

## "Finding the Truth"

Where do you find the truth about eternal life? Now remember you're investing 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 the truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding." Now your most important purchase comes in buying the truth about God and about your 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. Thanks for taking time with us today. 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 maybe you've heard "There is no right or wrong; only what people think." Do you remember the exchange between Pontius Pilate and Jesus just before His crucifixion. In John 18 verse 37 Pilate said to Him, "'So You are a king?' and Jesus answered, '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. And everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.' Well then 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. And doctors test to find out the truth about our health. Well 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. Well humans cannot answer these questions on their own. We must seek answers from above and hear from God.

Well if you want to study more about truth, we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you 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](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. Now we also have materials free on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

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

Our reading today comes from the words of Jesus found in the gospel according to John, chapter 14, verses 1 through 6. "'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. Let's pray together. Oh Father help us always to seek You and Your will. Father we know that Jesus is the way, help us to follow that way. And that He is the life, help us to have life from Him. And that He is the truth, help us to listen to His voice. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

People search for truth, but some of their sources aren't trustworthy. In fact, some of those sources are downright dangerous. Let's look at some harmful sources: First, some people look to their

feelings for truth. You remember, as we mentioned, Joseph's brothers got angry with him, they sold him into slavery; but they told their father a wild beast had devoured him. Jacob believed his ten sons and thought Joseph was dead. And he mourned for years, even though Joseph wasn't really dead. The feelings were real, but they were based on a lie. People often trust their feelings. They want something to be true so badly, they're willing to believe a lie. Now what we feel often differs from the truth. The Jews had a zeal for God, but it was not in accordance to knowledge (Romans 10 and verse 2). I mentioned Martin Luther who 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 consensus for truth. They reason that if the majority believes it, it must be true, but the majority isn't always right. Opinion polls are not always trustworthy. I think of Acts 28 verses 3 to 6, which tells a very funny story. It says, "But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came and because of the heat fastened itself on his hand. Well 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 he 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." Well opinions and beliefs are as fickle and as changeable as night and day. Spiritual truth is not like popular opinions; spiritual truths don't change. You can rely on spiritual truth from the word of God, that doesn't change. But you can't rely on popular opinion.

Third, some go to authorities. Now authorities are a blessing, but they aren't always right. Compare any history book, science book, or psychology textbook from 50 years ago to today, or even 25 years ago, to the present. Even your dictionary has more than 50,000 words in it that were not even in existence a century ago. People go to doctor and then they go to get a second opinion, because they want to be sure, that what the doctors told them is right. We have appeals courts, because sometimes a court makes a wrong decision. You see, authorities disagree. We hear contradictory information about the foods we eat, the medicines we take. What's 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 and limited.

Now some look inside their consciences for their moral guide. Now the conscience, if trained properly, can be a marvelous motivator to do what's right and to avoid what's wrong; but the conscience can believe a lie, and it can be fooled. You remember in Acts 23 and verse 1 Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, "Brethren, I've lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day." Well he thought persecuting Christians was the right thing to do at one point, it was already free in his conscience, but later on he found out that he was wrong! And so he admitted in 1 Timothy 1:15, "It's a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all." You see he acted according to what his conscience thought was true; but Paul's conscience was as wrong as wrong could be.

Now some people's consciences harden to the point that they can't feel anything. 1 Timothy 4 verses 1 and 2 says, "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times 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, when a branding iron affects the skin it destroys the nerve cells too, so the person no can longer feel. You might know people who get past feeling any

remorse, who no longer have a conscience. Well if we're only looking within our consciences, within ourselves, for truth, we may not find that standard of truth that is indisputable.

Well where, then, do we find the truth? Well it's obvious that truth isn't in man. Jeremiah admitted many centuries ago in Jeremiah 10 and verse 23, "I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it's 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 and verse 12, that "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." When people walk their own ways, never giving God a thought, they manufacture a false substitute for God. When people empty themselves of God, they fill their lives with false gods, and false hope, and fairy tales. Without God people lose their sense of justice and morality.

Truth is essential to life. Solomon urges us as we've mentioned in Proverbs 23:23, "Buy truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding." Truth is precious and it's costly. 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 a new direction, it requires you to be honest. Buying the truth will lead you to change your ways. Confessing the truth means that we may have to repent. One reason people refuse to believe the truth is they don't want to change their lives—even if that old life is destructive.

Now 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 (or healthy) doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."

My friend, we must find the Truth, because Truth sets us free. In John 8 verses 31 to 32, Jesus promised those Jews who had believed Him, that "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." Whether we know the truth matters, because truth sets us free. Free from what? Well free from the lies that deceive, enslave and destroy us. When we know the truth, we can spot the lies. And 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. And I fear many are sold on false hopes found in the teachings of men. Jesus said in Matthew 15 verse 13, that "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted." The religions of men, because they conflict with the teaching of Christ, will not stand and cannot save you. When people push their own ideas and refuse to hear Jesus, they are planting something that will be uprooted. By forgetting God people destroy themselves and the lives of their loved ones. Foolishness will never grant us spiritual freedom. Freedom doesn't come from falsehood or deception but from the truth—you see, it's the truth found in the words of Jesus that will save us. And that's what makes the truth of God's Word so valuable to our lives. 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, no one) comes to the Father but through Me." Jesus personalizes what truth is all about. He's so real, so genuine, so authentic as the Son of God, that He is the truth Himself. 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 Christ. The Lord 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 and verse 48). We won’t be judged by our feelings, by opinions, by human authorities, or by our consciences. We’ll be judged by what Jesus teaches. Doesn’t it make sense then that we know as much as possible about what His will is for our lives?

The Lord Jesus said in John 16 verses 12 to 13, “I have many more things to say to you (He spoke this to the apostles), (he says) but you cannot bear them now. But when He, (that is) the Spirit of truth, comes (and He came on the day of Pentecost), 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 will disclose to you what is to come.” Now Jesus promised all truth would come to His disciples. The Holy Spirit will speak from God and will tell them what God says. He will guide the apostles and prophets of the first century into all the Truth. “All the truth.” And that means the Spirit revealed through the apostles in the first century, every religious truth. God wanted us to know that truth. And if it’s true, then there are no new truths being revealed today, since they revealed all truth.

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 that Jesus 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 for truth. The truth that leads to heaven is found in the Bible. 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.” Oh the Lord purifies our souls when we obey the Truth! That’s when we become Christians, children of God, washed in the blood.

Truth is one of God’s great gifts. And while such gifts are free, they aren’t cheap. The truth can change your life, but only if you open your heart and listen. Truth is like a 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. And without the truth, we’re all left in confusion, trying things that won’t last or won’t give us life. The truth is where it’s always been my friend—in the Word of God! Let’s pray together. Father, help us to find Your truth in Your word, and to trust in You, and to be obedient. In Jesus name, Amen!

Many Christians find little satisfaction because they seek to hold onto Christ with one hand and hold onto the world with the other. And they’re never really happy in their Christianity and never really 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’ll 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, and 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. And they forget that they’ll have to face the consequences of their actions one day. When we shut God out, we destroy what is good and we 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 be sure of Jesus Christ and His love. You can build your life on Him and what He teaches. You can find peace because of His promises. The God who loves you will always keep His promises; He will never lie to you. Put your loving trust in the Lord. Believe the gospel message. Jesus died on the cross for you, He was buried, and on the third day rose from the dead. Trust Him with all your heart, turn from every sin in repentance, confess to all the name of Jesus, and be baptized (immersed) in water so that your sins will be forgiven. And when you're baptized, the Lord will add you to His church and count you as His child. He'll bless your life in ways you've never imagined. Don't be fooled by popular religion, or feelings, or the notions of men. Look to Jesus for every answer to the questions of your life. You'll never regret it!

We hope that today's study about truth has stirred you to study your Bible. Think seriously about what God says. And if you live in the United States and want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, then 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](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website. There's also a schedule of our programs at [searchtv.org](http://searchtv.org). And you can find there a map with the location of churches in your area. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses, so write to us and ask for one. Now don't worry, we're not here to exploit you. We're here to help you get to heaven.

Please get involved with a church of Christ. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well, we'll be back next week. We'll be back with a word of God, teaching and preaching the things that God says in His word. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. Each week we enjoy getting to come into your home and to be close to you, and we hope you will be close to us. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.