

"Finding the Truth"

Where do you find the truth about eternal life? Now remember you are risking your soul. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're going to talk about the sure source of religious truth. Stay with us.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God urges us in Proverbs 23:23, "Buy truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding." Your most important purchase comes in buying the truth about God and about salvation. Where will you find the truth? A thousand voices are confusing us with contradictory ideas and fanciful notions. Is there a standard? Is there a sure and undeniable source of truth? Yes, my friend there is. And thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you, and we want to be a part of your life each week.

You've probably heard: "No one really knows what the truth is," or "There are no absolute truths," or "There is no right or wrong; only what people think." Do you remember the exchange between Pontius Pilate and Jesus, before His crucifixion? Jesus told Pontius Pilate in John 18:37, "You say *correctly* that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" Well, that question has burned in the hearts of many people: "What is truth?"

Webster defines truth as, "the true or actual state of a matter." Truth conforms to reality or to fact. Truth stands against what is false. Courts seek facts to determine innocence or guilt. Doctors test to find out the truth about our health. Where do we find spiritual truth? We want to know who we are, where we come from, why we're here, and what will happen to us when we die. Humans can't answer these questions on their own. We must seek answers from above and hear from God.

Now if you want to study more about truth, we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org and on YouTube at "Search TV Ministry."

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from John 14:1 to 6, and find the real source of truth.

Our reading today comes from the gospel of according to John and it talks about Jesus in His last days. Talking about His place in promises and how that He is the truth.

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

That's the words of Jesus. The way the truth and the life. John 14:1 to 6. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that our Lord and Savior Jesus is the way and the truth and the life and that You because of Your grace have sent Him to this earth to help us to know the truth. Father we pray that You will give us strength to put our faith in You and to trust You always. And to be obedient to Your will. This is our pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

People search for the truth in lots of places, but some sources aren't trustworthy. In fact, some sources are dangerous. Let's look at some harmful sources: First, some people look to their feelings for the truth. When Joseph's brothers got angry with him, they sold him into slavery; but they told their father a wild beast had devoured him. Now Jacob believed his ten sons and thought Joseph was dead. And so he mourned for years, even though Joseph wasn't really dead. Jacob's feelings were real, but they were based on a lie. People often trust their feelings. They want something to be true so badly, that they're willing to believe a lie. Well what we feel often differs from the truth. The Jews had a zeal for God, but it wasn't according to knowledge (Romans 10 verse 2). Martin Luther wrote that, "Feelings come and feelings go; and feelings can be deceiving. I rest my warrant on the Word of God; nothing else is worth believing."

Second, some look to popular opinions or a consensus for truth. They reason well, "if the majority believes it, it must be true"; but the majority isn't always right. Opinion polls aren't always trustworthy. Acts 28:3 to 6 says, "But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand. When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another, "Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live." However Paul shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm. But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god." Opinions and beliefs are fickle and changeable. He was neither a murderer or a god. God's spiritual truth is not like popular opinions; God's truth does not change. You can't rely on popular opinion, but you can depend upon God.

Third, some go to authorities. Now authorities are a blessing, but they aren't always right. Compare any history, science, or psychology textbook from 50 years ago, 25 years ago, and the present. Well, even your dictionary has thousands of words in it that were not in existence a century ago. People get a second doctor's opinion, because they want to be sure. We have appeals courts, because sometimes a court makes a wrong decision. Authorities disagree. And we hear contradictory information about diseases, the foods we eat, the medicines we take. What was bad for you in one report is good for you in another. We're often left confused and wishing for answers.

The fact is, even authorities are human and make mistakes. Their knowledge and their judgments are imperfect.

Fourth, some look inside to their consciences as a moral guide. Now the conscience, if trained properly by Scripture, can be a marvelous motivator to do what's right and to avoid what's wrong; but the uninformed conscience can believe a lie. In Acts 23:1 Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, "Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day." Well, he was speaking about his life before his conversion. He thought persecuting Christians was the right thing to do but later learned that he was wrong! He admitted in 1 Timothy 1:15 that, "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all." Now he acted according to what his conscience thought was true; but Paul's conscience was as wrong as wrong could be.

Some people's consciences harden to the point that they're past feeling anything. 1 Timothy 4:1 to 2 says, "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times (that) some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron." Well branding irons destroy the nerve cells, so the person no

can longer feel. You may know people past feeling remorse, who no longer have a conscience. If we're looking within our consciences for truth, we cannot find a standard of truth that is indisputable.

Where, then, do we find the truth? It's obvious the truth isn't in man. Jeremiah admitted many centuries ago in Jeremiah 10:23. He said, "I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps." Man, left to his own ingenuity will dream up what he wants but will ignore what he needs. Solomon said in Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death." When people walk their own ways, never giving God a second thought, they manufacture a false substitute for God. When people empty themselves of God, they fill their lives with false gods, false hope, or false fairy tales. Without God people lose their sense of justice and morality.

Truth is essential to life. Solomon urges us in Proverbs 23:23, "Buy truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding." Truth is a precious and costly thing. Telling the truth cost Jesus His life. The apostles died because they wouldn't deny the Lord or His truth. One must work to get truth. Buying the truth may mean discovering what you believed before is wrong. Truth requires you to leave an old error and start in a new direction. Buying the truth will leads you to change your ways. Confessing the truth calls for repentance. One reason people refuse to believe the truth is that they don't want to change—even if that old life is destructive.

Once a person has the truth, he must treasure it and never sell out for shoddy thinking or worldly ways. It's tragic that some sell the truth to gain some personal advantage. Paul challenged Timothy in 2 Timothy 4 verses 2 to 4 to "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."

We must follow the Truth because Truth sets us free. In John 8:31 to 32, Jesus promised those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." Now whether we know the truth matters, because truth sets us free. Free from what? Well, free from the lies that deceive. Lives that enslave and destroy us. When we know the truth, we can spot the lies. Then lies won't have the power to hurt us or to lead us astray.

Many preachers today tell people what they want to hear rather than what they need to hear. I fear many are sold on false hopes found in the teachings of men. Jesus said in Matthew 15:13 that, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant (speaking of human traditions) shall be uprooted." The religions of men, because they conflict with the teaching of Christ, will not stand and cannot save. When people push their own ideas and refuse to hear Jesus, they're planting something that will be uprooted. By forgetting God people destroy themselves and their lives. The lives of themselves and their loved ones. Foolishness will never grant us spiritual freedom. Freedom doesn't come from falsehood or deception but from the truth—the truth found in the words of Jesus Christ. That's what makes the truth of God's Word so valuable to our lives. And nothing can replace it.

The Lord Jesus said in John 14:6: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; (and) no one (no one) comes to the Father but through Me." Jesus personalizes what truth is all about. He is so real, so genuine, so authentic as the Son of God, that He is the truth. He is the standard of right and wrong. And every concept, every belief, and every religious doctrine must be weighed against the life and the words of Jesus. Jesus said, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges

him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day” (John 12 verse 48). We won’t be judged by our feelings, opinions, human authorities, or by our consciences. We’ll be judged by what Jesus teaches. Doesn’t it make sense that we know as much as possible what His will for our lives is?

Jesus said in John 16:12 to 13, “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.” Jesus promised all truth would come to the disciples. Now the Holy Spirit will speak from God and will tell them what God say. He will guide the apostles and prophets of the first century into all the Truth. “Now all the truth.” That means the Spirit revealed through the apostles in the first century every religious truth God wanted us to know. Now if that’s true, then there are no new truths being revealed today, since they received all the truth in the first century.

Jude in verse 3 of his brief letter confirms this understanding when he says, “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” Now the faith Jesus, that He wanted us to know has been revealed once for all time within the pages of the New Testament—the Word of truth. We don’t need to search the literature of the world or the philosophies of men for truth. The truth that leads to heaven is found in the New Testament. We need to read it, love it, meditate on it, memorize it, obey it and share it with others, so that they too can understand the truth.

Peter said in 1 Peter 1:22 to 25, “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For, All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, But the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word which was preached to you.” Now the Lord purifies our souls when we obey the Truth! That’s when we become Christians, children of God, who are washed in the blood of Jesus.

Truth is one of God’s great gifts. While such gifts are free, they aren’t cheap. The truth that can change your life is expensive, but only if you open your heart and listen will it save you. Truth is like medicine, it only works when you are willing to swallow it. It won’t do you any good if you merely look at it, play with it, judge it, or throw it away. It only works when you welcome it and obey it. The truth can make you free from sin, free from the heartache and destruction that sin brings. Without the truth, we’re all left in confusion, trying things that won’t last or give us life. The truth is where it’s always been—in the Word of God!

Let’s pray together. Heavenly Father we’re thankful for this wonderful gift of Your Word. That we may know the truth and be able to make a distinction between truth and error, right and wrong, good and bad. Help us Heavenly Father to be devoted to Your will always. In Jesus name, Amen.

Many Christians find little satisfaction because they hold onto Christ with one hand, while they hold onto the world with the other. They’re never happy in their Christianity and never happy in the world. Jesus said in Matthew 6:24 that, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other.” Why not give God a real hearing. Deciding to listen to God, who created you and loves you, will change your life for the best. God ought to have the first voice in your life. The world wants to silence Him, because they would rather live on their own terms. They forget they’ll have to face the consequences of their actions one day. And when we shut God out, what we destroy what is good and throw away our hope.

We all need a good long look at the cross. Once we see the love of God, we'll listen to Him. You can build your life on Him and what He teaches. The God who loves you will always keep His promises; He'll never lie to you. Put your trust in the Lord. Believe the gospel message that Jesus died on the cross for you, was buried, and on the third day rose from the dead. Trust Him, turn from every sin and repent, confess the name of Jesus, and be baptized (that is immersed) in water so that your sins will be forgiven. When you're baptized, the Lord will add you to His church and count you as His child. Don't be fooled by popular religion, feelings, or the notions of men. Look to Jesus. You'll never regret it!

We hope that today's study about truth has stirred you to think seriously about what God says. Now if you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. You can also search, watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! We do ask that you subscribe to our channel, that's, "SearchTVMinistry", all one word. And be sure to like the programs that you watch; this helps spread the program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses that you can take at your leisure. And we'll grade them and send them back to you. Now if you get a hold of us for one reason or another don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God. We want you to know the Lord and to love Him.

So focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And I realize some of you for health reasons can't attend worship; I'm speaking to those who can attend and haven't been there recently. There's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. And always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.