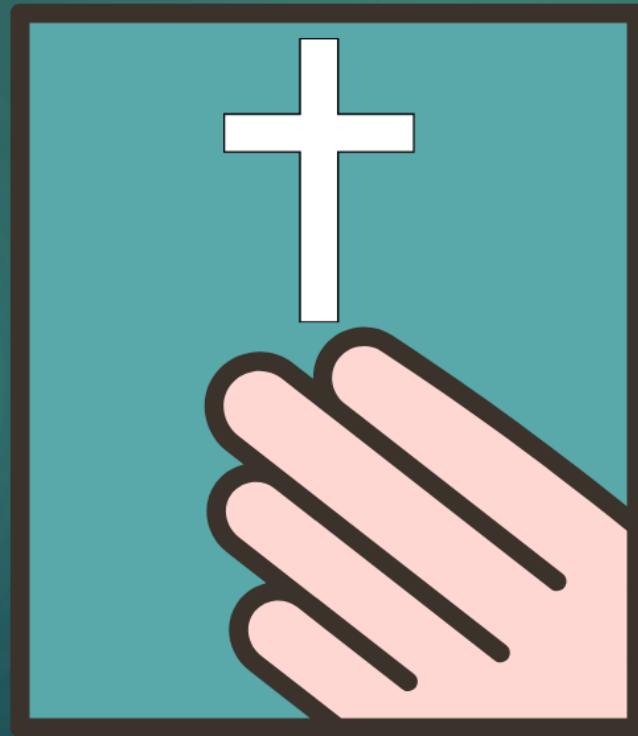


Living in Truth

Confident Conversation in a Conflicted Culture



Bible Study adapted from
Living in Truth by
Mary Jo Sharp

Welcome

- Prayer
- Ground Rules
 - This study is intended to be participatory, so please feel free to engage with one another and answer questions openly and honestly
- Introductions
 - Please share your name & what you hope to gain from this study

Our Goal For This Study

- The goal for this study is to help Christians effectively communicate the truth by:
 1. Seeing the need for truth conversations
 2. Knowing who you trust as an authority
 3. Listening to cultural views
 4. Learning to ask questions
 5. Responding to false beliefs
 6. Living in truth



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Session 1: See The Need



LIVING IN

TRUTH

MARY JO SHARP



Christians, Culture and Truth



- Confusion about truth is ubiquitous in our culture, which can lead Christians to censor themselves or remain silent before conversations even get started.
- When Christians stand on God's Truth, we often hear derogatory comments such as, "Christians are arrogant bigots," "Don't be so intolerant," or "Who are you to judge?"

How Did We Get Here?



- Epistemology:
 - (*n*). The investigation of what distinguishes justified belief from opinion.
- Up until the 17th century, people looked to God for answers about all things related to life, wisdom and truth. This is known as Theocentrism.
- Proverbs 1:7
 - "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

How Did We Get Here?

- Modernism

- A movement away from theocentric models of epistemology which began in the mid-17th century with people like René Descartes & Francis Bacon.
- Emphasized objectivity (the idea that we can be completely detached from our own biases) and universal rationality (the idea that all people generally think the same, if taught the same), assumptions disproven by modern anthropology.
- Also advocated for "inevitable progress", the idea that society (by rejecting a biblical worldview) will necessarily trend toward progress in all disciplines such as science, medicine, philosophy and morality.

How Did We Get Here?



- Postmodernism

- A movement away from modernism which developed in the mid to late 20th century. It rejects the ideals of modernism by rejecting concepts of absolute truth.
- Correspondence theory of truth is replaced by relativism.
- No longer any metanarrative (objective Truth); "truth" is subjective. In other words, what you feel to be true is true for you.
- This pernicious ideology claims the virtue of "tolerance", but in reality seeks to supplant all other "truths" with its own.

Who's Right?


- "'This – is now MY way, where is yours?' Thus did I answer those who asked me 'the way.' For THE way – it doth not exist!" - Friedrich Nietzsche



Who's Right?

- "Reality is what we... run into when we are wrong"
- Dallas Willard



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- Respond to the following statements:
 - "Humans tend to love truth (and the pursuit of truth) when it supports what we already want to be true."
 - "People don't want to hear your opinion; they want to hear their opinion coming out of your mouth."
 - "The battle for truth is not just between the Christian and the culture, it starts between a Christian and their own mind."

Crashing Into Truth



- "Reality can be very solid, and it can hurt." - Mary Jo Sharp

Crashing Into Truth



- Think of how truth affects your daily life. Describe a time when you found out you were wrong on something you believed and took an action based on that wrong belief.
- After discovering the untruth, did you adjust your thinking? Why or why not?
- What was the consequence of your wrong thinking?

How Do We Know?

- Few people stop to ask how we know what we think we know. Instead, we go through life casually (often subconsciously) accepting the assumptions of those around us.
- When we crash into truth, it can be very jarring. "When we engage people in conversation about God, we are essentially acting as a curb for them to run into. We do so to prevent them from continuing until they smash into a granite mountain." - Mary Jo Sharp

How Do We Know?



- Name one reaction people usually give when they run into an unexpected obstacle.
- What are some of the reactions you have received when talking to people about God? (You may include reactions from Christians and non-Christians)

What is Truth?

- Without looking it up, how would you define truth?
- Our faith must be grounded in Truth, or else it is of no real consequence.
- When you begin to share your belief in God as not only real, but something that actually matters in everyday life, you may give people quite a shock. If they have believed that no God exists (or that Jesus is not God) and have lived accordingly, to be told that they may be wrong is upsetting.

What is Truth?

- For our purposes, let's say that truth is "telling it like it is."
- Why would it be absurd for someone to say, "There is no truth about the color of the grass?"
- Why would it be absurd for someone to say, "There is no truth about whether Jesus is God"?

What is Truth?

- When we say that we believe in the Truth of Jesus Christ, we mean to say that we believe this is simply the way things are.
- If our beliefs about Jesus are true, there are some obvious implications. What are some of the implications if Jesus is truly God?
- Read John 14:1-6 and John 18:28-38. How does Jesus refer to Himself?
- Why is Pilate's last question to Jesus so important?

Truth: A Stumbling Stone

- Jesus is a "stumbling stone" to those who refuse to believe (1 Peter 2:7-8, Romans 9:32-33). What does this mean?
- Why does truth matter to the Christian?
- Why should truth matter to everyone?

