

Total Truth

Session I – Introduction (Truth)

James River Community Church

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February – May 2014

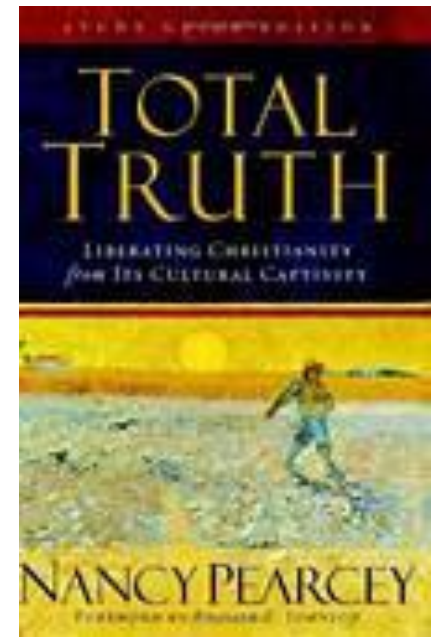


What is Truth?

- Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" 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. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find no guilt in Him. – John 18:37-38
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9z3cNBme-8&feature=player_detailpage

Outline

1. **Introduction – Truth**
2. Two Worlds
3. Cultural Mandate
4. Morality and Religion
5. Privatization of Faith
6. Rediscovering Joy
7. Keeping Religion in Its Place
8. Surviving the Spiritual Wasteland
9. The Science of the Common Sense
10. Darwin's of the Mind
11. How We Lost our Minds
12. When American met Christianity, Guess Who Won?
13. What Next? Living it Out



Goals of the study

- Understand the worldview paradigms of most Americans
- Identify the secular/sacred divide
- Encourage us to craft a biblical worldview
- Enable us to apply a worldview grid to cut through the typical American postmodern worldviews
- Liberate Christianity from its cultural captivity
- Develop questions to create an openness to the Gospel
- Unleash the power of the truth to transform lives

“Christianity is not merely religious truth, it is Total Truth – the truth about the whole of reality” – Frances Schaeffer

Overview

- Politics is not enough to change people
- Politics is downstream from culture, not the other way around
- Real change must start with culture
- Culture change starts one heart at a time
- The most effective means is ordinary Christians fulfilling God's calling to reform culture within their local spheres of influence
- We continue to loose our children to the culture

“The Gospel is like a caged lion. It does not need to be defended, it just needs to be let out of its cage” – Charles Spurgeon

What is Truth?

- In Roman mythology, “*Veritas*” meaning truth, was the goddess of truth, It was believed that she hid in the bottom of a holy well because she was so elusive. Her image is shown as a young virgin dressed in white

“Veritas,” Roman God holding a mirror and a serpent (1896). Olin Levi Warner, Library of Congress



What is Truth?

- In Greek mythology, Veritas was known as “*Aletheia*”.
- Corresponding to reality
- Corresponding to fact
- From the Old Norse *trú*, “faith, word of honor, religious faith, belief”
- Many “theories of truth” are debated

**“Alethia,” Greek God (BC).
Unknown location**





What is truth to you?

“Tell me I'm clever, Tell me I'm kind,
Tell me I'm talented, Tell me I'm cute,
Tell me I'm sensitive, Graceful and wise,
Tell me I'm perfect But tell me the truth”

– Shel Silverstein

What do others say about truth?

- “To myself I am only a child playing on the beach, while vast oceans of truth lie undiscovered before me.” – Isaac Newton
- “It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself.” – Thomas Jefferson
- “The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie, deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth, persistent, persuasive and unrealistic.” – John F. Kennedy

What do others say about truth?

- “The pursuit of truth and beauty is a sphere of activity in which we are permitted to remain children all our lives”
– Albert Einstein
- “If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything” – Mark Twain

What do others say about truth?

- “Our heavenly Father understands our disappointment, suffering, pain, fear, and doubt. He is always there to encourage our hearts and help us understand that He's sufficient for all of our needs. When I accepted this as an absolute truth in my life, I found that my worrying stopped” – Charles Stanley
- “A dog barks when his master is attacked. I would be a coward if I saw that God's truth is attacked and yet would remain silent.” – John Calvin

What are some theories of Truth?

- Correspondence theory

- From Ancient Greece (Socrates, Aristotle)
- “A judgment conforms to reality”
- Closest to Biblical Truth

- Coherence theory

- From Spinoza (heretic) and others (1600's) as outgrowth of the Enlightenment
- Agreement with a “specified” set of beliefs or standards

What are some theories of Truth?

- **Constructivist theory**

- From Karl Marx and others in mid-1800's
- Truth is “constructed” by social processes, is historically and culturally specific, and that it is in part shaped through the power struggles within a community

- **Consensus theory**

- 1960's by various philosophers
- Whatever is “agreed” upon

What are some theories of Truth?

- Pragmatic theory

- 1900's by Dewey and others
- "Truth is that concordance of an abstract statement with the ideal limit towards which endless investigation would tend to bring scientific belief, which concordance the abstract statement may possess by virtue of the confession of its inaccuracy and one-sidedness, and this confession is an essential ingredient of truth" – Charles Sanders Pierce
- Truth achieves statistical probabilities, not certainties, and that chance, a veering from law, is very real
- Pierce is the founder of modern statistics and the scientific method

What is your criteria for Truth?

- Coherence with all the available information
- Consensus of large group
- Consistency with logic
- Correspondence with observation
- Pragmatic – “It works”
- Appeal to Authority
- Custom – “When in Rome, do as the Romans”
- Emotions and feelings
- Instinct
- Intuition – I am the source
- Majority rule
- Naïve Realism – first hand observation
- Revelation – an assumed source
- Time – “stands the test of time”
- Tradition

What is Absolute Truth (Universality)?

- "What is absolutely true is always correct, everywhere, all the time, under any condition. An entity's ability to discern these things is irrelevant to that state of truth." —[Steven Robiner](#)
- Truth is considered to be universal if it is valid in all times and places. In this case, it is seen as eternal or as absolute.
- The relativist conception denies the existence of some or all universal truths, particularly ethical ones (through moral relativism).

How do we know the Bible is truth?

- By faith – “The substance of things hoped for and the assurance of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1); but not testable
- By self-validation– “All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for doctrine...” (2 Tim. 3:16); because it says so
- Textual consistency and uniqueness – validated and upheld over time
- External evidence – Archeology, paleontology, cosmology, physics, biology...Creation
- Predictive prophecy – fulfilled; but some say it's after the fact
- By practical application – “If any many shall do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God..... (John 7:17)

How do we know the Bible is truth?

- The Old and New Testament terms for truth are, respectively, *‘emet*, and *aletheia*.
 - fidelity, moral rectitude, being real, being genuine, faithfulness, having veracity, being complete.
- Two aspects are primary:
 - faithfulness, and conformity to fact.
- An application of the correspondence theory:
 - But - Modernism’s error with regard to its view of truth was the same as its views of logic and science, namely acknowledging their reality while abstracting them from the Lord who governs them
- An application of the coherence theory:
 - As long as it is in coherence with God’s structured reality.
 - “That which corresponds to the Divine mind.” Bahnsen
 - Truth is attained by “thinking God’s thought after Him” on a particular subject matter – Van Til

Truth

Truth is that which is consistent with the mind, will, character, glory, and being of God. Even more to the point: Truth is the self-expression of God. That is the biblical meaning of truth. Because the definition of truth flows from God, truth is theological

Sources of discussion

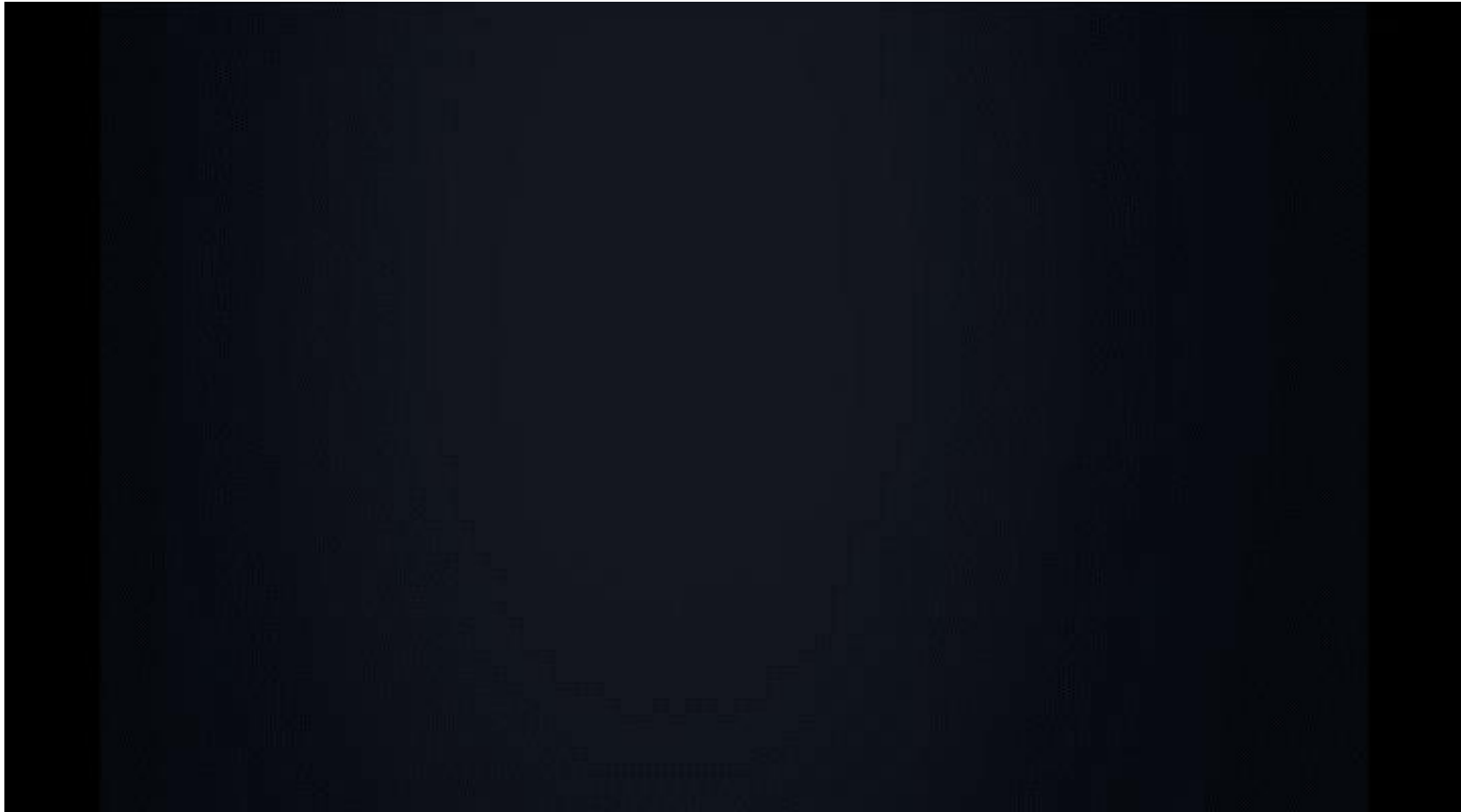
- Bible
- “Total Truth” – Nancy Pearcey
- “Escape from Reason” – Dr . Francis Schaeffer
- “Mere Christianity” – C.S. Lewis
- “Origins” – David Curfman (James River Community Church, May 2013)

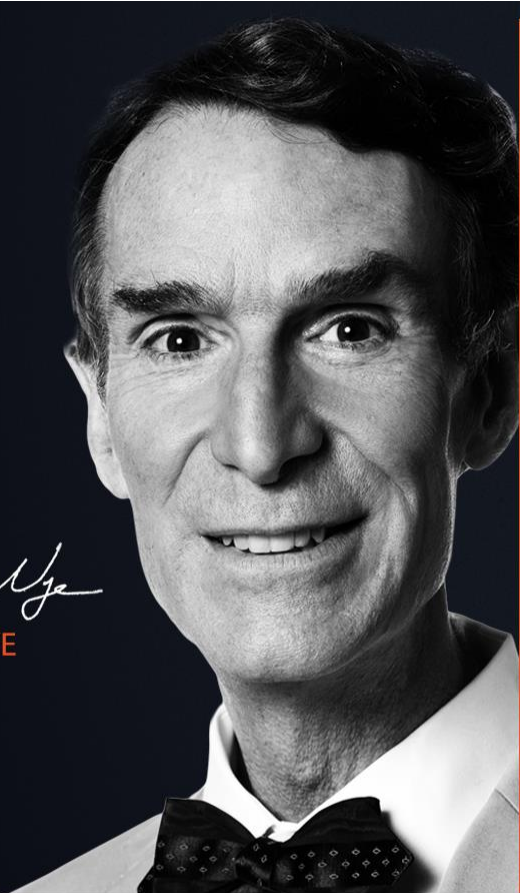
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Homework

- Observe the news and bring back examples of application of any of “truth theories”
- Read Total Truth
- Watch the Debate on Tuesday night

Homework



A black and white portrait of Bill Nye, smiling, wearing a white shirt and a dark bow tie.

Bill Nye

BILL NYE

WATCH US
LIVE

2.4.14

7:00 PM EST

A black and white portrait of Ken Ham, smiling, wearing a white shirt and a striped tie.

Ken Ham

KEN HAM

DEBATE**LIVE**.ORG