



BEAUTIFUL TRUTH

Lesson 1

Steward the truth as the Greatest Good

Introduction & Prayer

What is included in the Biblical doctrine of stewardship?

Lesson Objectives:

- We steward Christian truth by holding onto what is true and good.
- We steward Christian truth by sharing it with our culture.

To Start Out

What insights do each of the following quotes provide regarding the concept of truth in the world?

It boils down to this: Live in YOUR TRUTH. I emphasize both YOUR, and truth here, because your truth will not be the same as anyone else's truth... You need to FUEL YOUR SOUL with whatever brings YOU JOY.¹ - Denise Mack, Medium.com

In the late 1920s the American astronomer Edwin Hubble made a very interesting and important discovery. Hubble made observations that he interpreted as showing that distant stars and galaxies are receding from Earth... The implication of these findings is that the universe is expanding. Hubble's hypothesis of an expanding universe leads to certain deductions. One is that the universe was more condensed at a previous time. From this deduction came the suggestion that all the currently observed matter and energy in the universe were initially condensed in a very small and infinitely hot mass. A huge explosion, known as the Big Bang, then sent matter and energy expanding in all directions.² - Science and Creationism: A View from the National Academy of Sciences

TRUTH TO HOLD ONTO: THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH

Truth as What's Real

1. Consider the following excerpts from Scripture and summarize in just a few words what each reveals about the nature of truth.

1 Kings 17:24 Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth."

¹ Mack, Denise, "These 2 Words Mean You're Living in Your Truth," Medium, 7 December 2016, <https://medium.com/thrive-global/these-2-words-mean-youre-living-in-your-truth-4dd970f3d229>.

² National Academy of Sciences (US), "The Origin of the Universe, Earth, and Life," *Science and Creationism: A View from the National Academy of Sciences: Second Edition*, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK230211>.

Psalms 19:1-3 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.

Matthew 24:34-35 “Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

John 3:19-20 “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.”

Matthew 10:34-36 “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.”

In Summary: Christian truth encompasses authenticity, honesty, and facts. It’s about what is objectively, universally, and timelessly real. This concept of truth can often be the focus of debate when people differ.

Truth as What’s Really Good

2. Read the following passages. For each grouping, consider this question: How does Scripture here associate truth with what is good?

Psalms 33:4 For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

Revelation 19:11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war.

Isaiah 55:1-2 “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.”

1 John 3:18 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

Matthew 4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

John 10:9-10 “I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. ...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

In Summary: The goodness of God’s truth is ultimately revealed in Jesus Christ. It is in the truth of the gospel that God’s goodness to fallen humanity shines most beautifully. Simply put, God’s truth is *life*.

A Good Beginning and a Good Ending

3. Recall the creation account in Genesis 1. How many times does God speak of his creation as “good?” What does the repetition communicate?
4. Imagine you were there in Eden. What is this life like?
5. The book of Revelation closes with a vision of the life to come, describing it as a new heaven and earth, as paradise restored (see chapters 21 and 22). Concerning that existence, John says, “God himself will be with [his people] and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (21:3-4) and “no longer will there be any curse” (22:3). Such life was God’s intent for people from the beginning. Humanity, created for such goodness, is by God’s gracious salvation restored to such goodness.
 - How might this perspective help you better grasp the nature and purpose of God’s truth in Scripture?
 - How might it help you better communicate it?

In Summary: The Bible begins and ends in the paradise of perfect truth and communion with God. Sandwiched in between is the account of humanity’s search for truth apart from God and God’s gracious restoration of the truth through Jesus Christ.

THE TRUTH WE SHARE: OUR STEWARDSHIP OF TRUTH

God calls us to steward his truth as that which is true and that which is truly good. Christian truth isn’t just one good option among many equally good possibilities. It’s not even just the one truth claim that happens to be true among countless other equally valid options. It is, rather, the highest good. It is, as Jesus said, life—and life to the full.

This means that our stewardship of truth is to be different than what we see among the many other competing ideas and philosophies out there. Our lives are not one grand debate over what’s right; nor is our goal to win

the argument or have the last word. Rather, we're stewards intent on holding to and sharing that which is actually in the best interests of the people God has placed in our lives.

6. Evolution is a common truth claim today that conflicts with the biblical account. Those who argue in favor of evolution might offer a variety of scientifically grounded statements. Consider the following:

Due to billions of years of evolution, humans share genes with all living organisms. The percentage of genes or DNA that organisms share records their similarities. We share more genes with organisms that are more closely related to us. Humans belong to the biological group known as Primates, and are classified with the great apes, one of the major groups of the primate evolutionary tree. Besides similarities in anatomy and behavior, our close biological kinship with other primate species is indicated by DNA evidence. It confirms that our closest living biological relatives are chimpanzees and bonobos, with whom we share many traits... DNA also shows that our species and chimpanzees diverged from a common ancestor species that lived between 8 and 6 million years ago.³

Our initial reaction may be to argue back, citing alternative scientific evidence that suggests evolution is not possible or that casts doubt on dating methods. How might we respond, however, if we desire to steward the truth as that which is not just *correct*, but also seeks to win hearts and mind with *good*?

7. Your son/daughter says to you, "Everyone has their own sense of truth. I may not always agree with my friends, but they have to do what's right for them. And I have to do what's right for me." Given our study and discussion today, how might you respond? What can you affirm, what do you need to correct, and how do you do it?

CONCLUSION: STRIVING TO CONNECT TRUTH & GOODNESS

NEXT WEEK: THE TRUTH OF OUR FALLEN AND RESTORED HUMANITY

³ "What does it mean to be human? Genetics," Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, 9 July 2024, <https://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/genetics>.