

DAWN TREADER

EQUIPPING FAMILIES FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

A KEEPING THE FAITH RESOURCE

ISSUE 2.6



The *Dawn Treader* has a challenge to offer this month: What is Truth? This newsletter will investigate the nature of Truth, what the Bible means by Truth, and why Jesus came to “bring the Truth” (John 18:37).

Dawn Treader Moments

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: WHAT IS TRUTH?

Dawn Treader Moments are purpose-driven opportunities to engage children in important topics. We offer one key question per week, the answers to which parents can then explore with their children throughout the week.

It's probably quite significant that the question of truth was raised in the Bible by Pontius Pilate, a Roman official who doubtless was very well off materially and politically. Despite the material wealth and political rights we possess in abundance in the Western world today, many people feel a great deal of emptiness and meaninglessness in their lives, due to a lack of understanding of the nature of truth. The desire to know the truth is part of our God-given human nature, and it is important to properly foster its growth in our children. *For each week, ask the question over an unhurried meal. Let the children think about it and then offer their own answers. The children should talk more than the parents. Throughout the week, offer the different reasons highlighted and let the children discuss them. (Parents, read through the relevant Bible passages in advance.) Challenge the children to look up other verses addressing the question. Do the same for the following questions each week for the month.*

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Resource of the Month

The Bible Project — Free short-form animated videos about the biblical story

The Bible Project offers free short-form, fully animated videos on the internet to make the biblical story accessible to everyone, everywhere. These videos have proven to



be popular with families, kids, high school and college students, and adults. The videos, typically 5 to 8 minutes long, explore the Bible's

unified story by focusing on its overarching themes and individual books. The videos and related resources are available at: <https://jointhebibleproject.com/resources>

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: WHAT IS TRUTH?

Week One: What is the difference between truth and falsehood? (Joshua 24:14, Hosea 4:1-6, Romans 1:18-21)

- Truth is whatever is in accordance with the way in which God created the world; falsehood is anything that goes against God's reality, even if it still "exists" in a sense, in this fallen world.
- Truth is more than just facts and appearances: truth is knowledge of what is right in God's sight, rather than man's alone.
- Human beings have been created to seek truth, but we cannot know all truth in ourselves, and so we need God to lead us to the Truth; or we can easily be led astray by falsehood.
- The devil is the "father of lies" (John 8:44), and he is behind every lie circulated in the world today; he can only be defeated by God's Truth.

Week Two: How can we know the difference between truth and falsehood in the world? (Proverbs 12:19, 1 John 4:1-5:20)

- Truth is always good — even when it is sometimes painful to discover or tell the truth, the ultimate result leads to increased righteousness and trust; falsehood, even when we grow accustomed to it, ultimately destroys.
- Truth shows itself in acts of love.
- The truth stretches our understanding: it frequently takes us some time to discover it behind the tangle of false agendas that surround us in our worldly circumstances — politically, socially, and materially.
- Just because something is commonly accepted as "fact" does not make it true: it must be tested by the only Truth of God's Word in order to discern whether it is in fact true or false.

Week Three: What does the Bible mean by "truth"? (Exodus 34:6, Psalm 85:7-13, Daniel 10:21, John 14:6 and 17:17)

- Truth, in Scripture, is one of the ways of describing Who God is — just as He is Love or Wisdom or every other good thing; so coming to understand Truth requires that we come to know God, not just "facts" of experience.
- Jesus came to bring the truth — He is the Truth.
- Truth must be exercised in love and righteousness — all these good things are bound up together, because they are all part of God's Nature and shown to us by Him.
- The ultimate Truth is therefore God Himself; while we may know the truth about other things without knowing God, it is only a partial knowledge of Truth until we know and acknowledge Him as the source and foundation of all Truth.

Week Four: How can we know and apply truth practically? (John 8:31-32, 16:7-13, and 18:37-38)

- As Pilate's (unanswered) question shows, gradually coming to understand what the Truth is in each situation is not a one-time, simple matter; we have to turn to God for guidance in finding what the truth is for dealing with any new, unknown situation.
- But the stronger we grow in His faith and wisdom granted to us, the more we will recognize the Truth when we see it working out in our world.
- Truth has a very practical aspect: knowing what is true or false according to God's reality helps us to determine what is right or wrong for us to do.
- Truth helps us evaluate what we are doing in light of the ultimate purpose and outcome of all creation.

Apologist Polly Conversation Corner (CONT'D)

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHAT IS TRUTH?

Polly: Morning, Honoria. Have you got a minute to talk?

Honoria: Sure, Polly. How are you doing? I haven't seen you since you stopped coming to rehearsals. Have you quit the play?

Pol: Yes, how did you guess?

Hon: Well, it just seemed like the sort of thing you would do; no offense, but you can be such a stickler on what you believe is right or wrong behavior!

Pol: If you believe in right and wrong at all, I think it's a pretty good thing to be a stickler about it.

Hon: Oh, of course, Polly. I've always admired you for the way you stick to your convictions—but you can't take the trouble to lay down the rules for the rest of the world, now can you? The part you had in the play didn't require you to do anything morally questionable, even if some of the other characters did. And you can't decide for them what's right and wrong for them, right?

Pol: Not if "right and wrong" are specific to the individual. But you see, I don't think that. I believe in absolute truth.

Hon: Oh, what does that have anything to do with it? Of course I believe that facts are unchangeable, but people's views and morals aren't.

Pol: Truth is more than mere "facts," Honoria. And even if it wasn't, one fact to deal with is the existence of a standard by which people's changeable views and morals are judged. Without that, we couldn't have a right and wrong at all.

Hon: Wait a moment, Polly. You're going a little too fast for me. How does the issue of right and wrong connect with the idea of absolute truth?

Pol: Same way everything else does. There has to be an acknowledgment of truth before we can acknowledge a rule. As C.S. Lewis stated, if there truly is a "Moral Law, or Law of Human Nature ... this Rule of Right and Wrong ... or whatever you call it, ... must somehow or other be a real thing — a thing which is really there, not made up by ourselves ... a real law which none of us made, but which we find pressing on us."¹ If right and wrong are just our own decisions, there's no law and no truth: it's all a matter of personal choice. But if there is an Absolute Truth out there, then it applies to right and wrong as well as every other matter in the universe.

Hon: But how can you be so sure truth applies in every instance? Maybe — I'm not saying it is, but that it could be the case — maybe truth is only applied selectively, to some areas of life and not others?

Pol: That's not an uncommon argument, though it's rarely stated so honestly, Honoria. The trouble is, that if there is no absolute truth to guide every area of life, we can't be sure what areas it does apply to and what areas it doesn't. And if we want to say that truth is flexible in moral areas, then we compromise our ability to even talk about it or form any sensible judgments, even in our own opinions.



QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHAT IS TRUTH?

Hon: For example?

Pol: Well, as C.S. Lewis said: “But how had I got this idea of *just* and *unjust*? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing the universe with when I called it unjust? ... the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my fancies ... I was forced to assume that one part of reality — namely my idea of justice — was full of sense ... If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning.”² Unless there is some absolute rule, some framework or guideline by which everything else is measured, we could never have arrived at the definitions “right” and “wrong.” So even people who say there’s only “right for you” and “right for me,” by their very use of the terminology, commit themselves to believing in an absolute defining rule of right and wrong. And if we must admit it exists, there’s no point in not trying to live by it — it will ultimately exact its price from us later on. Truth always catches up with us.



Hon: I guess so. But if that’s true, isn’t it still, well, rather arrogant for us to tell other people what is true and what isn’t? I mean, if there is an absolute truth, it’s available to everybody, and it’s each individual’s responsibility to find it for themselves.

Pol: You’re absolutely right — up to a point. Certainly everyone is responsible for making their own moral decisions, and you can’t force other people to do the right thing, especially since we are all likely to make mistakes. It would be very arrogant to claim to be so clever as to discover the Truth on one’s own — but it’s not arrogant to claim to *know* the Truth.

Hon: What do you mean?

Pol: Jesus is the Truth — “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). Only He can give it to each individual; but if one individual already knows the truth through Jesus, why shouldn’t they tell someone else about it? Saying that everybody has to discover the Truth of the Gospel on their own is like saying everybody has to discover the law of gravity or the second law of thermodynamics on their own. We learn a lot of truths from people who know them already. No one but God has all the Truth, which is why each of us is responsible for evaluating what we know and have learned by His Word, to determine what is in fact true and what is false. I hope I would never be so arrogant as to expect people to accept faith in Christ on my word alone, as though I were some perfect, infallible know-it-all. But there is nothing arrogant in saying to someone else: “Actually, I have some experience in this and know this is true; if you’d like to check it out for yourself, here’s where you can look for confirmation.” People have to accept truth on others’ testimony very often — like any jury in a court of law. But it is each individual’s own responsibility to check that the testimony we have been given is actually true.

Hon: But how on earth can we know that?

Pol: By God’s Word and His Holy Spirit in us: “hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:6).

Ask your children: *What do you think about Polly’s answers to Honoria’s questions? Do you have any other questions of your own that this dialogue has brought up for you? Challenge them to think up more responses they could give, if someone asked them a question like Honoria’s.*

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 50th Anniversary ed. (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2002), p. 20

² *Ibid.* pp. 38-39

Prayer of the Month

THE LIGHT OF GOD'S TRUTH

The prayer for this month is a very old one and makes the connection between our human desire for Truth and our knowledge of God as His followers. The language of the prayer has been slightly updated, but the meaning is the same.

Almighty God,

We pray that You will show the Light of Your Truth to all
those who live in falsehood,
In order that they may return into Your Way
of righteousness,
And grant to all of us who belong to the fellowship of Your
Son Jesus Christ,
That we may avoid all the things that go against our faith,
And follow all the things that are in accordance
with its Truth,
Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen



Activity of the Month

HONEST TRUE



For this month, our activity is all about the connection between truth and trust in relationships. How often do we ask others to promise, and believe

promises without any need for further "proof," because we know we can trust and love them? Find a good time to get together as a family and discuss how much we must trust others in order to find out the truth, in various scenarios. Which comes first: knowing something is the truth or trusting someone is an honest person? Play-act out how the same situation could result in either in discovering the truth (a good, righteous outcome) or being betrayed by falsehood (an evil result), depending who and whether we decide to trust in such a situation. Lead the discussion to how all Truth rests in knowing and trusting in Christ, Who will never betray our trust and therefore guarantees us access to real Truth.



What is Keeping the Faith? The Keeping the Faith program is a unique study-plus-fellowship experience featuring the Aslan Academy Small Group model centered around the Keeping the Faith guidebook. It is designed to equip parents, grandparents and other caring adults for intentional discipleship of their children and teens. Dawn Treader is a monthly newsletter filled with activities and ideas geared to help you to disciple the children in your lives from preschool through the teen years. To learn more about the program, go to: www.cslewisinstitute.org/KTFResources