

What is Truth? Week 1

- Describe a time in your life when you told a lie. What were the consequences of your lie? Was the truth finally revealed?

"You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." "What is truth?" Pilate asked.

John 18: 37-38a (NIV)

- What you believe determines how you behave. How have false beliefs affected you in your life?

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness... Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools... They exchanged the truth of God for a lie...

Romans 1: 18,22,25 (NIV)

- Two of Satan's greatest weapons against truth are relativism and subjectivism. Relativism is the assumption there is no absolute truth and subjectivism allows a person to determine what is right and wrong on their own without submitting to any authority. How do you see these two weapons being used by Satan in our society today?

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14: 6 (NIV)

- Some would say, to believe there is only one way to a relationship with God, is narrow minded. Would you agree? Why or why not?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1: 1-2, 14 (NIV)

- Verse 14 says that Jesus came full of grace and truth. Truth without grace can lead to legalism. Grace without truth can lead to an "anything goes" mindset. Do you lean more toward grace or truth? What are some areas, in your life, where you need to experience this balance of grace and truth?

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

John 8: 32 (NIV)

So if the Son sets your free, you will be free indeed.

John 8: 36 (NIV)

- Share with your group how the truth of Christ has set you free from those things that used to hold you captive.

Final thought: With your group ask God to show you more of His truth as you pray together. Pray that He will open your eyes to false truths that you may have fallen victim to. Thank God for His wonderful grace through Christ that has set you free from lies and the darkness of sin.

What is Truth? Week 1

Group Activity—True or False

This week's message asks the question "what is truth"? Here is an activity that may help spark discussion in your group about what is and is not truth. Below are some simple true and false statements. Read the statements and have your group offer their opinions, true or false.

1. The youngest Pope was actually 10 years old. True or False?

Answer: False. The youngest Pope was 11 years old.

2. The original color of Coca-Cola was green. True or False?

Answer: False. This is an urban myth. Coca-Cola was invented by Dr. Pemberton of Atlanta in 1886.

3. A cat has more than double the amount of vertebrae in their spine than a human. True or False?

Answer: False. Cats actually have 60, while humans have 34. Almost double, but not quite.

4. Diamond is the hardest naturally-occurring substance on earth. True or False?

Answer: True. It is made up almost entirely of the element carbon, and is related to graphite, which I found in pencils.

5. All Zebras are white with black stripes. True or False?

Answer: False. Some are white with black stripes, but some are actually black with white stripes due to genetic variations.

6. On average, a man's heart beats faster than a woman's. True or False?

Answer: False. Studies have found a woman's heart actually beats faster.

7. The first U.S. President to visit China while in office was John F. Kennedy. True or False?

Answer: False. It was Richard Nixon in 1972.

8. Fingernails grow faster than toenails. True or False?

Answer: True.

9. The first ship to use the "SOS" signal was the Titanic. True or False?

Answer: False. The first SOS message was sent two weeks before Titanic sank by a French ship named Niagara who had engine trouble.

10. The phrase "the blind leading the blind" comes from the Bible. True or False?

Answer: True. This phrase comes from Matthew 15:14.

Here are some suggestions you may want to use for your time with God this week:

Day 1: Read 1 John 1:5-2:14. Have an honest conversation with God about those areas of your life that may still be in darkness. Ask Him to lead you into the light of His truth.

Day 2: Read Romans 1: 18-25. Spend time praying for those you know that are being misled by lies in their lives. Ask God to open their eyes to His truth.

Day 3: Read John 14: 5-14. In those areas of your life where you have been blinded by a lie, ask God if you are still being affected by that lie. Ask Him to continue to bring the light of truth into this area of your life.

Day 4: Read John 8: 32-36. Spend time thanking God for rescuing you from lies in your life that have held you captive in the past.

Day 5: Read John 18: 37-38. Spend time in prayer, asking God to reveal a specific truth in your life today.

What is Truth? Week 1

For Further Study

To use this resource, simply select one or two questions from each category below that you think will help your group discussion. Alternatively, you can use these questions and Scriptures in your own personal devotions during the week.

Open

- Why is it difficult for many people to admit they have done something wrong? Do you find this true in your own life? Explain.

Explore

Read 1 John 1:5- 2:14 This passage encourages us to walk in the light of God's truth. When we walk in His light, there is no darkness at all. (1:5)

- What message did the writer hear and declare? (1:5)
- What inconsistency did John address? (1:6)
- What results from "walking in the light"? (1:7)
- How were some believers apparently deceiving themselves? (1:8)
- What is the result of confessing one's sins? (1:9)

- Why did John write this letter? (2:1)
- What did John say he was giving to his readers? (2:7-8)

Reflect

- What do you think the terms "light" and "darkness" represent?
- In what way is God similar to light?
- In what way do we "walk in darkness"?
- How can we "walk in the light"?
- How does the promise of being purified from all sin make you feel?
- What confidence should our relationship with the Father give us?

Apply

- Share some of the areas of your life where it feels like you are still "walking in darkness."
- What are some things you can do help that will allow Christ to take you out of the darkness and into His light this week?

As Long As You're Happy Week 2

- Besides your faith in Christ, what are some of the things in your life that give you happiness? Explain how these things make you happy.

May all who are godly be happy...

Psalm 97:12 (NIV)

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

Proverbs 14:12 (NIV)

- There are many false beliefs in our society as to how to achieve happiness. Discuss some of those beliefs that you have followed and how those beliefs affected your life and your actions.

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But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do...

1 Peter 1:15 (NIV)

- The world's ideas of how to achieve happiness are usually at odds with God's standards. Describe a time when you have put your immediate happiness above doing what you knew was right.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

1 John 2: 15-17 (NIV)

- This passage says “Do not love the world or anything in the world.” Have you ever pursued happiness through the things of this world? If so, be open and give some specific examples.

Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands

Psalm 112:1 (NIV)

- God wants you blessed (which can be translated as **more** than happy.) Talk about a time when you have been overwhelmed by the blessings of God. (

May all who are godly be happy in the LORD and praise his holy name!

Psalm 97:12 (NLT)

- Discuss some ways that you can begin a greater pursuit of happiness through God this week.

Final thought: With your group pray that God will help you strip away the false beliefs you have regarding true happiness in your life. Ask God to help you seek happiness through Him only. Thank Him for the blessings he has given you in your life so that you can truly appreciate the comfort and happiness that comes through His blessings.

As Long As You're Happy Week 2

For Further Study

To use this resource, simply select one or two questions from each category below that you think will help your group discussion. Alternatively, you can use these questions and Scriptures in your own personal devotions during the week.

Open

- Describe some people you know that seem truly happy in their lives. Where do you think their happiness comes from?

Explore

Read Matthew 5:1-12

- According to Jesus, what is the reward for those who are poor in spirit? (5:3)
- Why are those who mourn blessed? (5:4)
- What is the reward for those who are meek? (5:5)
- What can those who hunger and thirst for righteousness expect? (5:6)
- What does God promise to those who are merciful? (5:7)

- Why are peacemakers blessed? (5:9)
- What does the future hold for those who are persecuted because of righteousness? (5:10)
- What instruction is given to Christians who are insulted, hassled, and lied about? (5:11-12)

Reflect

- How do you think a person might behave if he or she were hungering and thirsting after righteousness?
- What are some examples of showing mercy?
- How does society's list of admirable virtues compare and contrast with these kingdom virtues?
- How (if at all) does the promise of future blessing affect us in the present?
- Which of these promises means the most to you today? Why?

Apply

- What realistic steps can you take this week to increase your hunger and thirst for righteousness?



As Long As You're Happy Week 2

Additional Resources

Quotes about the world's view of happiness

This week's message looks at the world's view of happiness versus God's view. Below are some quotes regarding happiness. Read these quotes and discuss with your group which of these reflect the world's view and those that reflect God's view. Some may incorporate both.

"Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence." - Aristotle

"Success is getting what you want, happiness is wanting what you get." - Dave Gardner

"People are just as happy as they make up their minds to be."
- Abraham Lincoln.

"Often people attempt to live their lives backwards; they try to have more things, or more money, in order to do more of what they want, so they will be happier."
- Margaret Young

"Being happy is something you have to learn. I often surprise myself by saying 'Wow, this is it. I guess I'm happy. I got a home I love. A career that I love. I'm even feeling more and more at peace with myself.' If there's something else to happiness, let me know. I'm ambitious for that, too." - Harrison Ford

"Happiness is a conscious choice, not an automatic response." - Mildred Barthel

"Joy has nothing to do with material things, or with man's outward circumstance... A man living in the lap of luxury can be wretched, and a man in the depths of poverty can overflow with joy." - William Barclay

"Success is getting what you want, happiness is wanting what you get."
- Dave Gardner

Facts about happiness

The following are some unique facts about happiness taken from various surveys to share with your group.

1. Nigeria is the happiest country in the world. The United States is ranked 16th.
2. Americans are, on average, only 69 percent happy.
3. 14 percent of the world's nations on Earth are less than 50 percent happy.
4. The world's population is, on average, less than 65 percent happy.
5. Americans earning more than \$10 million annually are only slightly happier than average Americans
6. Americans' personal income has increased more than 2 1/2 times over the last 50 years, but their happiness level has remained the same.

Here are some suggestions you may want to use for your time with God this week:

Day 1: Read 1 John 2:15-17. Be honest with God and confess those things in your life that are distracting you from truly knowing God's happiness. Seek God for satisfaction through Him rather than worldly things.

Day 2: Read Philippians 4:12-13. Pray to God for contentment in those areas of life where needed. Share with God any urgent needs you have.

Day 3: Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-26. Pray for those around you that lack true happiness in their life. Pray that will find that happiness through God.

Day 4: Read 1 Timothy 6:6-12. Pray about your financial needs. Seek God's satisfaction rather than relying on money during your prayer time today. Ask for God to meet your needs today.

Day 5: Read Psalm 112:1-10. Thank God for the blessings in your life. Praise Him for all He has done in your life and will continue to do.

As Long As You're Sincere Week 3

- What impressions did you have of Christianity before you became a follower of Christ? Are those different now? If so, how?

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Acts 16:29-30 (NIV)

- Many people don't believe they have anything to be "saved" from. Discuss what being "saved" means to you?
- The word "saved" in this passage of scripture can also be translated "rescued." When you made the decision to follow Christ, what do you believe He rescued you from?
- In what ways has He continued to rescue you?

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.

Luke 6:27-29 (NIV)

- Has there ever been a time when you showed to love to someone you considered to be an enemy? If so, how did the experience affect you? How did it affect them?

What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles!

Mark 6:2 (NIV)

- God continues to perform miracles in our lives today. Discuss a time when you saw a miracle in your own life or in the life of someone you know. How did that affect your relationship with Christ?

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 14:6 (NIV)

- If you're a follower of Christ, explain how you came to know Him personally. (If you've never shared your Christian testimony with your Life Group, take a few minutes to tell your story).

"Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Matthew 16:15-16 (NIV)

- Who do **you** say He is? Take a moment and tell the others in the group who Jesus is to you, what He means to you.

Final thought: Spend time in prayer as a group thanking God for all He saved you from when you made the decision to follow Him. Then take time to thank Him and celebrate the ways He continues to rescue you daily.

As Long As You Don't Hurt Anyone Week 4

- Share with your group your what your biggest “guilty pleasure” is. Some examples could be a questionable television show you like to watch, a controversial type of music you like to listen to, overeating when it comes to a certain food or maybe just a bad habit.

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 (NIV)

- One of the top virtues promoted in today's society is tolerance. The virtue of tolerance teaches we can justify almost anything we want to do in our lives. How has the virtue of tolerance affected you (or someone you love)?

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 1:28-32 (NIV)

- What are some questionable activities that you have heard others justify with the claim that “it's ok if no one is getting hurt?” What sins does our culture tend to excuse with this same logic?

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:8 (NIV)

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags...

Isaiah 64:6 (NIV)

- Even if a sin, in our own life, doesn't directly impact others, in what ways can it impact others indirectly?

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness

1 John 1:9 (NIV)

- Describe how Christ's forgiveness has transformed you and resulted in your living a more pure life.

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret...

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NIV)

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Isaiah 1:18 (NIV)

- Is there something in your life right now that may be questionable but you've found a justification for it? Take a moment to pray individually. Ask God to help you see that “something” through His eyes and how it is impacting your life. Ask if it is something He wants to purify in your life.

Final thought: With your group As a group share with each other what you sense God may be wanting to purify in your life.

As Long As You Don't Hurt Anyone Week 4

For Further Study

To use this resource, simply select one or two questions from each category below that you think will help your group discussion. Alternatively, you can use these questions and Scriptures in your own personal devotions during the week.

Open

- What are some of the common motives people have when deciding to make major changes in their lives?

Explore

Read Romans 6:1-14

- Why should a forgiven, justified person make a strong effort not to sin? (6:1-2)
- Why would a person not want to live in sin any longer? (6:2)
- What makes it possible for a person to live a new life? (6:4)
- Before a person is united to Christ, what are they a slave to? (6:6)
- After Christ died and was raised, why did neither sin nor death have any power over Him? (6:7, 9-10)
- How will uniting with Christ in His death change the future of our lives? (6:8-10)
- In a person's new relationship with God, what is his or her relationship to sin supposed to be? (6:11-12)
- What change in attitude and action toward God happens in a person who follows Christ? (6:11-13)

Reflect

- Why would a Christian want to stop sinning even though he or she knows God has forgiven them and will forgive those sins?
- How does God help a person discard old habits and tendencies?
- How does God give a person a new self?
- What are the symptoms of a person in slavery to sin?
- What does it mean to live a new life for God?
- In what practical sense is sin no longer the master of a Christian even though he or she might still commit specific sins?

Apply

- What are some ways Christ has promised to help you run toward Him and away from your old life and sin.?

Here are some suggestions you may want to use for your time with God this week:

Day 1: Read Romans 1:28-32. Take time today to confess those areas of your life that continue to struggle with sin to God. Ask God for forgiveness and for his healing in those areas of your life.

Day 2: Read Romans 7:7-25. Spend time with God in prayer asking Him to help you recognize and battle the attacks of the enemy in your life.

Day 3: Read Luke 17:1-10. Ask God to make you aware of ways you can show his love to those you impact daily.

Day 4: Read 1 John 1: 5-10. Spend time thanking God for His forgiveness in your life.

Day 5: Read 2 Corinthians 7:2-16. Pray for those in your LifeGroup and other loved ones and for strength and wisdom in the battles they are facing.