

# What Is Truth?

## Daystar Church – 12/4/05

### “Christmas: Fact or Fiction” Week 1

#### **Introduction:**

- A. “What is truth?” Great question. Many people try to avoid truth.

Like the drunk husband snuck up the stairs quietly. He looked in the bathroom mirror and bandaged the bumps and bruises he'd received in a fight earlier that night. He then proceeded to climb into bed, smiling at the thought that he'd pulled one over on his wife.

When morning came, he opened his eyes and there stood his wife. "You were drunk last night weren't you!"

“The truth is, I wasn't honey.”

"Well, if you weren't, then who put all the band-aids on the bathroom mirror?"<sup>1</sup>

1. Looks like truth finally caught up with him.
2. We can try to avoid truth, say it isn't real, but eventually it will catch up to us.

- B. The sad fact is, less and less people actually believe in truth.

1. 74% of Americans believe that *“there is only one God, holy and perfect, who created the world.”*
2. Yet 65% believe that *“there is no such thing as absolute truth.”*<sup>2</sup>

- C. This is a product of a new, more “tolerant” society.

*Josh McDowell (Beyond Belief to Convictions) says, “The definition of new... tolerance is that every individual's beliefs, values, lifestyle, and perception of*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.sermonillustration.com](http://www.sermonillustration.com)

<sup>2</sup> Christianity Today, Sept 16, 1991, p. 48.

*truth are equal. There is no hierarchy of truth. Your beliefs and my beliefs are equal."*

*"If all truth is equal to all other views, then people need to respect the opinions and beliefs of others. Everyone needs to accept others and not judge them for what they believe. So, when we celebrate our diversity, we show respect for others, and this produces harmony within the human family. Sounds appealing, doesn't it? Many are adopting this postmodern doctrine."<sup>3</sup>*

1. But if we accept the idea that all beliefs are equal, there can be no truth.

Two men had an argument. To settle the matter, they went to a Sufi judge for arbitration. The plaintiff made his case. He was very eloquent and persuasive in his reasoning. When he finished, the judge nodded in approval and said, "That's right, that's right."

On hearing this, the defendant jumped up and said, "Wait a second, judge, you haven't even heard my side of the case yet." So the judge told the defendant to state his case. And he, too, was very persuasive and eloquent. When he finished, the judge said, "That's right, that's right."

When the clerk of court heard this, he jumped up and said, "Judge, they both can't be right." The judge looked at the clerk of court and said, "That's right, that's right."<sup>4</sup>

2. Everybody can't be right!!!
3. Burying your head in the sand and saying truth doesn't exist will not make it go away.

D. Sadly, this doctrine of relativism has infected the fabric of American life.

*A Sociologist named Robert Bellah studied the religious beliefs of Americans and found that many Christians are arriving at faith on their own terms. He interviewed a woman named Sheila who's attitude seemed to speak for the majority. "I believe in God," she said. "I can't remember the last time I went to church. But my faith has carried me a long way. It's 'Sheila-ism.' Just my own little voice."<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Josh McDowell, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> Roger von Oech, Ph.D., *A Whack on the Side of the Head*, Warner Books, 1983, p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Colson, *Against the Night*, p. 98.

1. This attitude takes God completely out of the picture.
2. It also takes TRUTH completely out of the picture.
3. In America, Absolute Truth has given way to Situation Ethics – my situation dictates what is right.
4. WE ARE PROGRESSING AT BREAKNECK SPEED TOWARD A TRUTH-LESS SOCIETY!

## **I.Results of a Truth-Less Society.**

A. “Thou Shalt Not Kill” becomes open to interpretation.

Rev. Tim Percy at the funeral of 3 students who were shot to death by a fellow student at a Paducah, Ky. high school after they finishing a prayer meeting:

*“We live in a nation where we slaughter our children, and we act surprised when they slaughter each other...God help us.”<sup>6</sup>*

1. If you think abortion in America has nothing to do with the increased violence among our young people, you couldn't be more WRONG!
2. Children are learning by the unspoken curriculum.
3. Regardless to the fact that we say we value human life, our actions (as a nation) betray our words.

B. We give up God's plan for our sexual health.

1. God's plan: Abstain from sexual activity outside of marriage.
2. Society's plan: distribute condoms.

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<sup>6</sup> *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Dec. 6

- a. Condoms will not restore a shattered self-image.
  - b. Condoms will not restore a child's innocence.
  - c. Condoms will not restore a broken relationship with God.
3. In the most medically (intellectually, scientifically, socially) developed time in the history of the world, AIDS runs rampant.
- a. Politically correct solution? Condoms.
  - b. Why not God's plan? Abstention?
  - c. Abstention works every time it's tried (100% effective).

C. The 10 Commandments are outlawed from public life.

1. The problem with the 10 Commandments is they leave no room for interpretation.
2. They're not the "10 Suggestions."
  - a. This world hates that.
  - b. But it was not always like this:

If you walk up the steps of the building which houses the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. above your head in the center of the building you will find a likeness of Moses holding the Ten Commandments. In fact, as you enter the Supreme Court courtroom, the 2 huge oak doors you walk through have the 10 Commandments engraved on each door. Right above where the Supreme Court judges sit is a display of the Ten Commandment on the wall.

James Madison, the 4<sup>th</sup> President, known as "*The Father of Our Constitution*" said, "*We have staked the whole of our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government, upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control*

*ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.”*

D. Now, somehow the 10 Commandments are banned from our schools.

1. Result? Children who do not regularly hear, “*Thou shalt not steal/kill...*” steal and kill more than at any time in our history.
2. With no God in our society our children grow up with no hope. Proof? 6 teens commit suicide every day in America.
3. Instead of believing, “*Thou shalt not commit adultery,*” Marriage in America has been reduced to an agreement of convenience.
  - a. Result? Soaring adultery and divorce rates.

E. Result #4: Christian Ethics are attacked.

1. Liberal universities all over America promote sexual perversion.
2. UNC-Greensboro is a glaring example.

Each year they hold a “Gay Pride Week” but have rejected a student organization’s application to hold “Morals Week”, “Right to Life Day”, and “Abstinence Day”. Instead, this state-funded university paid thousands of dollars to a porn-star to come and speak on “safe sex” to the student body.

F. Result #5: American has no course or purpose.

1. When we should be combating violence, drug addiction, H.S. drop-out rates, unemployment, societal problems...

2. Federal govt. invests money in the ACLU's outright attack on Christianity.
3. US Citizens are being sued all over America for displaying Nativity sets (Here in Cullman they try to sell you a "Holiday Tree").
4. ACLU sues a kindergartener for sexual harassment b/c he kissed a classmate on the cheek.
5. Where were they a few years ago when the Whitehouse was being turned into a college frat party?

G. I don't mean to get on your political toes, but TRUTH IS TRUTH!

1. If it's true in the church house, it ought to be true in your house, the school house and the Whitehouse!
2. If you wonder why I'm impassioned about this it's b/c of this (show check stub).
3. A portion of your check & mine goes to fund the ACLU!

### THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THERE IS NO TRUTH!

- Over 1 million abortions/yr in America.
- Adult bookstores which sell porn outnumber McDonald's 3 to 1.
- Children witness 18,000 murders on TV by graduation.
- We are watching the gradual erosion of ethics in America!

BUT I have an answer to the original question: "*What is Truth?*"

- The answer sounds remarkably like that of society's...

### **II.Nothing is Truth (NO-THING).<sup>7</sup>**

A. They are absolutely right; nothing is truth.

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<sup>7</sup> Much of this point taken from *Beyond Belief to Convictions* by Josh McDowell.

1. Truth is not a thing, it's a Person!
2. Picture the condition of the world 2,000 years ago:

Pious religious hypocrites rule over regular people who can never do enough to measure up. Sin is rampant among the irreligious and there is just as much sin in the church. It's just packaged differently. It is truly a hopeless society...a hopeless world.

Into this scene comes the announcement of the birth of a God-child who would save the world from this destitute condition. True to the prediction, a star leads many to a child in a manger, born of a virgin. He would grow up to not only teach powerful truth, but he would go on to claim:

*John 18:37*

*"I came to bring truth to the world."*

The Bible would also say that He was "*full of grace and truth*" (Jn 1:14). But the statement that truly revealed His nature was when Jesus had the boldness to announce:

Jn 14:6

"I am *the way, the **truth**, and the life.*"

B. Jesus is the very embodiment of truth.

1. Truth is not simply an abstract concept.
2. It's not something we create within ourselves.
3. It's not a little voice inside of us.

C. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the TRUTH!

1. Webster defines truth as: fidelity to an original or standard.
2. Jesus is that Standard.

*Colossians 1:16-17 NKJV*

*"For by (Jesus Christ) all things were created...and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."*

D. God is the original.

1. The only way to know if anything is right or wrong, good or evil, is to measure it against Him.

*Deut 32:4 KJV*

*His work is perfect...a God of truth & without iniquity, just & right is he.*

2. You see it is the very nature of God that defines truth.
3. It's not something He announces.
4. It's not something He decides.
5. IT IS SOMETHING HE IS!

E. Jesus once told His disciples: *"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (Jn 8:32).*

1. But then a few minutes later He said, *"If the Son (of God) sets you free, you will be free indeed" (Jn 8:36).*
2. Jesus wasn't contradicting Himself or speaking in riddles.
3. He was setting them up for the fact that HE is the TRUTH which sets men free!

F. See if truth were an idea it would shift from person to person.

*Hebrews 13:8*

*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."*

### **Conclusion:**

Allan Bloom writes: *"Openness and relativism...is the great insight of our times...The point is not to correct the mistakes and really be right; rather it is not to think you are right at all."*

- See the erosion of absolute truth in this ideology?

He goes on to say, *“The true believer is the real danger.”*<sup>8</sup>

A. Because I believe in the TRUTH, I’m a danger to society?

1. You better believe I’m dangerous!
2. I won’t be intimidated by a lie.
3. I won’t be frustrated by fear.
4. I won’t back down from the truth.
5. I won’t be mastered by ideologies of this world.
6. I know who I am & I know WHOSE I am!
7. I AM FREE!

B. You, too, can be free.

1. You can’t buy it, deserve it or earn it.
2. You can’t even learn the truth intellectually.

*John 8:32 NIV*

*32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

C. This doesn’t mean you will learn a set of facts.

1. This is not intellectual assent.
2. The truth is not a what, but a Who.

D. TRUTH IS RELATIONAL!

1. You can know Jesus Christ, the Truth personally.
2. That relationship will SET YOU FREE from all that holds you back!

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Colson, *Against the Night*, p. 98.