

# Truth, Faith, and Knowledge

By Travis Dickinson

## Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

### Assignment One

List three sentences that are clearly true. Then list three sentences that are false but could be true. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: What determines whether something is true or false?

### Assignment Two

Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: Who are three things or persons that you trust. What makes these things or persons trustworthy?

### Assignment Three

Read Genesis 22:1–19. Here Abraham had great faith. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: What observations about faith can you draw from this passage?

### Scripture to Memorize

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.* Hebrews 11:1

### Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand the importance of the concepts of truth, faith, and knowledge for the disciple.

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## It's in the Book

30 minutes

### Real-Life Scenario

Let's suppose you are going skydiving. You are given a parachute and are about to jump. You are, in a real sense, placing your faith in the parachute.

What if your pack looks sloppy and old, no one knows who prepared it, and the last ten people who attempted to jump with this particular chute fell tragically to their death? Would you jump?

What if the parachute was prepared by the world's leading expert in packing parachutes and she's never had one fail? How do these facts affect your faith in the parachute?

### Truth

Christianity includes a good number of truths. "God exists," "God created the universe," "the Bible is God's Word," "Jesus rose from the dead," "the Holy Spirit is God," etc. In order to defend these truths, we need to be clear on what truth is. Truth is absolute. What this means is that if something is true, it is true for all people and for all time.

The current culture commonly embraces a view called *relativism*. This is the view that things are true for some but not true for others. The relativist might say, "The statement 'God exists' is true for you, but it is not true for me since truth is relative."

The problem is that relativism itself cannot be held consistently. Notice that the relativist is telling you that you should take relativism as true for all people for all time. In other words, the relativist thinks we should all be relativists. So the relativist is saying, "It is absolutely true that there is no absolute truth." This is clearly contradictory.

### Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week may now share observations about the difference between true and false statements.

### Discussion Questions

What makes something true or false?

Truth is correspondence to reality. Truth exists when what someone believes or says corresponds to or matches the way the world actually is. When someone believes or says that "snow is white," this is true only if snow is actually white. This statement corresponds to reality. Christianity is not just believing certain truths; our faith is also entrusting our lives to these truths and the reality they describe.

### Faith

**Read** Hebrews 11:1 out loud.

### Studying the Passage

**Verse 1. assurance . . . conviction.** Faith involves an assurance and a conviction. So when we have faith, our minds are made up. **hoped for . . . not seen.** Faith is something that goes

beyond our immediate control. Having faith is something hoped for and unseen. Faith is when we confidently entrust our lives to something about which we lack control. Consider the parachute jump in the **Real-Life Scenario** above. Will the parachute open? Will you make it safely to the ground? These outcomes are unseen, and you better believe they are hoped for! Most of us would only jump if we were assured of what we hoped for—namely, surviving—and we had a conviction that the chute would open and we would make it safely to earth. Faith is trust, but it is trusting big, since our lives often depend on it.

### **Assignment Two Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week may now report on the top three things or persons the student trusts and what make them trustworthy.

We should also notice that Hebrews 11 does not speak to how we go about getting our minds made up.

### **Knowledge**

When it comes to the parachute, the *knowledge* of who packed the parachute makes it trustworthy, or what we may call faith-worthy. We know faith in Christ is a gift of God. However, throughout Scripture God reveals Himself to people in order to produce faith. Thus, reason and knowledge, with God as their author, is in no way against faith. In fact, it produces a greater faith!

**Read** Genesis 22:1–19 out loud.

### **Assignment Three Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week may now share observations related to faith from Genesis 22:1–19.

### **Discussion Questions**

What does Abraham know about God at this point in his life that gives him good reason to go up to sacrifice Isaac? Hint: keep in mind what God had done in the life of Abraham and especially in the events related to Isaac's birth.

### **Studying the Passage, Genesis 22:5**

**Verse 5. I and the boy . . . worship and come again to you.** Given Abraham's experiences, he *knew* God was able to do the miraculous and, even more importantly, he *knew* God to be steadfastly faithful to fulfill His covenant promises. With this in the backdrop, when the Almighty God of the universe tells you to do something, even if it is something as radical as going up to sacrifice your own child, is it not completely rational to act accordingly? Given Abraham's knowledge of God, the competing reasons pale in comparison to the reasons he had for going through with the sacrifice.

In summary, we have canvassed three important concepts:

1. The nature of truth is important. If the claims of Scripture are true, then these things are true for all people for all time.
2. The nature of faith is important, since it is much more than collecting true beliefs. We are called to place our faith fully in Christ and all that this entails. Is this an irrational pursuit? No way!

3. The knowledge of God leads us to place our faith in Christ.

### **Discussion Questions**

What is something you are facing right now that has an uncertain outcome? What do you know about God that helps you place your faith in Him despite these circumstances?

### **On Your Own**

In the space below, list reasons you have for trusting God. These can be ways in which God has “shown up” for you or for people you know. Add those times God has done something extraordinary in your life. When you are facing a time of struggle in trusting God in your circumstances, come back to this list and remember His goodness in your life.

### **Heart and Hands**

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

### **Since Last Week**

5 minutes

### **Grace-Filled Accountability**

5 minutes

### **Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service**

5 minutes

### **Prayer**

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

## **At Home: Nail It Down**

If something is true, it is true for all people for all time. If Christianity is true, then it is true for everyone.

We are not called merely to believe the truths of Christianity but place our faith in Christ. Faith is when we confidently entrust our lives to something about which we lack control. This definition is drawn from Hebrews 11:1, where the writer characterizes faith as “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Faith has to do with having our minds made up (we have assurance and a conviction) about matters that go beyond us (things hoped for and unseen).

How do we come to have our minds made up? God ultimately solidifies our faith. However, one way He does this is through the use of reason and our knowledge.

The story of Abraham’s going up to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:1–19) is a great example of faith that is grounded in knowledge. Though this is an extraordinary call, there was nothing irrational about Abraham’s trusting God in these circumstances. At this point in Abraham’s life, he had plenty of reasons for taking God to be faith worthy and good. Disciples today can follow his example.

### **Follow up Question**

*What is the role of reason and knowledge in coming to know that God is trustworthy—or what we’ve called faith-worthy?*

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.