

# The Real Deal

## Trading Trust for Truth

October 15, 2023

**Today we're learning to listen for trustworthy truth!** Cuz *whatever* truth we *trust* becomes the *belief* behind the life we *live* – *for better or worse!* And after last week's look at the deadly *consequences* of a *conflict* between *our truth* and *the truth*, I think it would be a good exercise to *question* our confidence; so **Why do you trust your truth?** Well *first*, we have to answer the question *behind* that question. And it's the same one posed by Pilate after Jesus frustrates him with *unwanted* answers to all *his* questions:



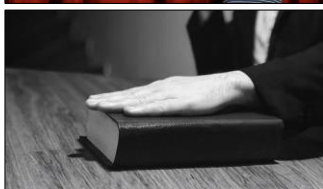
What *is* truth? [Now that's a vital question!] – John 18:38 NIV



Because regardless of *each* person's *answer*, **the truth we live by is the same truth we'll die for.** And even though truth has *always* been a matter of *life* and *death*, it's more *critical* to question it than *ever* because it's *never* had so *many* different *meanings*. But still, in its most *broad* and *basic* sense, most *generally* believe, truth **is the quality of reality.** It's the ultimate *explanation* of *why* everything is the way it *is*. And *every* *answer* that accurately adds to and agrees with that explanation is under *truth's* umbrella and part of it.



For example, if I walk to my car after church and arrive to find a brand-new dent in my driver-side door, it's safe to say, *something* happened! Now, there are *limitless* explanations for what *might* be true; another door might've dinged it, a bouncing ball might've bumped it, or an invisible unicorn might've kicked it. But, **"mights" don't make things right!** *In reality*, there's only *one* story that explains what *actually* went down. *That's* the truth. **It's the authentic story behind reality.** And like the dent in my door, you and I are part of it. And we all want to know the *actual* story behind *us*. Problem is, we weren't there! So, to *find* the truth, we need a witness! And it must be one we trust! Because **all truth worth believing starts with a witness worth trusting.** So, when it's something *beyond* you, who's *your* go-to truth *guru*? Who do you *trust* as an *authority* on the truth? Well, since you're sitting in a church, let's assume you said Jesus! Well *good choice*, cuz He *assures* us:



The reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me. [And that's when Pilate asked] What is truth?" – John 18:38 NIV

And if only he had a copy of John's Gospel, he could've flipped four chapters back for an *answer*:

[Cuz Jesus laid it out plainly, saying:] "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. - John 14:6 NIV

And with *that* answer, Jesus *confirms*: **the truth we can trust isn't a "what"; it's a "who".** Because **when the truth we need goes beyond what we can see, we have to rely on someone else's sight.**

And so, **the biggest battles in our world are always over who gets that trust.** Because **our authorities on truth have authority over our lives.** And it's a simple *equation* that usually puts them *into* that position: **the power we perceive determines the authority we allow.** It's why we pull over for police, pay taxes to the government, and buy whatever celebrities say!

So to know *why* we trust the truth we *do*; we *really* need to ask ourselves: **whose power is behind our belief?** And as much as we want to say it's *God Himself*: **How do we know we're trusting the real deal?** Could it *be* an *imposter, imitating?* Well, we've always got Paul's plan to find phonies:

Test all things; **[and]** hold fast what is good. - 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NKJ



Well okay, let's see if we can do it. I got three clips of different authorities; and I want you to spot the fake. [CLIPS] So, what do you think? Which one is the fake?



The point is this: **us humans aren't great at testing truth!** Because of our *limited* abilities, it's *difficult* to detect the *frauds, forgeries, and phonies.* And so, this world is *full* of opportunistic people willing to *lie* and *cheat* to earn our *trust* to take more *power.*



**[No wonder]** *false* messiahs and *false* prophets *will* appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.  
– Matthew 24:24-25 NIV



And since *we* only see *part* of the picture [1 COR 13:9], sorry to say, but **deception's not just possible, it's trending!** Look how easy it was for *me* to deceive! And if *signs* and *wonders* can be faked or falsified, **we must learn to better discern trustworthy truth.** The Good news is: God's got the perfect training plan – the *bad* news is – it's equal parts *loving* and *painful.* Here's an OT hint on how God handles misplaced trust:

**[Back then, He said]** My people would not listen to Me; Israel would not submit to Me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices. - Psalm 81:11-12 NIV

Wait, is God saying He just *gives up* on us?! *You wish!* This is just the tack He takes when we won't trust His truth. Cuz as much as it pains *Him* to pain *us,* **He'll let us live out our lies to prove they shouldn't be trusted!** It's like a child believing it's a good idea to eat ice cream for breakfast, lunch, and dinner; if they won't trust Dad, there's always *one* way to prove the point – *let them do it.* And eventually, **the tummy-ache of truth will teach them who to trust!**

Well, we're all His dumb kids who want our ice cream! We want the truth and we want it on our terms! *With sprinkles!* **We want Him to prove Himself before we give Him our trust!** Like when:

The Jews then responded to [Jesus], **[asking]** "What sign can You show us to prove Your authority to do all this?" **[And]** Jesus answered them **[and the 'me-first' mentality],** "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and You are going to raise it in three days?" - John 2:18-20 NIV

And by *letting* them believe *that's* what He meant, He '**gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices**'. Cuz **they trusted in their limited understanding more than His authority,**



But the temple *He* had spoken of was His *body*. - John 2:21 NIV

And now, in addition to missing the miracle that *would've* proved the truth they wanted – their stubborn hearts won't *just ache* from *living* a lie; **they'll spread the pain by actually killing the truth!** Cuz later on:



The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put Him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'" - Matthew 26:59-61 NIV



And it was those *misheard* words that started Jesus toward the cross. Real *truth* really *is* a matter of life and death! And by continuing to let us believe the deceit of our own stubborn hearts, Jesus is proving that **He'd rather die than let us have His truth on our terms**. Y'know *why?*! Cuz the last time someone went after *that* knowledge *without* trusting *God's* authority, it was Adam and Eve – and **the fruit of that mistake caused more than just a tummy-ache**, it separated us from God! And **God loves us too much to let us repeat that mistake!**



So what do we do? Well, we've got to change our wicked ways by letting Jesus flip the script.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and **[then]** He will make your paths straight. – Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

*Get it?* Back in the Garden, we acted as the ultimate authority when we took His truth before giving Him our trust – so now, **it's up to us to prove it's His power we're putting as our authority!** And we do that by just **giving God our trust before we have His truth**; aka having Faith. Like His *disciples*.

Cuz these kids heard the *same* strange claim about *destroying* and *restoring* the temple – but, instead of *assuming* they understood the truth behind His words, **they trusted Jesus and waited until something apart from their own heart made it make sense**. And one day,

After [Jesus] was *raised* from the dead, His disciples recalled what He had said. **[and]** Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. - John 2:22 NIV

Y'see, up until *that* point, **all they knew for sure was that didn't know**. And until Jesus *Himself* proved He *was* the One behind any belief, they *knew* all they could do was *trust*. And you know *how* the disciples were *able* to trust when others *failed*? *Let's ask 'em!* How'd you guys do it John?

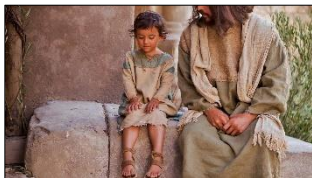
We know and rely on the love God has for us. God *is* love. – 1 John 4:16 NIV

*Booyah!* There's the secret sauce to the whole enchilada! If we want a truth we can *trust* with a *stubborn* and *self-centered* human heart full of *deceit*, **it's gotta be as un-fakable as it is unbreakable!** And *try* as we might, **nobody can counterfeit true love.** *Know why?*

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. **[And most importantly] Love never fails.** But where there are *prophecies*, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. – 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 NIV

Almost everything on earth *can* be faked with a forgery; from *friends* and *flowers* to *fidelity* and *faith*. But **all phonies eventually fail.** And *due* to all the *different dimensions* that have to be *flawlessly fulfilled* on an *ongoing basis*, **true love is too perfect to make pretend.** Especially the way it *won't* pass away, but actually *grows* in death:

There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. - John 15:13 NLT



**The real power behind the real deal isn't a show of force it's an act of love!** So *that's* what we should look for when we want to authenticate His identity. Remember how *easy* it was to call Morgan Freeman a *fraud*? That's because *appearances* are easy to fake; but *character* isn't. And comparing *who* we knew to *what* he said made it easy call shenanigans on the *false* Freeman. Well *likewise*, **God's faithful know true love is His character's tell-tale trait that can't be faked.** And the more familiar we become with *Who* He is and *how* He loves, the more *skilled* we'll be at *detecting* His truth. Because God's **supernatural love leaves His fingerprints all over reality.**

So if we want to trust that the God of the universe is behind something we believe, **we gotta look for the love.** Cuz *love* is all God ever writes – and *He's* the Author of the *entire* universe!

**And if you can't connect any explanation to some expression of God's love, call it into question!** And don't accept any answer until you see that love! Especially when *your impatience* is keeping you from being *impartial*. Remember, **God can't prove Himself on your terms**, cuz making *you* the boss throws *everything* off and keeps us all out of His kingdom. And when we see it's still His love that makes us wait, **we should at least love the Lord enough to finally hear Him out on His terms.**

That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him." - 1 Corinthians 2:9 NLT

And if we ever *feel* the sting of our *stubborn heart* listening to one of this world's *lying leaders*, remember, **we can flip the script at any time, give God our trust, and let Him lead our life;** knowing truth *is* on the way, *on* His terms, as part of our *Dad's* loving plan. And that way, we're *guaranteed* to get the ice cream *God* wants to give, without any more *lessons* from the *tummy-aches of truth!*