

WWWN

WE WRESTLE NOT

SERIES DEVOTIONAL

BELT OF TRUTH | JUNE 21, 2020

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Spiritual warfare requires spiritual armor and weaponry. Resolutions and human willpower are not enough to defeat our formidable enemy, the devil. We can almost envision Paul in his prison cell, writing his letter to the church in Ephesus. Perhaps he paused, searching for an illustration to help him communicate this important truth. His gaze fell upon the Roman guard to whom he was chained. As he considered the various parts of the guard's armor, Paul found the perfect analogy to describe the essential pieces of armor each Christian soldier needs to battle against Satan.

Discussion Starter #1: Why is truth essential to Christianity?

Key Passage: "Stand, therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth..." (Eph.6:14a)

TEACHING POINT

#1

The belt of truth holds together the rest of the armor; without truth we cannot defeat Satan or detect his lies.

The belt that Roman soldiers wore around their waist connected all of the other pieces of armor together. The belt stabilized his armor, preventing it from shaking and moving around as ran. The belt was the central piece of the soldier's uniform, not merely an accessory.

None of the other pieces of our spiritual armor will hold together if we do not first have a commitment to truth. This is why truth is mentioned first in the list of our spiritual armor. We are to fasten on the belt of truth (v.14). This means we are to actively lay hold of the truth and use it. Truth is a crucial piece of defensive armor guarding us in the battle against the lies and deceptions of the enemy. Without an understanding of truth, we are left defenseless and can easily be "carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming" (Eph.4:14). The belt of truth protects us and prepares us for the battle that is part of every Christian's life.

What is truth? With all the talk these days about "fake news" and "speaking your truth," sometimes it's hard to decipher what truth really is. Thankfully, God did not leave us on our own. He revealed truth to us; we have a standard by which to measure all ideas and doctrines—the Bible. God's Word is the belt of truth that supports all the rest of our beliefs as Christians. The objective standard of God's truth in God's Word keeps the rest of our armor from shaking and moving around on us. Your growth in sound knowledge and wisdom depends on your relationship to that revealed truth.

TALK ABOUT IT:

- What are some reasons people may be reluctant to agree that there is absolute truth?
- Explain how each, individual piece of our armor (see the pieces of armor listed in Eph.6:14-18 or in the previous lesson) relies upon truth in order to be useful.

TEACHING POINT

#2

As the “father of lies” Satan’s primary weapon against the Christian is lying.

In John 8:44, Jesus said to a group of unbelievers: “*You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*”

As the “*father of lies* (v.44)” Satan is the original liar. He told the first lie in recorded history to Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen.3:1), and with that lie, Satan led Eve to her death; Adam followed, and so have we all.

Satan loves to see his lies spread around and deceive many people. This is what happened when Eve convinced Adam to also believe the devil’s lie. Today, Satan uses false religions and cults to spread his falsehoods for him. The apostle Paul tells us that Satan “*masquerades as an angel of light*” (2 Cor.11:14), so that what he says and does seems good and reasonable, but it is nothing more than pretense, a false appearance. Satan has told more lies to more people than any other being ever created. His success depends on people believing his lies.

Satan especially enjoys deceiving people about his own identity. In the preface of his classic book *The Screwtape Letters*, an insightful satire about a senior-ranking demon (Screwtape) coaching a junior demon-in-training (Wormwood) on how to deceive humans, C.S. Lewis wrote:

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves [Satan and demons] are equally pleased by both errors...”

TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why do you think lying is Satan’s primary weapon against followers of Christ?
- In reference to the quote from *The Screwtape Letters* (above), what is so damaging about disbelieving in the existence of Satan and demons? What is so damaging about feeling an excessive and unhealthy obsession with Satan and demons?
- It has been said, “If you tell a big enough lie and tell it frequently enough, people will believe it.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

#3

In Christianity, truth is a Person to relate to, not just a concept to believe.

Truth matters in every realm of life, and this includes worldviews and religions. Of course, all worldviews and religions claim to present a true depiction of reality. But there is a key difference between Christianity's claim of truth and every other religions' claim of truth: Christianity presents truth not only as an idea to be believed, but also as a Person to know and experience.

Jesus is the very personification and essence of absolute moral and spiritual truth itself. John 1:14 says, "*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" Jesus himself said, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*" Notice that Jesus not merely claim to teach the truth; He claimed to *be* the truth in the flesh! When Pilate questioned Jesus about truth 2,000 years ago: "*What is truth?*" (Jn.18:38), he failed to realize that Truth was standing before Him in the Person of Jesus Christ, clothed in human flesh! Pilate was literally looking at truth with his own two eyes!

So, truth is a concept, but it is also relational. Truth as a concept cannot be separated from truth as a Person: Jesus Christ. Take note that Jesus did not call people to follow a set of rules or obey commands or live out certain teachings; rather Jesus told people "*Follow Me*" (Jn.21:19). Jesus knows that we can only fully understand what it means to know truth if we are first willing to follow Him in full commitment.

In John 16:13-14, Jesus says: "*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*" Truth dwells in us through the relational presence of the Holy Spirit. So, knowing truth ultimately means knowing Christ personally through his Spirit.

Many people in our world today thirst for truth. What they need most is a relational encounter with Jesus, the Person of truth. As we proclaim the conceptual truths of Christianity, let's never forget to also proclaim the unique offer that Christianity alone makes about knowing and experiencing the God of Truth in Jesus (Jn.17:3).

TALK ABOUT IT:

- In your own words, explain how Christianity—unlike any other religion—presents truth as both a concept to believe and a Person to know and follow.
- Why is it attractive and appealing to know that truth is not just cold, hard facts, but also an embracing, loving Person—Jesus Christ— to relate to?
- What is something helpful you've learned from today's lesson about the belt of truth?