

# Truth: What It Is and Why We Can Know It

*Rick Wade explores truth from a biblical and philosophical perspective. Despite what many believe, it IS possible to know truth because of the role of Jesus Christ as creator and revealer of truth.*

## The Loss of Confidence



Did you see the movie *City of Angels*? Nicholas Cage plays an angel named Seth who has taken a special interest in a surgeon named Maggie, played by Meg Ryan. Maggie's lost a patient on the operating table, and she is very upset about it. Seth meets her in a hallway in the hospital, and gets her to talk about the loss. Here is a snippet of the conversation:

**Maggie:** I lost a patient.

**Seth:** You did everything you could.

**Maggie:** I was holding his heart in my hand when he died.

**Seth:** He wasn't alone.

**Maggie:** Yes, he was.

**Seth:** People die.

**Maggie:** Not on my table.

**Seth:** People die when their bodies give out.

**Maggie:** It's my job to keep their bodies from giving out. Or

what am I doing here?

**Seth:** It wasn't your fault, Maggie.

**Maggie:** I wanted him to live.

**Seth:** He *is* living. Just not the way you think.

**Maggie:** I don't believe in that.

**Seth:** Some things are true whether you believe in 'em or not. [\[1\]](#)

What did he say?! "Some things are true whether you believe in 'em or not"?? Are you kidding?!? That's crazy talk these days! I have a right to my own opinion, and if I don't believe it, if it's not my opinion, it's not true . . . for me, anyway.

The meaning of *truth* has changed in recent decades. Whereas once it meant statements about reality, today it often means what works or what is meaningful to me. This kind of language is heard primarily in the context of religion and morality. We have lost confidence in our ability to know what reality *is*. So much emphasis has been put on knowledge through sense experience that anything outside the boundaries of the senses is considered unknowable. Moral and religious discussions frequently end with, "Well, that's *your* opinion," or the more colorful, "Opinions are like belly buttons. Everyone has one." It's assumed that opinions can't be universally, objectively true or false. Each person is his or her own authority over what is true. Truth is a personal possession which is why people get so offended when challenged. A challenge is taken personally. "This is *my* truth. Don't touch it!" Strong challenges are even taken as a sign of disrespect.

What does it mean when truth is lost? In philosophy, the result is skepticism or pragmatism. In society in general, one sees a degeneration from skepticism to hypocrisy to cynicism. First we say no one can know what is true—that's skepticism.

Then someone says “I have the truth” but then speaks or acts in a way not in keeping with that “truth” (if truth is uncertain, it can change with my moods)—that’s hypocrisy. Then we stop trusting each other—that’s cynicism. In politics, power and image are what count. In matters of morality, there is no standard above us; social consensus is the best we can hope for, or “human solidarity,” according to Christopher Hitchens. Justice has no sure footing. Might becomes right.

[Elsewhere I have written](#) that we don’t have to give in either to the demand for absolute certainty or to the skepticism of our day.[{2}](#) We can be confident in our ability to know truth even though not exhaustively. In this article I want to look at the nature and ground of truth, for these are of utmost importance in regard to the question of reliable knowledge.

## **Truth: The Significance of Its Loss**

Let’s look more closely at what it means to lose confidence in knowing truth. One problem is that we become closed up in our individual shells with each of us having his or her own truth. Theologian Roger Nicole notes that the loss of truth means the loss of meaning in language; if we don’t know whether a proposition means what it seems to mean or its opposite, then language is impotent to convey reliable knowledge. And we get caught up in contradictions. As Nicole wrote, those who deny objective validity “presuppose such validity at least for their denial!”[{3}](#)

Problems are also created in the realm of morality. Historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto wrote this:

*The retreat from truth is one of the great dramatic, untold stories of history. . . . For professional academics in the affected disciplines, to have grown indifferent to truth is an extraordinary reversal of traditional obligations; it is like physicians renouncing the obligation to sustain life or theologians losing interest in God—developments, formerly*

*unthinkable, which now loom as truth diminishes. The trashing of truth began as an academic vice, but the debris is now scattered all over society. It is spread through classroom programmes, . . . In a society of concessions to rival viewpoints, in which citizens hesitate to demand what is true and denounce what is false, it becomes impossible to defend the traditional moral distinction between right and wrong, which are relativized in turn. Unless it is true, what status is left for a statement like 'X is wrong' where X is, say, adultery, infanticide, euthanasia, drug-dealing, Nazism, paedophilia, sadism or any other wickedness due, in today's climate, for relativization into the ranks of the acceptable? It becomes, like everything else in western society today, a matter of opinion; and we are left with no moral basis for encoding some opinions rather than others, except the tyranny of the majority.* [\[4\]](#)

One of the worst problems for a well-ordered society is cynicism. First we say there's no truth. But then we hypocritically push our views on others as though we have the truth. Then people stop trusting each other. "You say there are no fixed truths, but then you push your claims on me." The result is cynicism.

Some people claim that truth claims are suspect because the words we use are changeable; they can't carry fixed, eternal truths. If we don't think it's possible that words convey truth, then words lose their objective meaning, and we start giving them our *own* meanings.

The loss of confidence in knowing truth is significant for Christians, too, who, without realizing it, adopt similar patterns of thought. When such confidence in knowing truth is weakened, one cannot have confidence that the Bible is the true Word of God. Its authority in the individual's life is weakened because what it says becomes questionable. Evangelism becomes a matter of sharing one's own religious preferences,

rather than delivering God's authoritative Word. Bible study becomes a sharing of opinions with none being normative. Each has his or her own opinion and no one is supposed to say a given opinion is wrong.

## Truth in Scripture

What is this "truth" thing we talk so much about? My dictionary has such definitions as genuineness, reality, correctness, and statements which accord with reality.[{5}](#) Truth can also be a characteristic of persons and things. Someone or some thing that is true is genuine or in keeping with his or its nature. And truth can refer to quality of conduct. The Bible speaks of people doing the truth rather than doing evil (cf. Nah. 9:33; Jn. 3:20, 21).[{6}](#)

To help in considering all these matters, let's look at truth as understood in Scripture, and then at truth considered in philosophical terms.

What does the Bible teach about truth?

In the Old Testament, the word most often translated *true*, *truth*, or *truly* is *'emet* or a cognate.[{7}](#) This word is also translated "faithfulness." Let's consider the matter of faithfulness first.

For the Israelites, Yahweh was "the God in whose word and work one could place complete confidence."[{8}](#) For example, God said through Zechariah: "I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God" (8:8). Nehemiah said to God: "You have acted faithfully, while we did wrong" (9:33). "The works of his hand are faithful and just," said the Psalmist; "all his precepts are trustworthy" (111:7).

*'Emet* also means truth as over against falsehood as when Joseph tested his brothers to see if they were telling the truth (Gen. 42:16), and when the Israelites were warned to

test accusations that people were worshiping other gods to see if they were true (Deut. 13:14). Commenting on Ps. 43:3—"Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me"—theologian Anthony Thiselton says that "Truth enables [the writer] to escape from the dark, and to see things for what they are." [{9}](#)

We shouldn't conclude by these two uses of the word that on any given occasion "truth" always means *both* faithfulness *and* the opposite of falsehood. However, there is a connection between the two. Theologian Anthony Thiselton says the connection depends "on the fact that when God or man is said to act faithfully, often this means that his word and his deed are one. He has acted faithfully in accordance with his spoken word. Hence the believer may lean his whole weight confidently on God, and find him faithful." [{10}](#)

Thus, in the Old Testament, truth is a matter of both words and deeds. "Men express their respect for truth not in abstract theory, but in their daily witness to their neighbour and their verbal and commercial transactions," Thiselton says. [{11}](#)

In the New Testament, there is an increased focus on truth as conformity to reality and as opposed to falsehood. The Greek word *alētheia* means, literally, "not hidden." When Peter was sprung from prison by an angel, he didn't know if it was real (or true) or a dream (Acts 12:9). John the Baptist bore witness to the truth (Jn. 5:33). Jesus used the phrase "I tell you in truth" four times to emphasize the correctness of what he was about to say (Lk. 4:25; 9:27; 12:44; 21:3). When Jesus said "I *am* the truth," (Jn. 14:6), He was identifying Himself with what is ultimately and finally real.

Truth in the New Testament isn't disconnected from how we live, however. We are to walk in the truth (2 Jn. 4; 2 Pet. 2:22), and we are to obey the truth (Gal. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:22).

One mustn't oversimplify scriptural teaching on truth.

However, it's safe to say that truth in the Bible means having the correct understanding of the way things really are, and living in accordance with this understanding.

## Truth Considered Philosophically

Let's look at truth now from a philosophical perspective, first as what is real, and then as true statements. This is important, because these are the terms according to which non-Christians think about the matter.

First, truth is a characteristic of reality. In short, if something is real, it is true. Or put philosophically, if something "participates in being," it is true. When we say that the God of the Bible is the true God, we mean He really exists and really is God!

By analogy, we might ask if a plant we see in a room is a true or real plant. We want to know if it is organic, and not plastic or fabric. If we say a *person* has exhibited true love, we're saying the person's actions weren't motivated by anything other than concern for the object of the person's love.

Second, truth is a characteristic of accurate statements or propositions. Sentences which express true meanings convey truth. This is what we typically think of when we speak of truth. [\[12\]](#)

We often divide truth in this sense into the categories of *objective* and *subjective*. When we speak of objective truth, we mean that a statement truly reflects what is real, or really the case, apart from ourselves as knowers. And whether we believe it or not. Such truth is public; others can verify it. When we speak of *subjective* truth, we're speaking of truth that comes from us individually, where we ourselves are the only authority. For example, "My leg hurts" is subjective in the sense that I am the sole authority. Or if I claim that

“French vanilla ice cream is the best tasting kind there is,” that is a subjective truth claim.”

Both truth as what’s real and truth as objectively true statements are in crisis today. First, postmodernists say we can’t know what’s ultimately real. In academia this means there is no framework for integrating the various areas of study. In everyday life it results in fractured lives as we find ourselves having to conform to different situations without any integrating structure. French sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard had this to say about postmodernism: “[Postmodernism] has deconstructed its entire universe. So all that are left are pieces. All that remains to be done is to play with the pieces. Playing with the pieces—that is postmodern.”[{13}](#)

We can rearrange the pieces in a number of different ways, but there is, as it were, no picture on the front of the puzzle box to guide us.[{14}](#) Such a view of truth leaves one unwilling, or unable really, to say what is true about anything of importance, and, as a result, forces one into the rather mindless tolerance demanded today. Dorothy Sayers had this to say about such “tolerance”:

*In the world it calls itself Tolerance; but in hell it is called Despair. It is the accomplice of the other sins and their worst punishment. It is the sin which believes nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, loves nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and only remains alive because there is nothing it would die for.*[{15}](#)

Second, although truth as true statements is still acknowledged today, some important matters are considered subjective which should be acknowledged as objective, such as statements about God and morality. Christians believe we can know what is ultimately and objectively real and true because



the One who *is* ultimately real and true, God, has revealed Himself to us.

## A Foundation for Knowledge of Truth

Now we finally get to the key idea of this article.

Christians claim that they have the truth, a claim that is met with scorn. We are tempted to point to the Bible as our basis for the claim, but critics claim that we're jumping the gun. If no one can have confidence in knowing truth, then what good is the Bible? It isn't the *source* that's the question; not yet anyway. It's the very *possibility* of knowing truth that is questioned. How are truth and the possibility of knowing it even possible?

In a nutshell, we have what philosophical naturalism has given up: we have a metaphysical basis for knowing truth, a basis in what is.

You see, for the naturalist, there is nothing fixed behind the changing world. Three things need to be the case about the world for us to know truth: that it is real; that it is rational; and that there is something fixed behind it. *And* we need to be able to connect with what is around us with our senses and our reason.

Here's the key point: *Knowledge of truth is possible because of the creating and revealing work of the Logos of God, Jesus Christ.* I'll return to this below.

It is not enough that Christians to simply throw their hands up in despair over this. We have a message that is true for all people. But it may not do to just point to the Bible as our source for true beliefs if the very possibility of knowing any enduring truth is in doubt. Upon what basis can we believe we can really know truth?

To have true knowledge of the world outside our own minds, there has to be a solid connection between our thoughts and the world. The world has to be rational, and we have to have the proper sensory and mental apparatus necessary to comprehend it. Christianity provides such a connection between our minds and reality outside us in the person of the *Logos* of God.

“In the beginning was the Word,” John wrote, the *Logos* (John 1:1; cf. Rev. 19:13). In Greek philosophy, *logos* was the impersonal principle of cosmic reason which was thought to give order and intelligibility to the world. John’s *Logos*, however, is not impersonal; a Person, not a principle. The *Logos*—Jesus of Nazareth—is the intelligent expression of God or the Word of God (Jn. 1:1,14; Rev. 19:13). He is not secondary to God, but is God.

The significance of this for the possibility of knowing truth is this: knowledge is possible because of the creating and revealing work of the *Logos*. Remember that Jesus, the *Logos*, is not only the One who reveals God to us, but is also the creator of the universe (Jn.1:3; Col.1:16,17; Heb.1:2). Because the universe came from a rational Being, the universe is rational. Further, there is no hint in Scripture that the world is an illusion; it is just what it appears to be: real. And because we’re made in God’s image, we’re rational beings who can know the universe.[{16}](#) Also, we can perceive the world around us because we were created with the sensory apparatus to perceive it.

But this is just knowledge of our world. What about knowledge of God? Not only has the *Logos* created us with the ability to know the world, He has also revealed Himself in a rational and even observable way. He is, as Carl Henry put it, “the God Who speaks and shows.”[{17}](#)

Because of all this, it is not arrogance that is behind the Christian claim that truth can be known. We claim it because

we have a basis for it: Jesus of Nazareth, the *Logos* of God, the Creator, has made knowledge of truth possible, knowledge of this world *and* of God. Modern philosophy and theology denied God's ability to reveal Himself to us in any significant way. But such ideas diminish God Himself. He made us to know His world. He gave us sense organs to know the empirical world; He gave us rational minds to engage in logical and mathematical reasoning and to engage in the many, many deductions we make every day of our lives. He also made us to know Him, and He revealed Himself to us through a variety of ways.

It's no wonder that the naturalistic philosophy of our time is incapable of having confidence in knowing truth. It has lost a metaphysical ground for truth. Jesus of Nazareth is not only our source of salvation; He is also the Creator. And because of this, we can have confidence in our ability to know truth in general and truth about God in particular.

## Notes

1. *City of Angels*, DVD, directed by Brad Silberling (Warner Home Video, 1998).
2. Rick Wade, "Confident Belief," Probe Ministries, 2001, [www.probe.org/confident-belief/](http://www.probe.org/confident-belief/).
3. Roger Nicole, "The Biblical Concept of Truth," in D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *Scripture and Truth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 287.
4. Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Truth: A History and Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 165-66.
5. *Webster's New World College Dictionary*, 4th ed, s.v., "true."
6. John V. Dahms, "The Nature of Truth," *JETS* 28/4 (December, 1985), 455-465. This is parallel to Carnell's triad of

ontological truth, propositional truth, and truth as personal rectitude. See Edward John Carnell, *Christian Commitment: An Apologetic* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1957), 14-17.

7. Nicole, 288. I am indebted to Nicole's and Thiselton's (cf. note 8 below) studies for much of what follows.

8. Colin Brown, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978); s.v. "Truth" by A. C. Thiselton, III.877, quoting Alfred Jepsen, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, I:313.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. See Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, Vol. 5, *God Who Stands and Stays, Part One* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1982), 336.

13. Jean Baudrillard, quoted in Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove, Ill.: 2000), 169.

14. See Groothuis, 170.

15. Dorothy Sayers, *Christian Letters to a Post-Christian World* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1969), 4; quoted in Groothuis, 170.

16. As Henry says, "As creative, the Word of God is the ground of all existence; as revelatory, it is the ground of all human knowledge." (GRA, 5:334) Also, "The Logos is the creative Word whereby God fashioned and preserves the universe. He is the light of the understanding, the Reason that enables intelligible creatures to comprehend the truth." (GRA 3:212).

17. The subtitle to Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, Vol.

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# **How I Know Christianity Is True – A Defense of the Gospel**

*Dr. Zukeran presents five major reasons to believe Christianity is the truth. He begins with the Christian worldview and goes on to the authority of the Bible, Jesus' confirmation of His claims to be God, the resurrection of Jesus, and Pat's personal experience as a follower of Jesus Christ.*

## **Because Christianity Teaches the Correct Worldview**

Among all the religions and philosophies, how do we know Christianity is true? While there are many ways to address the question, let's begin by saying that Christianity makes sense of the world around us. In other words, it presents the most correct worldview based on the world in which we live. There are three worldviews that lie at the foundation of all religions and philosophies: theism, naturalism, and pantheism. Theism teaches there is a personal God who created the universe. Naturalism teaches there is no divine being and that the universe is the result of time and chance. Pantheism teaches that the universe is eternal and that the divine is an impersonal force made up of all things. All three worldviews cannot be true at the same time and if one of them is true,

the other two must be false.

The evidence from our study of the universe points to theism. Unfortunately, time will allow me to go over only three lines of evidence.

The first is the argument from first cause or the cosmological argument, which states if something exists, it must have either come from something else, come from nothing, or have always existed. What is the most reasonable conclusion of the three for the existence of the universe? Scientists confirm that the universe has a beginning. Many call this the "big bang." Since the universe assuredly has a beginning, the worldview of pantheism bears the burden of proof. Second, to say the universe comes from nothing goes against responsible scientific inquiry and human logic. For example, any invention in human history is not brought about from nothing. It comes from materials and ingenuity that existed before its inception. Therefore, the naturalist worldview has no logical ground to stand on. The best conclusion is that the universe is the result of a cause greater than itself. That cause is God.

Second, we have the proof of design or the teleological argument. Complexity and design point to a designer. For example, although all the parts of a watch are found on the earth, no one would assume it evolved as the result of natural, unguided actions of chance. Why would we conclude otherwise when we look at the human brain or the human anatomy, which is much more complex? The more we discover about the universe and nature, the more we realize how unlikely it is that this could have all happened by accident. Therefore, the burden of proof is on the worldviews of naturalism and pantheism, which hold to a position of evolution.

Finally we have the moral argument. All people have a sense of right and wrong. In every culture, adultery, murder, and

stealing are wrong. Where does that universal sense of right and wrong come from? A moral law code requires a moral Lawgiver who is personal and reflects the moral law in His character. Since we are made in God's image, we reflect His moral law. C.S. Lewis stated, "As an atheist my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. 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 this universe with when I called it unjust?"[\[1\]](#) Naturalists and pantheists have difficulty accounting for the human conscience.

For these reasons, theism is the only possible worldview that can remain true to scientific and philosophical scrutiny.[\[2\]](#)

## **Because the Bible is God's Word**

Among all the books written by man, none have the credentials that equal the Bible. The second evidence for Christianity is the Bible, which proves itself to be true and divinely inspired.

The Bible proves itself to be true because it is a historically accurate document. Thousands of archaeological discoveries confirm its historical accuracy. Numerous civilizations, rulers, and events once thought legendary by the skeptics have been confirmed by archaeology. Even miraculous geographic events in Sodom and Gomorrah, Jericho, and Sennachareb's defeat in the 7th century B.C. have passed the test of archaeological scrutiny.

Another proof of the Bible's truth is in historical records outside the Bible. Numerous historical records from ancient civilizations confirm the historicity of the biblical accounts. Dr. William Albright, who is still respected as probably the foremost authority in Middle Eastern archaeology, said this about the Bible: "There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the

Old Testament.”{3} The historical evidence upholds the premise that if an ancient historical work proves to be accurate again and again in its detail, we can be confident that it is accurate on the material we cannot confirm externally.

The Bible’s divine inspiration is attested to in its unity. Although the Bible is written over a 1500 year period, written by over forty different authors from different backgrounds, and covers a host of controversial subjects, it maintains a unified theme and it does not contradict itself in principle from beginning to end. This indicates that a divine author supervised the entire process and guided each writer.

Second, we have the remarkable record of prophecy. Hundreds of detailed prophecies are written years before the event takes place. For example the prophet Ezekiel in chapter 26 describes accurately how the city of Tyre will be destroyed years before it occurs. Daniel predicts the empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Prophecy shows the divine hand of God because only an eternal being could have inspired the writers to leave such a legacy.

Finally, the Bible answers the major questions all belief systems must answer. Where did we come from? What is the nature of the divine? What is our relationship to the divine? What is the nature of man? How do we explain the human predicament? What is the answer to the human predicament? What happens after death? And how do we explain evil? Any system that does not answer these questions is an incomplete system. The Bible gives the most complete and accurate answers to the truly important questions of human existence.

No other book ever written has these credentials. A book written by God would have the fingerprints of God all over it. The Bible alone has His fingerprints.{4}



# Because Jesus Confirmed His Claims

How do I know Christianity is true? Another source of confirmation comes from the person of Jesus Christ. Among all men who ever lived, Jesus stands apart from each one. Throughout the gospels, Jesus claimed Himself to be God. He claimed to have authority over the law, creation, sin, and death. John 10:30-33 states,

“‘I and the Father are one.’ Again the Jews picked up stones to stone Him but Jesus said to them, ‘I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?’ The leaders replied, ‘We are not stoning you for any of these but for blasphemy because you a mere man, claim to be God.’”

The Jewish enemies of Christ clearly understood His claims and it is for this reason they killed Him. His disciples also understood His claim and presented it in their message. Not only did He make an extraordinary claim; Jesus confirmed it. There are numerous ways in which Christ proved His claims. I will cover only four.

The first confirmation of Jesus' claims is His sinless life. Jesus' most intimate companions stated He committed no sin that He needed to repent of. Paul writes of Christ, “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Cor. 5:21) It would have been hypocritical of Jesus if He had indeed sinned and never repented, for He taught all men this principle. Even His enemies could find no sin in Him. Pontius Pilate, after examining Jesus, stated to the angry mob, “I find no basis for a charge against him.” The Bible declares God is holy and Jesus showed Himself to be holy as well.

The second confirmation is the impact of Christ on mankind. More schools and colleges have been built in the name of Christ than any other man. More hospitals and orphanages are

built in the name of Christ than any other person. More literature and music are written about Christ than any other person. More laws and ethical codes are built on His teachings than any other man. He has had a tremendous impact on every area of culture like no one else.

The third confirmation is the miracles He performed. God's existence makes it reasonable to assume He would use miracles to confirm His message and messenger. Miracles are a powerful confirmation because it authenticates the creator's authority over His creation. Christ's miracles over nature, sickness, spiritual forces, sin, and death displayed this authority over every realm of creation.

The fourth confirmation is the fulfilled prophecies. Before He set foot on the earth, there were over seventy specific prophecies made by the Old Testament writers about the Messiah. The prophecies included the city of birth, His method of execution, His betrayal, the date of His death, etc. Jesus fulfilled each of these. The probability of His fulfilling just eight of these by chance is very close to a mathematical zero.

No one has both made the claims of Christ and confirmed them, as He did. His life is another proof Christianity is true. [\[5\]](#)

## **Because of the Resurrection**

Jesus further confirmed His claims to be God by rising from the dead. Jesus openly proclaimed that as God He had authority over life and death. He states in John 11:25, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and he who believes in me will never die." The resurrection is proof that His claim is true.

Many skeptics have presented alternative theories to the resurrection. Some of the most famous include: the theory that the disciples stole the body, the disciples went to the wrong

tomb, the disciples hallucinated the resurrection, Jesus did not die but went unconscious on the cross, and the most recent theory is that wild dogs ate the body of Jesus.

However, these arguments have been shown to be severely flawed and could not account for all the facts surrounding the events of the resurrection. Many have done detailed analysis of the evidence and have concluded that the resurrection must be a historical event. The late Simon Greenleaf, the former Royal Professor of Law at Harvard, performed one of the most famous of these studies. In his book, *The Testimony of the Evangelists, the Gospels Examined by the Rules of Evidence*, he concluded,

They had every possible motive to review carefully the grounds of their faith and the evidences of the great facts and truths which they asserted; . . . It was therefore impossible that they could have persisted in affirming the truths they have narrated had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as certainly as they knew any other fact.

As an atheist, lawyer and journalist Lee Strobel did a two-year investigation on the resurrection interviewing some of the great scholars on both sides. He finally concluded in his book *The Case for Christ*,

In light of the convincing facts I had learned during my investigation, in the face of this overwhelming avalanche of evidence in the case for Christ, the great irony was this, it would require much more faith for me to maintain my atheism than to trust in Jesus of Nazareth. [\[6\]](#)

No one has been able to conquer death by raising himself or herself from the dead. Jesus by His resurrection proves He is God. For only God, the giver of life has the authority over life and death. Since Jesus substantiates His claims, we conclude He is divine and what He teaches is true and

authoritative.

Jesus also taught the Bible to be God's Word. Therefore, the Bible is the foundation for all truth to all of mankind in every culture and for all time. Any teaching that is contrary to those of Jesus and the Bible are false. [\[7\]](#)

## **Because I Have Experienced It**

Jesus Christ and the truths of the Bible are not simply facts to be stored in our minds, they are truths that we are invited to experience in a personal way. God invites us to a personal relationship with Him. The evidence points convincingly toward Jesus Christ. After reviewing the evidence, we each must make the decision to move in the direction the evidence is pointing. It is then that we experience the reality of God in our lives. Although an individual's experience is a subjective thing, it is part of the proofs that authenticate faith.

When I first heard that the God of the universe loved me and desperately wanted a relationship with me, I thought it was the greatest news I ever heard. As I began to share my newfound discovery, I met scholars who seemed to have convincing proof that this was all a religious fantasy.

As I searched for answers I came across several Christian scholars who were able to defend the authority of the Bible and the claims of Christ. As I weighed the arguments and questioned men and women on both sides, I could not deny the overwhelming evidence that supported the Bible and the claims of Christ. Eventually I came to the conclusion that Jesus Christ is Lord.

I then realized it was time for a decision. Often we do not have all the answers, but we move in the direction in which the evidence is pointing. For example, many of us do not really know for sure if the person we are marrying is the right one. However, we make our decision based on the evidence

we see at the time. If I find that I can communicate with my fiancée, our personalities are compatible, and that we share the same values, we move in the direction in which the evidence is pointing. When we make the commitment to marry, then our decision is confirmed definitively. Till we make the commitment, we base our decision on the evidence at hand. The same is true with becoming a Christian. Although we do not have all the answers, we can have enough faith to make a decision. When we commit our lives to Christ, we then experience the fullness of a relationship with the risen Savior.

It was then that I made the conscious decision to believe in Jesus Christ. I asked Christ to forgive my sin and invited Him to be the Lord of my life. Although nothing dramatic happened, I knew I had changed. I experienced the peace that comes from knowing your sins are forgiven. I experienced the joy of knowing I was placed here with a purpose and that there is meaning to my existence. Although I still had some questions, sins that I struggled with, and difficult trials, I had an ever-abiding peace and joy I had never had before.

The more I studied the Bible, the more the world around me began to make sense. I gained a new understanding in all my academic studies. The complexity of life on earth, biological organisms, and planets reflected the character and intelligence of a loving Creator who wants us to enjoy His creation.

My struggles in relationships were the results of selfishness, and a sinful attitude in my heart. Once I began to follow the principles of Christ's love, my friendships became much more meaningful and joyous, not competitive. I experienced freedom from living up to others' expectations because the God of the universe loved me just for who I was.

I experienced the reality of the Bible promises as I applied them to my life. My faith continues to grow each time I see

that God's truth works in every day life. The more time I spend with God in prayer, in study, and in worship, the stronger my faith becomes.

How do I know Christianity is true? The facts behind it along with my experience of God's promises confirm it.

## Notes

1. Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*. (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing, 1960), 45.
2. For more extensive discussion read the Probe article, "[Evidence for God's Existence](#)" by Sue Bohlin.
3. Albright, William. *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*. (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins, 1953), 176.
4. For more extensive discussion read the Probe article, "[The Authority of the Bible.](#)"
5. For more extensive discussion read the Probe article, "[The Uniqueness of Jesus.](#)"
6. Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Christ*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1998), 265.
7. For more extensive discussion on the resurrection read the Probe article, "[Resurrection, Fact or Fiction.](#)"

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# **“I am a Christ-Believing Hindu”**

**I am a Hindu by birth. A Christ-believing Hindu (we will get to that a little later).**

**I was just reading your write up on [“Do Hindus believe in Jesus.”](#) And I am writing to thank you! Thank you for not calling Hinduism a religion created by Satan as some do, for not outrightly dismissing our faith as pagan or evil. Thank you for the open mind with which you view Hinduism. And thank you for not considering Jesus a western God.**

**But the article talks about the Jesus of the Bible and the Jesus that the Hindu man believes in. Being a Jesus lover myself (don't get me wrong, I mean I love Jesus absolutely, unconditionally, and like crazy, talk to Jesus 24/7 and try to listen to what He tells me), I can tell you that Jesus is God according to Hinduism as He could be according to**



Christianity. This is because Hinduism lets you choose your path to salvation. It lets you believe in any Ista of God or all of it. And I have chosen Jesus and His path to salvation.

And yes, my Jesus is the Jesus of the Bible. I read the Bible as often as I can. I was introduced to Jesus by the Bible and I know no other Jesus. There is nothing just nothing in the Bible that does not fit into the Hindu scheme of things. Yes, John 4:16 says Jesus only! But so does every scripture of Isha. Scriptures will tell man that following God/Jesus/Allah/Krishna is the only way of attaining God! This is because there is just One God. So there can be only one way. And that is to follow God.

It is important that people of God (I will happily claim that I belong to the group) accept that there is just one God. Different people choose different ways to reach God. But so be it. As it is stated in Romans 14:4, who are we to judge another, it is before our master, that we stand or fall. Our Master is one. He is the same to a Muslim who believes in Allah, to a Christian who believes that Jesus is the only way to heaven, to an atheist and to a Christ believing Hindu who believes that loving Jesus is the awesomest thing ever.

Good day

Bless the Lord

First of all, let me thank you for contacting Probe Ministries with your thoughts on Jesus. We must confess that your letter was thought-provoking and deserves a reasonable response. Hence, let me point out few things to shed some light on few things mentioned in your letter.

I agree with you that we have no choice when it comes to our birth. However, we all have the privilege of making a choice on what to believe and what to reject.

Regarding your comment on Jesus, we agree that Jesus is "not a western God." In fact, Jesus, in his incarnation, was born in

the Middle East. So, when it comes to region, He was more eastern than western. However, we must clarify that God, the Creator of the whole universe, is not limited to a region. He is not a foreigner or alien to any country or culture.

We are pleased to know that you have a loving relationship with Jesus. That is wonderful. We hope that this relationship will help you to listen to Him better and understand Him better and to follow Him better. In fact, Jesus said that "If you love me, you will obey my commands" (John 14:15).

While we respect your freedom to believe in Jesus or not to believe in Jesus, we want to point out a couple of things that Jesus taught. The first thing to keep in mind is that the information about Jesus as God is available only in the writings of the disciples of Christ. Hindu literature does not speak about Jesus. In the writings of the disciples of Jesus, it is made very clear that Jesus made some exclusive claims. For example, Jesus claimed "I am the way, the truth and the life." The definite articles in these claims make it clear that they are exclusive claims. He also claimed that "No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). The Bible is unambiguous in making exclusive claims. Exclusive claims of truth are logical. Truth by definition is exclusive—truth excludes what is false. It is from this kind of a worldview that the followers of Jesus, who loved him, believed His claim that He is the only way to the Father and therefore the only Savior of the world (Acts 4:12).

We agree with you that there is only one God. On the other hand, if there is only one God, it is reasonable for us to leave it to God to decide how many ways are there to reach Him. In fact, you might have heard of a religion known as Satanism. It will be injustice to the followers of Satan if we claim that their religion will lead to God. Don't they have a right to pick their destination? Won't it be cruel to them if we or God refuse them their right to follow someone other than God? If God has given that freedom to men, let us respect that

freedom.

We agree with you that we do not have to judge others. And we do not. Jesus will be the judge during the final judgment. We just believe Jesus' claim that He is the only way to the Father, and teach that belief, as an expression of our faith in Christ and as a response to His love shown to us on the cross. In fact, if there were another way for mankind to be saved, the death of Christ was futile or meaningless. We hope that you will find meaning in the death of Christ on the cross for you and me and will show your love to Jesus by believing in His claims. For a factual belief in Jesus, read the writings about Him and His teachings recorded by His direct disciples who saw His death and witnessed His resurrection and ascension. If you really love Jesus, you will believe His claims and obey them. I am sure that you do not want to love someone who taught wrong things, right? Jesus was either right in making those claims, or he was a liar or lunatic (to die for those claims). You must make a choice!

Rajesh Sebastian

**Grace and peace of God be with one and all. Thank you for considering my mail and send such a beautiful reply.**

**Just two things. One, Lord Jesus Christ has been mentioned in the Hindu scriptures. So has Noah, Adam and Eve. Besides I see no reason why the holy Bible would not qualify as a Hindu scripture.**

**And second, Mr. Rajesh spoke about the option to choose your destination. If there can be two destinations, can't there be two paths to a destination?? Why did the holy Bible give us the laws but later God blessed us with the Grace through Lord Jesus Christ? That's two paths, right? And accepting that Jesus Christ is the path does not mean that we deny the laws.**

**Lastly, the very thought of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ going meaningless sends a chill down my spine. For He has done so much for me and to save me. But trust me, as long as all the sheep get home safely, my Shepherd will be glad. That's all that matters to my Savior.**

**May the Grace of Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.**

**Happy Sabbath.**

Greetings in the name of the Saviour.

You brought up some interesting topics for discussion. Let me quickly respond to a couple of them that might be beneficial to you.

You mentioned that "Lord Jesus Christ has been mentioned in the Hindu scriptures. So has Noah, Adam and Eve."

You are right. It is true that Bhavishyapurana mentions the names you have mentioned above. However, there is nothing to wonder about that. It also mentioned the names of Muhammad, Sankaracharya, Babar, Akbar, East India Company, Queen Victoria etc. Guess the date of its composition!

As mentioned to you earlier, let me repeat that the only source of reliable information for the teachings of Jesus Christ are from the writings of the disciples who gave their life for following those teachings. Almost all of them were killed for their faith in Christ by followers of various religion. St. Thomas was killed in India.

You also stated that "Besides I see no reason why the holy Bible would not qualify as a Hindu scripture."

On the other hand, will you have a problem if Hindu Scriptures are considered as Islamic or Christian or Jewish? Each

religion and their texts present different and competing worldviews to people. They are mutually exclusive. While Christianity believes in One personal God, Hinduism offers One non-personal Brahman (Nirguna Brahman) as the ultimate reality. Both views can not be right at the same time in the same sense.

Regarding your question "Can't there be two paths to a destination?" We would prefer to say that it is for God to decide how many ways are there to reach Him. We also believe that, if there were another way, the death of Christ would have been unnecessary. Moreover, what God has revealed to us in the Bible is that there is only one way to Christ. Jesus and the writers of Bible are unambiguous about it.

Regarding your comment on law and grace, let me clarify that Bible clearly teaches that the giving of the law and the sending of Christ were both actions of grace. While the law was helpful in preventing sin, it was not enough to save sinners. So, as planned in advance and promised in advance, Christ came to make the sufficient incarnation and sacrifice once and for all so that whole mankind can be forgiven through his sacrifice. Law is never presented as a path of salvation in the Bible.

As you wrote, we hope that you will find your trust in the True Shepherd and Savior. He is the way, the Truth and the Life.

Rajesh Sebastian

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# Bringing the Truth of Christ to Your Generation

Are you a believer wondering if you're part of a dwindling population? Do people who follow hard after Christ—and show it by their actions and attitudes—seem to be a vanishing breed? Do you get the feeling that we're living in a post-Christian culture? We're not announcing the end of the Church in America and the West, but there is much cause for concern. We have the evidence straight from the mouths of believers—many of them caught up in captivity to the culture.

Here at Probe, we have been analyzing both existing and new original survey data to obtain a better grip on the realities of born-again faith in America today. Although the evangelical church has remained fairly constant in size as a percentage of our population over the last twenty years, these surveys show its impact on our society has continued to decline as the percentage of non-Christians has grown considerably over the same period. We see two reasons for this change:

*1. The increased acceptance of pluralism removes the felt need to share our faith with others. In our new Barna survey, almost one half of all born-again 18- to 40-year-olds believe that Jesus is one way to eternal life, but Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, etc. when followed well, will also result in eternal life.*

*2. Captivity to the culture rather than to Christ's truth shapes believers' perspectives on nearly every aspect of life. The recent National Study of Youth & Religion, a survey of 18- to 23-year-olds, shows that only a quarter of those affiliated with an evangelical church have a consistent set of biblical theological beliefs and that less than 2% of them combine those theological beliefs with a consistent set of biblical beliefs on behaviors and attitudes.*

A combination of pluralism and cultural captivity eliminates both the reason for and the evidence of changed lives needed to effectively share the great news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, these problems are not unique to our time and country. In fact, these problems were key issues addressed in the letters of Peter, John and Paul back in the first century. In this article, we will use the writings of Peter to introduce Paul's response to this problem as laid out in the book of Colossians with special emphasis on Col. 4:2-6.

As advocates of apologetics and a biblical worldview, we often focus on 1 Peter 3:15, which exhorts us to always be ready to give a defense for the hope of the gospel to anyone who asks. However, Peter points out that our testimony for Christ, goes far beyond our ability to make a reasoned defense. In the first chapter of his letter, Peter provides an excellent description of the hope of the gospel. He makes it clear that only through the resurrection of Christ can we receive eternal life. He then goes on to describe the ways that we are called to "proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light." Specifically, we are told to proclaim Christ through:

- *our excellent behavior (1 Peter 2:11-17),*
- *our right relationships with others (1 Peter 2:18–3:14),*
- *a verbal explanation of why we believe the good news (1 Peter 3:15-16), and*
- *sound judgment for the purpose of prayer (1 Peter 4:7)*

As our behavior and relationships cause observers to ask us to fully explain the hope that is driving these actions, we have the opportunity to speak the truth to them with words empowered by prayer (1 Peter 3:15-16). So Peter makes it clear that pluralism and cultural captivity are counter to the message of the gospel as portrayed in the lives of genuine

believers.

Given this message from Peter, let's take a more in-depth look at how Paul addresses this topic in his letter to the Colossians. In the first two chapters, Paul gives an in-depth description of what the gospel is and what it is not. In the New American Standard version, the reader is told to "set your mind on the things above" where we are living with Christ. Because we are residents of heaven, we need to consider our life on earth from that eternal perspective. From this point on in the letter, Paul lays out the same four instructions as Peter laid out on how we are to share Christ in this world.

In Colossians 3:5–17, we are given the standard for excellent behavior that our *new self* is being renewed to live in accordance with. As Paul makes clear in the first two chapters, this excellent behavior is not a qualification for heaven; after all, according to Colossians 2:9, the audience of believers is already "complete in Christ." Rather, the purpose of our excellent behavior is so the world can get a savory taste of heavenly living.

Then, in Colossians 3:18–4:1, Paul instructs us on the importance of **good relationships** in our families and at work. It is through our good relationships that the world can see the true meaning of "love your neighbor as you love yourself." As Paul points out, in all of these relationships "it is the Lord Christ whom you serve."

Paul then points to the remaining aspects of fully proclaiming Christ: through **our prayers** and **our words**. He addresses our prayer life as follows:

*Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the*



*way I ought to speak (Col. 4:2-4).*

First, we are to devote ourselves to **prayer**, making it a strong player in ordering our lives. I think that “keeping alert in it” gives us the idea that we are to be ready to take something to prayer at any time during our busy daily schedule. Prayer is not to be strictly relegated to a set prayer time, but rather a real-time, always-on communication with God in response to the interactions and challenges of our day. Paul also indicates we should not be praying as a rote habit, but rather with an attitude of thanksgiving, knowing that God hears and responds to our prayers.

Secondly, Paul gives us a consistent topic for our **prayers**: that God would open up a door for the word in the lives of those who need to hear. We may live a life characterized by excellent behavior and good relationships. But, if we are not praying that God will use our lives to open up a door for the gospel, then we are short-circuiting the purpose of God in our lives. Let me say it directly to you: If you are not seeing doors opening for the word through your life, perhaps you should ask, “What am I praying for? Am I praying that God will open up opportunities for me to share Christ with others?”

Note that in the first chapter of Colossians, Paul explains the mystery of Christ we are to “speak forth” saying,

*. . . That I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the **mystery** which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**” (Col. 1:25-27).*

We are praying for an open door to speak forth so that everyone can receive the promise of eternal glory through receiving Christ in their lives. In other words, we need to

actively ask God to give us entrée into others' lives to communicate the gospel so they can receive the riches of eternal life along with us. Do we really want this? It's a prayer God is sure to answer. If so, we're living according to a biblical worldview in one more essential way. If not, we risk the loss of succeeding generations.

Finally, Paul addresses the importance of our **words** in fulfilling our purpose as followers of Christ:

*Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person (Col. 4:5-6).*

We need to be wise in our relationships with those who don't know Christ. The verse literally says we are to redeem the time spent with unbelievers. As followers of Christ, we have the privilege of taking the most temporal and earth-bound thing in the world, time, and converting it into something of eternal value through our behavior, our relationships, our prayers and the words we speak.

We are to make the most of each opportunity to season our speech with the grace of Christ. If our speech is regularly salted with references to God's grace in our lives, we can tell from someone's reaction how we should respond to them. If we are not looking for it, how can we know when God answers our prayers to provide an open door for the gospel? And why would we be praying for it unless we value what God is saying to us here?

In summary, we must make clear to upcoming generations of evangelicals that we have a consistent message from Christ and His apostles on these two points:

*1. Jesus Christ is the unique Son of God and the only possible way to eternal life. Religious pluralism just*

*doesn't work.*

*2. We are called to live distinctly different lives—as captives of Christ not our culture—in our behavior, relationships, prayers and speech. Why? In order to be representatives of the good news of Jesus Christ in a world that desperately needs Him.*

If we choose to live our lives as if these statements are untrue, we have allowed ourselves to be deceived by the persuasive arguments of the world. Let's make the choice not to be taken captive and, instead, be bold and caring in proclaiming the truth for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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## **Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy and Fairy Tale**

Frederick Buechner is one of my favorite authors, probably top five. He's a brilliant storyteller, who, like Shakespeare, understands both the peasant and the prince and writes stories that all at once capture them both, stories that are magical yet earthy.

In *Telling the Truth*, a book about communicating the gospel of Christ, Buechner provides his readers several engaging (and true) stories to help illustrate what it means to tell the truth with our lives, including a very compelling story from the life of the famous (and infamous) 19th-century preacher Henry Ward Beecher. Later Buechner tells us the story of Jesus

before Pilate, but as if it were happening in 1977. And it's real. What I mean is, it isn't cheesy. As I'm reading it I believe it could have happened in 1977 like I'm watching it happen on some old rerun. Buechner does this with several stories from the Scriptures, and I read these stories with fresh eyes and new perspective.

And this is part of telling the truth: making new metaphors and painting contemporary word pictures so that people who have ears to hear... But I'm getting ahead of myself. Because the truth is silence before it is spoken, Buechner points out:

*He [Pilate] says, "What is truth?" and by way of an answer, the man with the split lip doesn't say a blessed thing. Or else his not saying anything, that is the blessed thing. [...]*

*The one who hears the truth that is silence before it is a word is Pilate, and he hears it because he has asked to hear it, and he has asked to hear it—"What is truth?" he asks—because in a world of many truths and half-truths he is hungry for truth itself or, failing that, at least for the truth that there is no truth. We are all of us Pilate in our asking after truth, and when we come to church to ask it, the preacher would do well to answer us also with silence because the truth and the Gospel are one, and before the Gospel is a word, it too like truth is silence—not an ordinary silence, silence as nothing to hear, but silence that makes itself heard if you listen to it the way Pilate listens to the silence of the man with the split lip. The Gospel that is truth is good news, but before it is good news, let us say that it is just news. Let us say that it is the evening news, the television news, but with the sound turned off.*

*Picture that then, the video without the audio, the news with, for the moment, no words to explain it or explain it away, no words to cushion or sharpen the shock of it, no definition given to dispose of it with... [\[1\]](#)*

We are all of us the preacher too—we do call ourselves evangelicals, after all—and we would all do well to reacquaint ourselves with the silence that is, the silence that speaks into the silence that isn't, the silence of the rocks crying out Jesus' gospel truth. So how do we listen to the pregnant silence? How do we grab hold of the gift of truth Jesus is offering *us* as he offered to Pilate when Pilate asked after it? One way we do this, Buechner tells us, is by listening to our lives. All of it {2}: the tragedy, the comedy, and the fairy tale. Your car that was stolen, your marital affair, your friend who betrayed you, the iPhone you own but can't afford, the self-righteousness you feel about someone else's affair, materialism, tax-collecting...that is the *tragedy*. And the *comedy* is that part which is both your wedding day and the day you fall in the toilet because he left the seat up, both "a kind of terrible funniness and of a happy end to all that is terrible". {3}

Finally, we must listen to our lives within the overarching framework of *fairy tale*. Because the tragic and the comic isn't all that's there. The fairy tale is the spell lifted and the Beast becoming on the outside the handsome prince he had become on the inside; it's the beautiful step-sisters whose feet turned out to be too fat and ugly like the sisters were in their hearts; it is those moments in our lives when we give to the least of these in spite of ourselves because once upon a time we climbed up the tree a cold opportunist and climbed down a caring, and cared for, philanthropist.

This listening to life—our own lives and the lives of others, the darkness and joyousness and impossible possibility of transformation into newness that we all share—listening to all of it in the silence before we finally but restlessly fall asleep or start our car or pour our coffee; and then also listening to the rustling of our tossing and turning, the cranking of the engine, the brewing of our coffee...this listening enables us to tell the truth.

Coupled with this Buechner reminds us we must also listen to the artists of our time and the times before us:

*There would be a strong argument for saying that much of the most powerful preaching of our time is the preaching of the poets, playwrights, novelists because it is often they better than the rest of us who speak with awful honesty about the absence of God in the world, and about the storm of his absence, both without and within, which, because it is unendurable, unlivable, drives us to look to the eye of the storm. [{4}](#)*

We would of course add the film writer / director. Fiction is such an important informer of the gospel, I cannot image how shallow my theology would be without it. Likewise, if I didn't discipline myself to listen to others, my theology would be shallow. And I recognize that some are gifted with a propensity for listening to nature, some to microbiology, some to art, some to numbers, some to everyday chores. But we each of us regardless of which comes more naturally can grow through the Holy Spirit in our spiritual ability to listen. More importantly, we all must learn to lean on one another: he who has ears for music learns from she who has ears for engineering, for example—and she learns from him, too.

*Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy, and Fairy Tale* is a small book divided into four chapters that brings us a refreshing look at sharing the gospel. It's refreshing because it is the whole, honest truth, not only about the world, but about our own hearts. "So if preachers or lecturers are going to say anything that really matters to anyone including themselves," Buechner, the ordained, "part-time novelist, Christian, pig" [{5}](#) knowingly tells us,

*they must say it not just to the public part of us that considers interesting thoughts about the gospel and how to preach it, but to the private, inner part too, to the part of*

*us all where our dreams come from, both our good dreams and our bad dreams, the inner part where thoughts mean less than images, elucidation less than evocation, where our concern is less with how the gospel is to be preached than with what the gospel is and what it is to us. They must address themselves to the fullness of who we are and the emptiness too, the emptiness where grace and peace belong but mostly are not, because terrible as well as wonderful things have happened to us all. {6}*

And so, Buechner being a gifted, contemplative listener to life and literature, uses everyday life to tell gospel history in fresh ways, and uses those stories together with the poetry of the prophets, the magic of familiar fairy tales, and the masterpieces of some of Buechner's favorite writers to tell the truth, which is the gospel, in hopes that his telling the truth will help us tell it too.

1. Buechner, Frederick, *Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy, and Fairy Tale* (HarperCollins, NY, 1977), p. 14

2. Ibid, p. 34

3. Ibid. p. 6.

4. Ibid, p. 44.

5. Buechner, A film about writer and minister Frederick Buechner, directed by: Rob Collins (CustomFlix Studio, 2004) <http://amzn.to/pTUeeD>.

6. Buechner, *Telling the Truth*, p. 4.

This blog post originally appeared at [reneamac.com/2010/01/26/telling-the-truth/](http://reneamac.com/2010/01/26/telling-the-truth/)

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# Zap the Lies, Hug the Truth – 1

*Sept. 1, 2009*

As the scriptures tell us that King Saul stood head and shoulders above everybody else, there is one aspect of the spiritual growth process that seems to stand head and shoulders above the rest: identifying and renouncing the lies that hold us in bondage, and embracing God's truth which sets us free.

Recently, I have been blessed by the experiences of two dear friends, both dealing with the fallout of trauma, as Jesus lovingly takes them through this process.

One of them is a college student whose parents wisely equipped her in how to think through negative thoughts and feelings:

1. Is \_\_\_\_\_ the truth? [No.]
2. That makes it a . . . [Lie.]
3. Where do lies come from? [Satan.]
4. God tells us truth because He is truth. So what does He say about it?

Armed with this powerful weapon, my friend successfully handled a molestation that happened in the middle of the night while she spent the night at the home of a friend. Wounds like that are "lie factories" that pump out pain and destruction. But she was able to pull out the arrows that had pierced her heart and let Jesus' truth bring healing.

**Lie #1:** "You got what you deserved. It's YOUR fault, because you didn't lock the door." **Truth:** I did NOT deserve it. That



man is responsible for his own sinful choice to violate me. 1 Cor. 6:18 – Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

**Lie #2:** “Ha! Hypocrite! You make everyone think you’re leading a pure life, but you’re nothing but a soiled dove.” **Truth:** I’m a hypocrite when it was something done TO me?? 1 Tim. 5:2b – [exhort] younger women as sisters, with all purity. He did not treat me with purity. I did not invite his mistreatment of me.

**Lie #3:** “You want your husband to be a virgin on your wedding day. Why should he be? You only have your ‘technical’ virginity left.” **Truth:** My innocence was not freely given; it was taken. My “full” virginity has been restored. Ps. 147:3 – He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

**Lie #4:** “No guy will want a soiled dove. That guy you are growing to love? Ha! You aren’t good enough for him.” **Truth:** I may not be good enough for HIM, but Jesus thinks I’m to die for! John 3:16; Jer. 29:11-13...

Since this was the biggest lie and the deepest wound, God also provided these powerful verses: Ps. 37:4 – Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Ps. 84:11 – For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

Praise God that His truth is powerful enough to show lies for what they are, and destroy their power to shackle us! His word is sharper than any two-edged sword, able to zap lies and allow us to embrace the truth that gives life and light.

[Next time](#) I’ll share the way Jesus revealed truth to zap the lies binding the heart of my other friend.

This blog post originally appeared at

# Zap the Lies, Hug the Truth – 2

Sept. 15, 2009

In my last blog post [“Zap the Lies, Hug the Truth – 1,”](#) I shared how one of my friends faced the lies of the enemy in the wake of a molestation, and successfully stood against them in the truth of God’s word.

Today I will let another friend share how the Lord Jesus has met her on prayer walks, addressing the lies that have held her in bondage since her trauma-filled childhood and then adulthood.

This is what she wrote to me:

*Jesus said, “First I will take off the lie you have believed, then I will wash you with the water of the word of truth, then I will put on your real identity in Me.”*

*I saw a picture, and realized it was me—as a beggar. My whole body was covered in rags and filth. The filth was garbage and dirt and waste that had been there so long it had hardened into a thick leathery shell all over my body. This shell adhered to my skin like glue, penetrating the rags I was wearing as clothes.*

*“This is going to hurt some,” Jesus said, “and your soul will be naked and exposed before Me, but it will be all right.”*

*I nodded my assent.*

*He then reached out and pulled off a piece from my shoulder to my elbow on the front side of my arm. The skin underneath was very pink and soooo tender.*

*Jesus: "Tell Me the lie you believe about your weight."*

*Me: "I'm fat and it makes me ugly and undesirable. I'm huge and when people look at me they just see the fat lady. I'm gross."*

*Jesus (commanding tone): "NOW, tell Me the truth I have shown you about this." (With that, He put water on the exposed skin, and it healed and tanned.)*

*Me: "That I'm 20 lbs. overweight, that I have a sedentary lifestyle due to chronic pain and damaged joints. That I am making appropriate efforts by walking and watching what I eat. That my body type will NEVER be 5'5" and 100 lbs. and that is okay with You because You made me to be this size."*

*Jesus: "What is another lie you believe?"*

*Me: "That I am worthless, of no value, that I benefit no one and that people would be better off without me. I am refuse."*

*Jesus: "Now what is the truth I am showing you?"*

*Me: \*tears\* "That You, Lord God, wanted spiritual offspring, and I am that. You, God, benefit, You gain a daughter. That my kids gain because they needed a mom who could make it alone (with You) with five kids. That my students benefit because others have given up on them. That my pastor benefits because he is seeing someone walk out of sexual brokenness first hand. Sue benefits because she sees how my relationship with You works. The online community of women benefit because You speak through me to encourage them."*

*Abba: "You are Mine, My daughter, heiress, friend. Your purchase price is set, the holy blood of the son of God. I did not find that price too high. You are precious in My*

eyes.”

So my friend writes me these healing scriptural truths she hears from the heart of God as they go walking, and then when she forgets them, I have the privilege of reminding her what He has said. It’s like that old saying, “A friend is one who knows the song of your heart, and will sing it back to you when you forget the words.”

This blog post originally appeared at [blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue\\_bohlin/zap\\_the\\_lies\\_hug\\_the\\_truth\\_part\\_2](https://blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue_bohlin/zap_the_lies_hug_the_truth_part_2)

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## Photoshopping Life

When Ray and I [visited the Galapagos Islands](#), one of my favorite pictures was the two of us with a gigantic tortoise. Unfortunately, my big ol’ red purse was on the ground in the picture too. So I photoshopped it out.



At our son’s wedding, one of the ushers wasn’t wearing his

boutonniere when it was time for the formal pictures. "Not to worry," the photographer said. "We can photoshop it in later."

During my daughter-in-law's holiday family picture taking, someone suggested photoshopping in a beloved uncle, since they were missing him. "No! He's been dead for two years!" someone else responded. "You don't photoshop in a dead person who couldn't have been here with us!"

We just had fiber-optic TV and internet installed. We can now pause and rewind live TV. Whoa.

The ability to manipulate digital images and sounds has spoiled us, I'm afraid, into thinking we should be able to manipulate the rest of life. It's a technologically enhanced update of the enemy's lies in the garden, enticing Eve to think she and Adam were entitled to be like God, a thinly veiled offer to make themselves as gods, just as he had.

And so we end up with people redefining things like marriage to include any two people, including those of the same sex. And a couple of gay men who successfully got both their names put on the birth certificate of their adopted son. This is the fruit of people redefining truth and reality according to their whims and desires.

And it is so much more serious than subtracting a purse or adding a flower.

This blog post originally appeared at  
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# **“Is It Always Wrong to Lie? Even During War?”**

**Our pastor claims it's always wrong to lie. Is this true? What about during war?**

It's one of the 10 Commandments: “thou shalt not bear false witness” (Ex. 20:16). In the New Testament, Jesus claimed to BE the truth (Jn. 14:6). Yes, it's always wrong to lie, because God's nature is truth, and lying is acting contradictory to His nature.

It's always wrong to lie; it's never wrong to tell the truth and trust God to work it out.

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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# **“I'm Having a Terrible Battle in My Mind”**

**I'm having a terrible battle in my mind. I know in my heart these terrible thoughts are lies, but getting it to my mind is hard to do. I have had thoughts of doubt, disbelief, and the devil has even questioned God's holiness to my mind. About two years ago I got serious about my walk with Christ and answered the call to preach. I need your prayers very much.**

The Bible teaches the principle of “displacement.” That is, rather than trying to make thoughts shoo away, we are told to replace them with what is good, true, and perfect (Phil. 4:8). As the truth comes in, the lies are displaced much like when we

fill a bathtub too full of water, and when we get in, our bodies displace the water, which flows out over the top of the tub.

What are you doing to displace the lies with the truth? I suggest that you read and meditate on Psalm 119, memorizing portions of it and reciting them OUT LOUD whenever possible. I also suggest you play good praise and worship music whenever you can, not as background music but as something to focus on. One other thing: it would probably be good for you to invest some time in reading books that will build your faith and send the lies packing, such as Lee Strobel's books *The Case for Faith* and *The Case for Christ*, and Teresa Vining's *Making Your Faith Your Own: A Guidebook for Believers With Questions*.

Also, spiritual battles are fought on the battlefield of the mind, so be sure to put on all your spiritual armor (Ephesians 6). It's all anchored to truth, so fill your mind with truth. That includes being careful what ELSE you're filling your mind with, such as TV, videos, movies and magazines that are filled with garbage. Most of those sources of information or entertainment come from the world, which is Satan's realm. Cut out the garbage, which is flavored with lies about God and about reality.

Let me pray for you, as you requested.

*Father God, I thank you that \_\_\_\_\_ is recognizing there is a terrible battle going on for his mind, and I ask that You show him what to do about it. Father, give him a distaste for anything other than the truth, and give him a deep desire to immerse himself in Your word and in workbooks and music that bring glory to You. Show him the source of the lies and give him a hatred of them, Father. Give him joy in resting in You and in developing discernment about his thought life. Teach him to love You with his mind as well as his heart and strength.*

*In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries