

A Biblical View of Truth

By Patricia Nason

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, students will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read the comments and verses related to **The Source of Truth: God** in the section **It's in the Book**. Examine the following verses to determine why God is the source of truth. Also look for the relationship of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and Scripture to truth: Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2; John 14:6; John 16:13; 1 Peter 1:20–21; 2 Timothy 3:16–17. Prepare to describe to the group what truth is to a disciple of Christ.

Assignment Two

Read the comments and verses related to **Subjective Sources of Truth: Relying on the Senses** in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to give the group a summary of 2 Kings 18–19. In your summary, include answers to the questions listed in the section **Assignment Two Feedback**.

Assignment Three

Read the comments and verses related to **Subjective Sources of Truth: Relying on Emotions** in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to give the group a summary of 2 Samuel 11:1–27. In your summary, include answers to the questions listed in the section **Assignment Three Feedback**.

Scripture to Memorize

“So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:11

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will discern the benefits of relying on God's objective truth and the pitfalls of making decisions based on subjective truth.

Patricia Nason is professor of Foundations in Teaching in the Price School of Church and Family Ministries at Southwestern Seminary and is director of the Master of Arts in Christian School Education. She teaches theology and philosophy for Christian Education and PhD courses relating to current educational philosophies.

Patricia is a wife, mother of five children, and grandmother of nineteen grandchildren. She has taught science in public school and science teachers at Texas A&M University (where she received her PhD), UNC-Charlotte, SFA, and at the Institute for Creation Research. She has been teaching director of Community Bible Study in Nacogdoches, Texas. Her walk with Christ is a story of His faithfulness and everlasting love toward her and her family.

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Elizabeth and her Aunt Patti were discussing abortion. Elizabeth said, "I would never have an abortion. But my friend's perception of truth is different from mine, so I would never tell her not to have an abortion. That's her choice." Aunt Patti asked, "So, you don't believe there's one body of truth?" "There are many truths but no single truth," Elizabeth answered. "I can't insist that her beliefs are not true and mine are."

How would you respond to Elizabeth? How would you convince her that God's truth is true for everyone or else it isn't truth?

The Source of Truth: God

Discussion Questions

What is your perception of truth and why? Do you believe truth . . .
is completely independent of what you understand, say, or believe?
corresponds to reality and can change?
is understood according to the perceptions of the observer?
works or else it wouldn't be truth?

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now describe to the group what truth is to a disciple of Christ.

Read Numbers 13:1–14:10 out loud.

Studying the Passage, Numbers 13:2–24

Verse 2. Send . . . men. God told Moses to send twelve Israelites to spy out the land of Canaan. **I am going to give.** God promised the Israelites the land would become theirs. That promise was the reason He was sending men to spy on the land.

Verses 3–16. all . . . who were heads. This passage lists the names of the leaders from each of the tribes of Israel, including Caleb and Joshua.

Verses 17–20. Go up. . . . See. Moses gave instructions to help the spies accomplish the goals. He supplied the route to travel and where to enter the land of Canaan. He told them exactly what information they should bring back. Moses even instructed them to bring back the fruit of the land.

Verses 21–24. So they went up. The spies did inspect the land, its produce, and its inhabitants. They returned to give Moses and the people their report.

Subjective Sources of Truth: Relying on the Senses

Discussion Question

On which source of truth do you currently base most of your decisions?

Senses—empirical evidence

Pragmatism—what works

Authority—experts and tradition

Reason—logical thought that leads to new truth

Intuition/emotions—a feeling of certainty that something is true
Culture—social consensus about what is true
Revelation—God’s communication

Studying the Passage, Numbers 13:25–33

God created us to use our senses and minds to know about the world. He gave us eyes to see, ears to hear, the senses of taste, smell, and touch. Our physical senses are meant to help us understand the world God has given us, but they are not meant to be the final basis for truth. Empiricism is knowledge that comes from sensory experience. Disciples are wise enough to know God’s truth is more reliable than sensory experience.

Verses 25–26. they returned . . . they brought back word. The spies delivered their report. Most of them depended on their senses in order to decide what to report as the truth.

Verses 28–33. We should by all means go up and take possession of it. Caleb and Joshua recognized that the Israelites could possess the land because God had said so. They believed His word was the truth. **We are not able to go up.** The other spies depended on their senses. They declared that the inhabitants of the land were too powerful to be defeated. The negative report from the unfaithful spies caused disbelief in God’s promise.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: How do you know King Hezekiah made choices based on God’s Word? What appeared to be proof that the Assyrian army could defeat Judah? What arguments did Rabshakeh use to persuade Judah to surrender? Did Hezekiah believe God or the Assyrian king? What truths did God fulfill? (Even though Hezekiah and the people observed a mighty army, Hezekiah and his people did not believe what they saw and heard from the enemy. Rather, they decided not to surrender based on the truth of God’s Word.)

On Your Own

In the space below, briefly describe a time when you made an unwise decision based on an observation rather than God’s truth.

Subjective Sources of Truth: Relying on Emotions

Studying the Passage, Numbers 14:1–11, 22–24

Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary defines *emotion* as “a conscious mental reaction (as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as strong feeling.” Emotions include some of the following feelings: anger, jealousy, desire, love, lust, fear, dissatisfaction, depression, anxiety, confusion, happiness, sorrow, shame, pleasure, grief, and peace. We often make decisions based on our emotions; thus, emotions become our own personal truth and the cause of our actions. God’s chosen people, the Israelites, struggled with emotions as recounted in Numbers 14.

Verses 1–2. The people wept through the night, indicating strong emotions. Those emotions caused them to prefer living in bondage in Egypt rather than in the freedom of God’s tender care and lovingkindness.

Verse 3. fall by the sword. By letting their emotions dictate their thinking, the Israelites imagined that God was leading them to death and their wives and children to be plundered. **Verse 5–9. He will bring us into this land.** Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb based their thinking and decisions on the Lord's promises. They had more faith in God than in their emotions.

Verses 22–24. Surely all . . . have not listened to My voice . . . shall by no means see the land. Because the Israelites relied on observation and emotion rather than God's truth, none of that generation entered the promised land. Choosing a source of truth has consequences.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week may now share answers to the following questions: What was David's initial emotion that caused him to sin? (Notice that his emotion was preceded by what he observed and accepted as fact.) What were the steps David took as he reacted to his emotions and fell deeper and deeper into sin? What was God's response to David's decision to follow his emotions as truth rather than God's Word? From 2 Samuel 12:15–19, what were the consequences of David's decision to believe and act on his emotions rather than God.

Like the Israelites in the wilderness, David paid the consequences for his decision to accept emotions as truth. Disciples make decisions based on God's truth rather than any other sources of perceived truth.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

At Home: Nail It Down

Worldview questions relating to knowledge are: Can truth be known? Is truth relative or absolute? Where can I find truth?

The disciple's ultimate source of truth, the lens through which we make decisions, is the Bible—God's special revelation.

Study 2 Timothy 3:16–17.

1. How much Scripture is inspired by God?
2. What is gained by believing Scripture is the Word of God?
3. What are the end results?

Study 2 Timothy 3:2–9.

In verses 2–4, Paul compares two kinds of people. One group loves God and His Word. The other group has at least nineteen characteristics that reveal they have denied the existence of God's truth. What are those characteristics?

In verses 6–9 Paul describes those who do not love of God and the truth of His Word. What are those people like? How would you compare them to true disciples of Jesus?

On which of the following sources of truth will you, as a disciple of Christ, base your decisions?

Senses—empirical evidence

Pragmatism—what works

Authority—experts and tradition

Reason—logical thought that leads to new truth

Intuition/emotions—a feeling of certainty that something is true

Culture—social consensus about what is true

Revelation—God's communication

Decisions based on observations, social correctness, emotions, or any other criterion than God's Word will not be based on truth. Such decisions have unfortunate consequences.

Disciples live under the reign of King Jesus. He calls His disciples to discern issues and make decisions according to an absolute standard, His written Word. Decisions consistent with His Word also have consequences—wonderful consequences. Decisions based on biblical truth allow disciples to fulfill Christ's calling on their lives and thus bring great glory to God.

Parent Question.

What is your most common source of knowledge when making decisions?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to teenagers who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.

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