

JESUS IS THE TRUTH

+ **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

Believers are to have nothing to do with the evil powers of the world and their fruit but are to share the one true gospel with the people of the world.

+ **BACKGROUND PASSAGES:**

2 Corinthians 4; Ephesians 6; 1 John 2

+ **SETTING:**

The world will say truth is one thing and Jesus will say truth is another. Jesus taught that He is the truth (John 14:6) and that His Word is truth (John 17:17). But the world and Satan's forces will try to tempt us toward their false truths. As disciples of Christ, we are to resist these temptations by holding onto the truth of God, living and proclaiming the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

DAY 1

READ:

Ephesians 6:10-17

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Ephesians 6:10-13

NOTES

In March 2020, the United States ground to a halt due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The initial “fifteen days to flatten the curve” turned into a months-long battle to reduce surging numbers of people impacted by COVID-19. While the virus was invisible and could not be seen, its effects were felt as various parts of the country were hit hard by the virus. Hospitals and healthcare workers were overrun in some places. The impact of an unseen sickness was incredibly disruptive to the job market, the economy, and a host of other sectors.

In Ephesians 6:10-13, Paul talked about an invisible enemy. Satan and his followers—rulers, authorities, cosmic powers of darkness, and evil spiritual forces—are opposed to God and wage war against Christians. These spiritual enemies cannot be seen, but their presence can be felt in the culture and in the pressure on believers to conform to the present age.

For this reason, Paul encouraged Christians to rely on the Lord’s strength and to put on the armor of God in order to stand against Satan. God is stronger than Satan and can empower His people to stand firm against the adversary. Christians must simply depend on His strength and use the equipment He provides to stand strong.

What can you do to remind yourself of the reality of spiritual warfare and the need to rely on God’s power to resist sin and Satan?

DAY 2

READ:

Ephesians 6:10-17

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Ephesians 6:14-17

NOTES

When people sign up to serve in one of the branches of the U. S. military, they are given government-issued uniforms and operate government-owned equipment. The army, for example, issues several different types of uniforms. Soldiers receive an army green service uniform, a combat uniform, a service uniform, and a physical fitness uniform. Moreover, the soldiers operate government-owned equipment. The radios, drones, tanks, rifles, and other tools belong to the military but are provided for soldiers to fulfill their duty and complete their service. Soldiers engage in battle while wearing the uniform and operating the equipment provided by the military.

Similarly, God has provided the uniform and equipment for Christians to stand firm in spiritual battle. In Ephesians 6:14-17, Paul outlined the various pieces of the armor of God. This equipment was “issued” by God to help believers resist Satan and his attacks. Paul mentioned the following items: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel sandals of peace, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, as well as the sword of the Spirit. The Christian does not have the strength or the resources to resist Satan on his or her own. However, by utilizing the resources God has provided, Christians can be successful in their fight against Satan and sin. Therefore, put on the armor of God and stand against Satan!

What are some ways we can use God’s armor well on a daily basis?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

“God can overcome His enemies without help from anyone, but His saints cannot so much as defend the smallest outpost without His strong arm.”¹

—William Gurnall (1616–1679)

DAY 3

READ:

1 John 2:15-17

FOCAL PASSAGE:

1 John 2:15

NOTES



KEY DOCTRINE #46: THE WORLD OPPOSED TO GOD

There are times in Scripture where the term “world” refers to more than the physical planet Earth or the collective human population. In many instances, the term refers to an active and evil spiritual force that is in direct conflict with God and His kingdom. This evil world force operates under Satan’s control (Ephesians 2:2; John 14:30), displaying the same self-centeredness and deceit that is found within his character. Christians are called to overcome this world of spiritual evil by faith in the Son of God (1 John 5:4-5).

In J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* series, an unusual group of friends embark on a dangerous mission to destroy the ring of power. The corrupting power of the ring is a major theme in the books. Each person who possesses the ring feels the pull of the ring and struggles to resist it. The person most noticeably affected is Gollum. In the series, he is obsessed with the ring and cannot resist its power. He calls the ring “my precious” and waits for his chance to steal it from Frodo. Tragically, the ring eventually leads to his destruction.

Gollum is a warning for Christians who are tempted by the things of the world. They may feel a pull toward the things of the world—much like Gollum felt the pull of the ring—but we must resist it. In 1 John 2:15-17, John told Christians not to love the world because everything in it is opposed to God and will be destroyed. The things of the world—the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride that comes with possessions—do not originate with God. They come from the world, which is opposed to God and will be destroyed. Only those who know God and do His will are promised eternal life. Therefore, Christians should reject the things of the world and seek to do God’s will.

How can Christians discern God’s will and obey it?

DAY 4

READ:

2 Corinthians 4:1-6

FOCAL PASSAGE:

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

NOTES

If you've ever played Marco Polo on the ground or in the water, you know that one person closes her eyes, sometimes with a blindfold, while trying to find the other people around her. She can only say, "Marco," while others are to respond, "Polo," so that she may try to find their location. Being blind is no fun. It can make you stumble, lose your way, and not find what you are looking for. People can misdirect you, and it's possible to believe their lies.

Blindness is a bad thing. In 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Satan—a fallen angel and the god of this age—works to keep unbelievers from seeing the light of the glory of Christ. He wants them to remain blind to the truth of the gospel. If they remain blind to Christ, spiritual death and eternal destruction are certain.

However, if their eyes are opened to the gospel and they believe in Jesus Christ, they will experience forgiveness and eternal life. Thus, the blindfold/veil needs to be removed so they can see and believe. Christians must remember that Satan works to keep unbelievers blind to the gospel, and so, they must ask God to open the eyes of unbelievers to see Christ in glory and faith.

How do we keep ourselves and others from being blind to the truths of God?

DAY 5

READ:

2 Corinthians 4:1-6

FOCAL PASSAGE:

2 Corinthians 4:5-6

NOTES

Tales of the Kingdom, by David and Karen Mains, is a collection of allegorical stories designed to teach children valuable lessons about God and His kingdom. The main character is named Scarboy—later he is called Hero—an orphan from Enchanted City. The Enchanted City is controlled by the Enchanter, a villain who keeps the residents of the city under his spell. Before she dies, Scarboy's mother tells him about the King and a safe place called Great Park. Scarboy escapes to the Great Park, but he struggles to see things that long-term residents of the Great Park see. Slowly the Enchanter's power is broken and the King helps Scarboy see himself and others as they truly are.

These truths in Tales of the Kingdom are supported by 2 Corinthians 4:5-6. The Enchanter—Satan—has blinded the minds and hearts of unbelievers (4:3-4). But King Jesus died and rose to open blinded eyes and save sinners. Everyone who trusts Christ will be saved. The Enchanter's spell will be broken. Therefore, Christians should resolve to share the message of the gospel. Through the preaching of the gospel, God opens blind eyes and softens hard hearts. He calls people from darkness to light. He works through our efforts to tell others about the glory of Christ. Let's be faithful to share His message with the world.

Whom can you tell about the truth and power of the gospel this week?

GROUP

NOTES

POINT 1: We are to resist the powers of the world (Ephesians 6:10-17).

While engaging in _____ against spiritual _____, we must rely on God's _____ to prevail.

? In what areas is Satan currently “attacking” Christians and the church?

God provides spiritual _____ and a spiritual _____ for Christians to stand firm against _____ and his followers.

? From Day 2: **What are some ways we can use God’s armor well on a daily basis?**

POINT 2: We are to reject the things of the world (1 John 2:15-17).

Christians cannot love the _____ and the _____; these two are mutually exclusive.

? How can Christians keep themselves from falling in love with worldly things?

**KEY DOCTRINE #46:
THE WORLD OPPOSED TO GOD**

There are times in Scripture where the term “world” refers to more than the physical planet Earth or the collective human population. In many instances, the term refers to an active and _____ spiritual force that is in direct conflict with God and His kingdom. This evil world force operates under Satan’s control (Ephesians 2:2; John 14:30), displaying the same self-centeredness and _____ that is found within his character. Christians are called to overcome

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

“Those who seek happiness from [the world] make a wretched and miserable provision for themselves, especially when God calls us to the ineffable glory of eternal life.”²

–John Calvin (1509–1564)

this world of spiritual evil by _____ in the Son of God (1 John 5:4-5).

POINT 3: We are to proclaim Jesus to the world (2 Corinthians 4:3-6).

Unbelievers do not _____ or _____ the beauty of the _____.



In what ways does sin affect a person?

Christians share the _____ in hopes that God will open the _____ and _____ of unbelievers.



Why should Christians share the gospel even if many will reject it?

MY RESPONSE

Because the world is opposed to God, we stand against the world's evil systems, rejecting anything that is contrary to God's truth and good design.

- **HEAD:** How can Christians use the Bible to learn and embody truth?
- **HEART:** What temptations of this world have you fallen for recently that you need to confess to the Lord?
- **HANDS:** How can you prepare to share the gospel more clearly and confidently?



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

VOICES from THE CHURCH

"We're living in a culture that is seeking what the gospel promises. The times are ripe for Christian witness, and we dare not shrink back."³

—D. Scott Hildreth and Steven A. McKinion

RECLAIMING THE REACHING MINISTRY OF SUNDAY SCHOOL

by Dwayne McCrary

In his book *Fuel the Fire*, Chuck Kelley notes that Sunday Schools began with a focus on nurturing believers more than reaching outsiders during the early 1920s.¹ People living during that time endured the Spanish Flu with quarantines, mask mandates, and confusing news accounts. They also faced economic hardships as soldiers returned from World War I without a reentry plan and navigated through social unrest during the Red Summer of 1919. Believers had been away from each other and missed the support provided in a regular Bible study group. That support included a safe place to share and talk about what was going on in the world in light of Scripture. We can certainly understand how and why this shift took place.

However, Kelley also notes that some church leaders made an intentional decision to use their Bible study groups as a tool for reaching people who were far from God. These church leaders realized that all people wanted the support of a group where they could interact with others about substantial issues.

These church leaders appear to have benefited from three streams intersecting each other:

- a desire for truth
- a desire for interaction with others
- a place where anyone was welcome.

In short, they created open Bible study groups that were small enough for people to interact about the Bible and then created new groups as needed to keep the dynamic of the three streams present. These were churches that made a difference not only in the lives of believers but also in the lives of people who were far from God. By the end of the decade, they had become the standard for an effective church in the West.

One wonders if we are not at the same intersection today. We could certainly circle the wagons and focus on Bible study groups for believers. The people in our churches might applaud us and be very content. But doing so fails to make room for those who are far from God and ignores the opportunity being placed before us.

We could certainly circle the wagons and focus on Bible study groups for believers. The people in our churches might applaud us and be very content. But doing so fails to make room for those who are far from God.

REACHING PEOPLE FAR FROM GOD

What does an ongoing Bible study group focused on reaching people far from God look like?

- They invite people who are not in a Bible study group. With the invitation comes an offer to pick them up or meet them so they know where to go.
- They leave space for new people. That means empty chairs and additional study resources.
- They are smaller. By smaller, I mean a maximum group size of a dozen at the most. Discussion and interaction starts to decline once a group surpasses that number.

- They look to start new groups. This involves preparing people to lead those new groups and current leaders continually recognizing the importance of starting new groups.
- They look to the Bible as the authority. This is what gives the group value and distinction. The value proposition is studying the Bible with a group.
- They make sure everyone can participate. Questions are crafted so everyone can answer, and lessons stand on their own (not dependent upon the participants being present the previous week).

These actions will get our groups down the road to reclaiming the reaching element of Sunday School or ongoing Bible study groups. What steps do your groups need to take in reclaiming the reaching ministry of Sunday School?

Dwayne McCrary is the manager for adult ongoing resources at Lifeway. He also serves as an adjunct professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, teaches an adult group and a preschool group in his church, reads history books, and is a road bicyclist.

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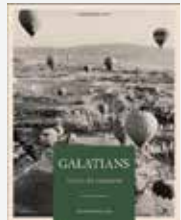
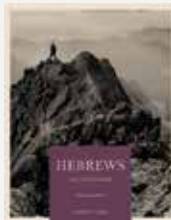
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