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Everyone's Right, Right?

Key Theme

- God's Word must be the absolute authority.

Key Passages

- Deuteronomy 12:8; Judges 17:6, 21:25; Romans 1:18–23

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Use four questions to expose false thinking.
- Identify the ultimate standard of truth.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Write on the board, "Is it possible to know the truth?"



Studying God's Word

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Western society has been greatly influenced by the ideas of moral relativism. What was once appalling behavior has become common and even the most evil actions are justified by many people. God's Word has been abandoned as a source of truth by many, and each person does what is right in his own eyes.

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Read Deuteronomy 12:8; Judges 17:6, 21:25; Romans 1:18–23.



Activity: Four Questions

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Students will watch a video that shows how to ask questions that help identify inconsistent thinking and the need for an ultimate standard to know truth from error.

- Student Guides
- Pencils

- Four Questions video clip from the Resource DVD-ROM (17 min.)
- TV and DVD player or computer



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

What a world we find ourselves living in today. Not unlike the period of the judges where everyone did what was right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6, 21:25), many people today follow that same pattern. Whether we examine Europe, Australia, Canada, or America, there is a decline in the moral character of societies and individuals. Now, we cannot deceive ourselves into thinking that the heart of man has become any more sinful (Genesis 6:5, 8:21), but there is surely a denial of the notion that God's standard of morality is true.

Speaking of truth, what is truth? That is a most important question. If we think back to the beginning of time, Satan used that question to tempt Eve. "Did God really say?" is a question about truth. Does truth exist? How do we know what is true? Is truth the same for everyone? Does truth change over time? All of these questions should be easy to answer from a biblical perspective, but many Christians stumble over them.

It might surprise you to know that a majority of people who identify themselves as born-again Christians don't believe in absolute moral truth. In a Barna survey from 2009, only 46% of adults who called themselves born again believed that there was absolute moral truth. As you look at younger groups, the percentages of those who believe there is absolute truth fall dramatically.

When man turns away from God, he does what

is right in his own eyes. Each person decides what he thinks is true and there is no standard that everyone should be judged by. This view is known as moral relativism—morality is relative to the person or the situation. You may have heard of situational ethics where people are taught to believe that it is acceptable, possibly even honorable, to lie or steal in certain situations. Without the absolute truths found in God's Word, there is no way to judge right actions from wrong.

Scripture is clear that truth can be known only in light of the Creator. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the Son of God is the embodiment of truth. It is in Christ that we find all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3).

We must stand firm on the truth that God has revealed to us—Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). There is no other name given among men that can bring us salvation (Acts 4:12). Truth is truth whether people accept it or not. We must cling to God's Word as the absolute standard of truth.

APOLOGETICS/HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although many people would say that they believe some things are right and wrong, without an absolute standard they are just giving an opinion. People will openly admit that things are true for some people or in some situations, but not others. But they don't apply the idea consistently. What might work (in their mind) for

a certain moral situation doesn't work when it comes to other aspects of life. If someone says something like, "That might be true for you, but it is not true for me," you can turn the tables on them to help them see how absurd their thinking is.

Lead them through a scenario like the following: So if truth is different for different people, could I go to a store and select a nice laptop from the shelf and offer the clerk \$10? I believe the computer costs \$10 and the clerk thinks it costs \$1,000. Whose truth is correct? Why?

They will likely realize how inconsistent their thinking is, but that doesn't mean they won't look for a way out. They may assert that it works for money but not for moral issues or spiritual matters. Ask them, "Why?" Asking questions is a great way to help people understand how inconsistent their thinking is. Questions can also help clarify terms that people use in various ways.

The postmodern mindset elevates uncertainty to a virtue, but most people have never stopped to think about the consequences or the consistency of the way they view the world. But, we can use questions as a pry bar to open their thinking, not a hammer to break them into pieces.

Those with a postmodern way of thinking will make the claim that there are no absolute truths. Ask them, "Are you absolutely sure about that?" See, the thinking that sets God aside and denies the existence of universal truth is self-refuting. It is only by acknowl-

edging God's truth that we can make sense of the world that we live in. Our worldview must be firmly rooted in God's truths. Scripture must be our authority. We know right from wrong because God has revealed it to us. We don't have an opinion about truth; God has shown us truth in His Word.

In light of what Scripture teaches, we must proclaim the truths of the gospel and help people to see their need for the Savior. Every person has sinned. Every person will be judged. Only Christ can offer salvation from sin. Those are absolute truths that every person must acknowledge if they are to inherit eternal life. Proclaiming these truths will not earn Christians favor in the world's eyes, but they must be proclaimed. There is a war on truth and those who proclaim it, and we must be prepared to fight that battle. As we trust in Christ, we can point others to Him.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear Lord, thank you that you have given us absolute truth in your Word. Jesus, you are the way, the truth, and the life. Help me to present this lesson to my students in a way that exalts you and your Word. Work in the minds and hearts of my students to that they will understand the vital nature of the battle for truth and stand firm in their faith.



Review

Our last lesson had us looking at a big overview of the period of the judges.

? What did we learn about God's character from our lesson? *God is merciful and gracious to sinners and faithful to His people.*

God used other nations to discipline Israel when they rebelled and then He raised up deliverers to free His children from their

oppressors. The Israelites were caught in a cycle of sin and constantly allowed their thinking to be drawn away from truth and into the error of serving false gods and false ideas.

Today we are going to use that lesson as a springboard to talk about the topic of truth and to examine our standard for truth.



➤ Write on the board, "Is it possible to know the truth?"



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Deuteronomy 12:8;
Judges 17:6, 21:25

Let's read three verses of Scripture together: Deuteronomy 12:8, Judges 17:6, and Judges 21:25. *Have someone read each of the verses aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? **What common theme do you hear in these verses?** *Men tend to do what is right in their own eyes when there is no authority over them.*
- ? **When did mankind begin doing what was right in his own eyes?** *It began with Eve and then Adam as they disobeyed God and did what they wanted.*

Discover the Truth

Throughout Scripture, people disregard God as the Creator who deserves their worship. They worship idols and themselves over God. With God out of the picture, His commands can be ignored and everyone can do whatever they want.

Much of Western society today is no different than the period of the judges. Rather than heeding God's call to follow Him and learn from Him, they set up their own standards. As we interact with these people, we need to understand how they think so that we can help them understand the importance of the authority of God's Word. Without an absolute standard, there is no sin. If there is no sin, there is no need for a Savior. Ultimately, this is an issue that ties directly to the gospel.





Four Questions

MATERIALS

- Student Guides
- Four Questions video from the Resource DVD-ROM
- TV and DVD player or computer
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

You will be showing a video segment from the Demolishing Strongholds DVD Curriculum featuring Bill Jack. The clip teaches the use of four questions that will help people understand the inconsistency in their thinking and their need for an absolute standard in order to know truth.

We are going to watch a video segment that features some man-on-the-street interviews. In the interviews, Bill Jack is going to use four questions to draw out various individuals' views on truth. There is a place in your Student Guide to record the four questions and then we will discuss the ideas after the video.

Play the video, about 17 minutes.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

- ? By using these questions, we are trying to get beyond mere opinion and experience.

We are dealing with more than chocolate or vanilla; PC or Mac; paper or plastic.

- ? **Did everybody get the questions written down?** *Ensure that everyone has the four questions written down: 1) What do you mean by . . . ? 2) How do you know? 3) What difference does that make in your life? 4) What if you are wrong?*

- ? **Is it important that you state the questions exactly as they are written here? What are some other ways you could ask some of these questions?** *The exact form of the question is not important. They can be applied to different circumstances in different ways.*

- ? **What is the purpose for using these questions?** *The purpose is not to win an argument, but rather to help a person think through the consequences of their beliefs. Many people do not know why they believe what they believe, or how their beliefs influence their actions. These questions are a tool to help people understand their own worldviews, and to open the door to share the gospel.*

- ? **Why are these questions usable in any situation?** *They aren't based on any topic, but they are directed at the way someone thinks. So, they are useful for discussions about creation/evolution, abortion, social justice, or any other moral issue that can lead to a discussion of the gospel.*

? **What is the point of question 1?** *We are trying to make sure that we know what the person is talking about and that we don't assume we mean the same things. People often make up their own definitions for words, especially in moral categories.*

? **What are some other ways that we could ask question 2?** *The point of the question is to determine what they base their thinking on—what is their authority. For specific topics, you could ask, "What book would you find that information in?" In generic cases you could ask, "Who did you hear that from?" or "How do you know you can trust that source?"*

? **Question 3 is basically asking how that influences the choices they make in life. Why is this an important question when talking about moral issues?** *It helps people to see the consequences of their thoughts. Ideas have consequences, and we have to help people understand those consequences.*

Question 4 is based on what is called "Pascal's Wager." While we should not base our salvation on a philosophical wager, it can indeed be a helpful tool to call people to think about eternity and the consequences of their actions.

? **How does question 4 offer an opportunity to talk directly about eternal things?** *If their worldview is wrong and God is real, they face His just*

judgment. This is an excellent way to transition into the eternal consequences of living in sin and rejecting Christ.

? **If we show people how their worldview is inconsistent or incoherent using these questions, but leave them without any hope, we have only been cruel to them. What must we always leave people with as we discuss these issues?** *We must always point them to the hope that is found in Christ alone! Their sins can be forgiven by the blood of Christ and we have the privilege of calling them to trust in Him and repent of their sin.*

? **What struck you about the answers given by these college students?** *Discuss various answers and spend some time asking about other questions the students are not sure how to answer.*

? **How does Romans 1:18–23 help us to understand the answers we heard from the students in this video?** *They want to make up their own truth even if they know the basic concepts of God's judgment and punishment. They are suppressing the truth in unrighteousness even though they can see from the creation that there is a God. They have become foolish in their wisdom and philosophizing about a world without God. They are seeking to establish their own standard apart from God. Ultimately, they are fashioning a god in their own image and making a god that they are comfortable with.*



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Since the events in the Garden of Eden, mankind has been pursuing autonomy—independence from God. Man has rejected God and His revelation, and turned to his own wisdom and philosophy. Each person does what is right in his or her own eyes. There is no longer an unchanging standard of truth or morality.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ? How do you see yourself using these questions as you interact with people around you? *Discuss various answers.*
- ? Regardless of the situation or moral issue we find ourselves facing, to what do we always need to appeal in order to know the truth? *We must always look to the truths of Scripture. It has wisdom for every issue that we face.*
- ? As we talk with people about various issues, are we battling the people or the ideas? *We must remember that unsaved people are blind to spiritual truths (2 Corinthians 4:3–5) and that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against spiritual powers influencing them (Ephesians 6:12). We are to demolish arguments and ideas (2 Corinthians 10:5), not people. We must demonstrate love to the people we are interacting with and remember that they are not the enemy, but potential brothers and sisters in Christ.*
- ? What kind of reactions do you expect to receive if you insist that there is absolute truth regarding moral issues (e.g., homosexuality, lying, cheating, stealing, adultery, abortion, etc.) and that the Bible contains those truths? *We can expect to face some degree of persecution for standing on the truth of God's Word.*
- ? Are you absolutely convinced that absolute truth exists and that there is actual right and wrong in every situation? *Some students in your class might need assurance of these things as they do not fully understand what the Bible teaches.*



MEMORY VERSE

Joshua 1:8–9 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Praise God for the absolute truth of His Word.
- Thank God for sending the Holy Spirit to empower us to proclaim His truths.
- Ask God for wisdom in helping people understand their need for a Savior.