



MESSAGE GUIDE

OCTOBER 27, 2024

LIVE NO LIES 4: WHAT IS TRUTH?



JOHN 4:23-24; 8:31-32; 14:6

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We are in week four of our series called, Live No Lies. There are a lot of lies told in our world today, even though we live in a culture that rejects absolute truth, which then actually makes lies an impossibility. A lie is considered a non-truth. But if you don't believe there is truth, then how can there also be lying? Lying is telling a false truth, and if there is no truth, there is nothing to falsify.

1. HOW HAS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF TRUTH BEEN SHAPED BY YOUR CULTURE OR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES?

What we need to wrestle with are three related questions:

What is truth?

How do we identify truth?

What does this mean for us in our day-to-day lives?

There are three texts in the Gospel of John where Jesus identified truth:

In a conversation Jesus had with a woman outside a small village called Sychar, He said, *“But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth”*

(John 4:23-24, ESV).

To a group of Jews who had believed Jesus, He said: *“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”* **(John 8:31-32, ESV).**

And, lastly, to His disciples, Jesus said, *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* **(John 14:6, ESV).**

Even though there are these three core examples of Jesus indicating there is this concept called “truth,” in total John's Gospel mentions “truth” 23 times. John had a specific point to make that was not just biographical but theological. Look at these examples:



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- Jesus is full of grace and truth (John 1:14).
- Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17).
- John the Baptist gave witness to the truth (John 5:33).
- The devil does not stand in the truth (John 8:44).
- I tell the truth (John 8:45).
- I tell you the truth (John 16:7).
- When the Spirit comes, He will guide you into all the truth (John 16:13).
- Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth (John 17:17).

So, what is truth? When you look at Scripture you find that truth is not a philosophical idea but a Person.

Going all the way back to the first book of the Bible, Genesis, we see that we human beings were not the first ones on the scene, nor was the created order or the physical universe. *“In the beginning, God”* (**Genesis 1:1, ESV**). Now, look at how John starts his Gospel: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God”* (**John 1:1, ESV**). This is no coincidence. John is establishing right out of the gate that Jesus is God, He existed as part of the Godhead before the beginning of time. So, what is true, right, correct, and the standard for “rightness” and “wrongness” flow from Him. *Jesus is the way, the TRUTH, and the life* (**John 14:6**).

The reason why this is important is because we don't get to decide whether or not there is truth. Truth is not subject dependent. Truth exists whether you affirm it, believe it, or accept it. Jesus is the embodiment of truth; truth flows out of Him. So, it is not subjective, it is objective. There is objective truth which leads to objective meaning.

“If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning: just as, if there were no light in the universe and therefore no creatures with eyes, we should never know it was dark. Dark would be without meaning” (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*).

2. REFLECT ON THE STATEMENT, “TRUTH IS NOT AN IDEA BUT A PERSON.” DOES THIS STATEMENT HELP YOU BETTER UNDERSTAND JESUS’ WORDS IN JOHN 14:6? AND HOW MIGHT YOU USE THIS TO HELP OTHERS UNDERSTAND AND BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS TRUTH AND THE ONLY WAY TO GOD?



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Through the Word of God in Scripture we discover that truth is a Person (Jesus Christ) and thus truth originates with God. But the next question is, how do we identify truth? How do we know whether something is true or not?

We live in a culture that has, what Francis Schaeffer described as, Two-tiered truth (Dollhouse Illustration):

- The lower story: public truth (science & reason)
- The upper story: private truth (nuncognitive experience, the locus of personal meaning)

The main floor is where such statements are made: “All dogs are mammals.” “Insulin controls type 1 diabetes.” “ $2+2=4$.” Those are all lower story truths.

In the upper story are likes and preferences, like it’s true for you that Grater’s has the best ice cream, or it’s better to watch a movie at a theater sitting near the front. In this dollhouse, facts go downstairs and preferences go upstairs.

3. WHAT DO YOU THINK, DOES CHRISTIANITY BELONG IN THE LOWER STORY OR THE UPPER STORY? IS IT A MATTER OF FACT ABOUT REALITY, OR IS IT A MATTER OF PRIVATE, PERSONAL BELIEF?

What Schaeffer says is that the way of Jesus is “True Truth.” It’s the fullest expression of truth, because it gives the fullest picture of reality.

Here’s what the Bible and all those passages we looked at in John’s Gospel do NOT allow us to do: Make Christianity a subjective claim. Jesus does not put truth (remember, originating from Him) in the category of likes and preferences. You can reject Christianity, you can say, “I don’t believe it’s true,” but what you can’t do is say, “It may be true for you, but it’s not true for me.” Why? Because the claim of Jesus is a claim for truth, and His claim is either objectively true, or it’s false.

“Christianity is not simply about finding a way of life that works for us or fits our personal tastes. In fact, sometimes Christianity will not feel like it’s working for us” (Childers and Barnett, *The Deconstruction of Christianity*).

When Jesus stood before Pilate on trial, He said, “For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice” (John 18:37, ESV). Jesus didn’t come bearing witness to a truth, or his truth. He came as a witness to the truth.



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Recap:

- What is truth? Truth is not a philosophical idea but a Person. Jesus is truth.
- How do we identify truth? By measuring it against the objective standard of Jesus.

Now, so what? What does this mean for us in our day-to-day lives?

Following Jesus means following the truth. Again, Jesus is the way, the TRUTH, and the life (John 14:6). If truth is objective but based on a Person, Jesus of Nazareth, then we have a choice to make. We can choose to reject truth, and thus reject Jesus, or we can believe, accept, and live the truth found in Jesus.

“I’m not a Christian because it ‘works’ for me. I had a life prior to Christianity that seemed to be working just fine, and my life as a Christian hasn’t always been easy. I’m a Christian because it is true. I’m a Christian because I want to live in a way that reflects the truth. I’m a Christian because my high regard for the truth leaves me no alternative” (J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity*).

What this means to us in our day-to-day lives is this:

- We can have peace in the midst of chaos.
- We can have hope in a world filled with hopelessness.
- We can have community in a culture of isolation.
- We can see beauty in art, music, and nature and have Someone to thank.

“The worst moment for an atheist is when he feels a profound sense of gratitude and has no one to thank” (G. K. Chesterton).

Jesus said, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32, ESV). Believe, accept, and live the truth found in Jesus, and whatever has you in chains, whatever lies have controlled you, you can be set free.

4. WHAT CHOICE WILL YOU MAKE? IF YOU ARE NOT A FOLLOWER OF JESUS, WILL YOU CONTINUE TO REJECT TRUTH? OR WILL YOU BELIEVE, ACCEPT, AND LIVE IN THE TRUTH AND FREEDOM FOUND IN JESUS? IF YOU ARE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS, WHAT NEXT STEP WILL YOU TAKE TO CONTINUE LIVING IN THE TRUTH?



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NEXT STEPS:

- If you would like to talk with someone about what it means to pursue a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, text **"FOLLOW"** to 317-707-6462, and we'll reach out to you. Or stop by the Next Steps Room, where people will gladly talk and pray with you.
- If you want to learn more about finding truth in a small group study, text **"TRUTH"** to the same number on the screen, and we'll reach out to you.

