemy's desire is to drive a wedge between you and God by twisting God's words, appealing to your ego, and introducing doubts.

If God is the embodiment of love, what better way to confuse God's people than by distorting our understanding of love? The good news is that there is a true rock that we can stand on when everything around us is swirling. The Word of God clearly reflects the nature and character of God and the story of the redemption He offers through Christ.

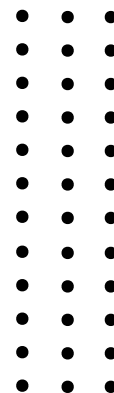
Whether you have been a Christian for years or you have just trusted Him for the first time with your life, God has equipped you with what you

need to silence the enemy's lies—His Word.

Our first Scripture reading comes from Christ's High Priestly Prayer: Christ prayed this prayer when He was in the garden before He was betrayed and crucified. He prays to His Father to protect His followers from the devil and teach them the truth of God's Word.

Our second Scripture reading gives us guidance not only on how to guard our hearts against the lies but how to go on the offensive by proclaiming the truth in love as the unified body of Christ, which is the Church.

Today, do you have the chance to speak the truth in love to someone? Take a moment to pray for your conversation.



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Read

Hebrews 2:1-3, Psalm 95:7-11

DAY 3:

Have you ever talked to someone who answered everything you said with “Yes, but. . .”? They agreed that what you were saying was true but felt like there was something else that needed to be factored in to explain or justify their actions.

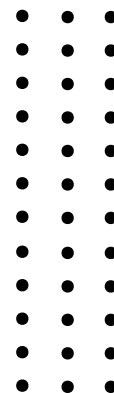
God’s truth is unchanging and immovable. It is as applicable to us today as it was to Adam and Eve. When we are tempted to respond to God’s truth with “Yes, but. . .” we know that we have allowed something to drain God’s Word of its power.

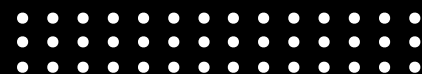
In the first Bible passage today, the author of Hebrews warns his readers to guard against drifting not just from the truth, but from God’s truth that has stood the test of time. God’s truth has proved reliable again and again. So if you feel like you’re

drifting, anchor yourself to something dependable. Anchor yourself to God.

In the second passage, the Psalmist tells God’s people to listen to God and not harden their hearts and turn from Him, like many have done in the past. You may have recently given into the temptation to listen to another voice that seemed to promise better things than what God has promised you. If that is you, it is never too late to turn back to the Lord. Listen to His voice today.

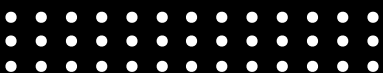
Today, do you have the chance to speak the truth in love to someone? Take a moment to pray for your conversation.





WEEK 4

Living Like It's True



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Read

John 3:16-21, Ephesians 5:6-9

DAY 1:

Long before the antiseptic qualities of light were known or the surgical application of concentrated light (lasers) was discovered, the Bible called us to reflect God's light.

When you walk into a room and flick on the switch, the light reveals what is in the room. People count on the darkness to cover their actions and keep their sins a secret.

Do not be startled when people react to you, or even accuse you of being judgemental when you haven't said a word. This can be a confirmation of the reality that you are reflecting God's light. Just as someone shared God's love with you, this is an opportunity to tell them about God's mercy and forgiveness.

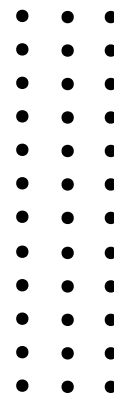
When we are afraid that there is no solution, revealing our sins can be terrifying. As a person of the light, you have a message that God already knows everything we are trying to

hide and that He has made a way for us to be restored through Jesus.

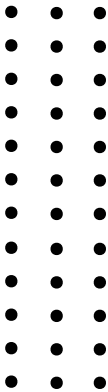
In the Scripture you'll read today, Paul is warning His readers not to participate in the things that hinder being on mission for God.

We are often referred to as "people of light," meaning God is using us, our lives, to light the way for others toward truth. Toward love. Toward a relationship with Jesus. But, we must be on guard against our old ways of living that dim our light.

Is there someone in your life who insists on trying to excuse their sins? What do you think your reaction should be?



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Read
Psalm 15

DAY 2:

Today’s Scripture shares some practical ways we can keep our light bright. The Psalmist encourages the reader to dwell with God humbly. To spend time in His presence and to choose to live a life that reflects God’s nature.

God has created us to be cyclical. The reality is that when we want to grow closer to God, we choose to worship Him. We want to spend time talking to Him and listening to His wisdom. As we worship God, as we seek His presence, we are empowered to live out what He has shown us. As you fall more and more in love with God, you crave to do what is right.

It’s not a matter of getting “good enough” to come into God’s

presence, it’s more about recognizing that when you spend time with God, your life reflects it.

We won’t want to gossip or physically harm others. We’ll stand firm in our mission even when facing opposition. And we’ll live with integrity—even when there is a cost. When we have spent time with God, we’ll want to share His truth and love with others.

Take a moment to consider whether this list could be used to describe you. Why or why not? Is there one element you want to work on today?

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Read

Matthew 7:24-27, James 1:22-25

DAY 3:

I think all of us would admit we struggle with believing the truth sometimes, no matter how clear it is to those around us. The headlines are full of stories about models who felt ugly, billionaires who doubted they were truly successful, and incredibly talented comedians, entertainers, and inventors who felt like their best was never enough.

Living in a broken world means we, too, might need some assurances about truth, love, hope, strength, courage, and salvation.

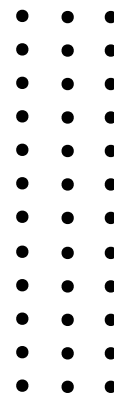
Today's reading reminds us that when we find ourselves forgetting about God's goodness and faithfulness, or when we're struggling to believe our value in Him, we can turn to the Bible and see a reflection that is not only accurate, but one that will remain with us. As followers of Jesus, who continually learn more and more about truth, we see the importance of obeying God's Word, not just listening to it.

As encouraging as the Lord's assurances are for those who follow Him, there are also assurances for those who do not. The Bible warns us about apathy of people who call themselves followers of Christ but don't put God's Word into daily practice.

Many people emotionally connect with God's Word and listen to it and would say they believe it, but they don't actually obey it.

They fool themselves. These are serious passages about living a life based on God's truth.

How do you need God's perfect law to set you free today? How will your life change to reflect this freedom?



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