



## TIME OF GRACE®

### Who's Truth Do I Trust? Their Truth?

#### Study Notes

#### Summary

Jesus, the prophets, and the apostles warned us about looking within ourselves for truth. So should we look out to our friends, family, and culture? Jesus' friend John would stiffen up at that assertion. John knew the world is often filled with an immoral majority. In this message, John warns us about what is popular in the world and turns back to what is preferable to God.

- Their Truth? \_\_\_\_\_.
  1. They \_\_\_\_\_ you.
    - **Proverbs 27:17**: As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.
  2. They \_\_\_\_\_ you.
    - **James 5:16**: Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.
  3. They \_\_\_\_\_ you.
    - **1 Corinthians 12:4**: There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.
- Their Truth? \_\_\_\_\_ .
- **Ephesians 4:18**: They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.
- **John 17:17**: Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.
- Challenge: Find “\_\_\_\_\_.”

#### Points to Ponder

1. Meditate on Acts 17:10-12, a short but powerful section of Scripture, so you are prepared for next week's message called “The Church's Truth?”

2. Talk to the people you do life with. Make a commitment to focus your conversations on “us” as opposed to venting about ‘them.’ (Warning: It won’t be easy!)
  
3. Study the sad story of King Rehoboam in 1 Kings 12:1-17. Why did Rehoboam trust his young friends’ advice as opposed to the elders in his kingdom? How does your answer apply to life today?
  
4. Evaluate: People who constantly talk about money-hungry churches might be money-hungry themselves. (Bonus: How does your answer relate to the message you heard today?)
  
5. Can you think of a friend who has had a bad experience with the church? Make sure to invite them to watch next Sunday’s message as we wrestle with whether we should trust the church to give us the truth.

## Homework for Next Week

Read Acts 17:10-12.

Time of Grace Ministry  
**Whose Truth Do I Trust? Their Truth?**  
Proverbs 27:17, James 5:16, 1 Corinthians 12:4, Ephesians 4:18, John 17:17  
February 11, 2024

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So back in grad school, I had a professor. He used to say this one line again and again and again and again. The line that he wanted to plant very deeply into every one of his students' hearts was this, "You are what you read." You are what you read. You probably heard the phrase before, "You are what you eat," right? It's not literal. Doesn't mean you eat a tomato; you are a tomato. It means that when you put certain things into your body, they affect you physically. Have a Sausage McMuffin for breakfast with a couple of donuts for a chaser and it will affect you. You are what you eat.

And what he wanted all of his students to know is the same thing that is true with the voices that we expose ourselves to. If you read this kind of book long enough, you might not agree with all of it, but eventually it will seep into your soul and it will affect you, right? If you did some quick math on all the minutes, if you think about the cable news network you watch the most, the daily podcast that pops into your feed, the friends that you listen to, the professors that you're in their class every day, whether you love it, hate it, agree with it, disagree with it, whose voice do you hear the most? Now, if you have your list, here's my big question for the day. Is that message a source of truth that you can trust? These two or three people who get more of your attention than anyone else, are they helping you to believe the things that Jesus believed and to behave in the ways that Jesus behaved? Can you trust their truth?

And if you still have your pen in your hand, I'd love for you to write this down. God would ask, "Their truth? Are they speaking the truth to you?" The first answer just might be, "Maybe." Maybe. It might sound very spiritual to think, "You know, if it's just me and my Bible, me and God, people can lie, people can deceive you, people can lead you astray, but if it's just me and God doing life together, I'm going to get as close as possible to the truth." But God would say to that, "No, maybe you need people. Maybe my grand design was to surround you with people so that you could have not just a little bit of the truth but the whole truth and nothing but the truth." In other words, if you're tempted to cross out all the names on your list, so it's just you and the scriptures, God would say, "Not so fast because if it's just you and me, you're not going to hear everything that I want you to hear."

You can see in your programs if you're here live in church. There's actually three points I want to make to prove that God wants to surround you with other people who can speak into your life, get your heart and shape your view of truth that without them, you will never become the kind of Christian that God wants you to be.

So, here's the first of the three points of that -- first of all, God would say that, "They," friends, family, professors, podcasters, "they sharpen you." They sharpen you. There's a classical passage in Proverbs 27 that says this, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." This is God's way of saying that if it's just you kind of doing life your way, eventually the day-to-day will kind of wear you down. You'll lose your edge and you will end up as a dull disciple. You know that about the knives in your kitchen? Eventually after enough use, they get a little bit dull. The same thing happens to people. And so, God puts people into our lives and they sharpen you, right? They have those conversations where there's a little bit of heat, a little bit of friction, it's not a smooth, comfortable conversation, but the sparks fly, you might get emotional and it's because of those relationships and those people that you stay sharp.

For example, let me talk to the husbands here for a second. Hands nice and high, where are my husbands at? Yeah, I got a bunch of you. How about single guys here who hope to be a husband someday, where are you at? Okay, a whole bunch of you. Sorry, single guys if you're sitting next to your girlfriend things just got really awkward, didn't it? Husbands, I think when we met the woman that we fell in love with, we were probably very sharp, but then... then life happens. In the day-to-day with work, and the boss, and the emails, and the promotion, and the extra hours, and maybe there's a kid, and there's another kid, you're running here, you're running there, and one of the worst things can start to happen in your heart. You assume. They assume that marriage is going to be amazing even if I haven't put in amazing work into my marriage. They assume that I can be amazing at work, and I can be an amazing dad, and I can be an amazing friend, and I can pick an amazing fantasy football lineup. I can be an amazing coach, an amazing whatever, and it's going to be amazing at home even if I just walk through the door, which is so obviously dull.

God says, "If you try to pitch that to me in any other area of life." "Man, I'm really strong today. I used to lift weights in high school." No. No. "I'm feeling really good today. Six months ago, I got a great night sleep." No, you know the connection between today and today, and it's the same with marriage, right? It's the same with any relationship. You have to work on it today. You have to keep your vows today. But before I pastor you, I have to be a rockstar in my home. Today's affection is based off of today's effort and sometimes not intentionally we lose sight of that. We're trying to juggle the responsibilities; we forget the importance of the vows that we take.

And so, guys, do you know what you need? You need moments like right now, right? You need someone to come with the word of God and keep you sharp. We need each other. These confrontationally Christian conversations where the sparks fly and we get a little bit defensive, but iron sharpens iron, so one person can sharpen another. It's obviously not just a husband, it's not just a marriage thing, it's a people thing. We can get too used to and too comfortable with certain behaviors and sins and sometimes it takes a group of friends, sometimes it takes a church family, sometimes it takes the right podcast, the right video that you see that kind of snaps you out of the dullness and gets you back to being a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ. Their truth.

God would say, "For sure." We need other people to point out things that we simply don't see.

So, I'm going to give you a bunch of homework today. Here's the first thing on my list. I want you to find someone that lives in proximity to your life and give them permission to sharpen you. In other words, I want you to pick someone to help keep you accountable, but they can't be the person that you rarely see. They need to be someone up close who sees you on regular basis and I want you to give them full permission to let the sparks fly, right? Ask them a dangerous question like, "What do people think of me? What's it like to be my coworker? Hey, we're friends, what am I totally ignorant of?" "As iron sharpens iron, one person sharpens another." And if you will have the humility to do that, they will speak the truth and the truth will set you free. Why do you need other people? First of all, they sharpen you.

Number two, if you're taking notes, they also comfort you. Jesus' half-brother, James, said this in James 5:16, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." Today, I want all of you to preach the gospel to another Christian. Sometimes Christians think, "I should share the gospel with my non-Christian friends. I should tell them that Jesus lived, and he died, and he rose for the forgiveness of sins." And yes, that is a great thing to do, but do you know who else needs the gospel? People who already believe it and they lose sight of it, and they forget it.

So, as long as I'm giving you tons of homework, I want you to ask someone to confront you, sharpen you, and then I want you to preach the gospel at someone who needs it. Maybe think of someone who really messed up in the past six months, someone whose relationship fell apart, someone who cheated on their spouse, someone who relapsed. I want you to find them as quickly as possible and just preach at them. Don't suggest, don't offer your opinion. You come with the authority of God because he's given it to you. "All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me," Jesus said. And so, he sent his friends and said, "Go make disciples, preach the good news to all creation." Because you and I need them. We need their truth to sharpen us, to comfort us.

And now here's my third point, because they might be the only ones in the room who see you. They see you. You might think you know yourself pretty well, but there honestly are some things about you, some beautiful God-given things, that you don't know without them. This classic passage from 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle said, "There are different kinds of gifts," spiritual gifts or talents, "but the same Spirit distributes them." When God has given you such a stunning gift that it feels like you don't have to try, like you don't really have to work hard, it just comes out of you. It is so natural to think that everyone can do the same thing, when everyone cannot. Your nose doesn't think, "Wow, I am amazing." It's just a nose. It does what it was created to do, but if you could talk to the ears, or the eyes, or the knees, or the toes, they would say, "I don't know how he does it." And it's the same thing with people, right? It feels so natural, but sometimes it takes other people speaking into your life to say, "How in the world do you do that?"

It's like the person who can make small talk with anyone. You know people like that? It's like you go into the gas station for a donut and a coffee, five minutes later they're still talking to the stranger they just met at the counter. How do you do that? Small talk makes me feel uncomfortable and awkward. I hate it, but you seem to love it. How can you meet a perfect stranger and have their phone number and be praying for their deepest, darkest secret in seven minutes or less? That's incredible. How do you do that? Have you ever met someone who's so compassionate and empathetic that they just know who to talk to after the meeting is over? They can read the room, the decision gets made, we're going into this direction, and they can just feel, "No, she's not there yet." And while the rest of the team would move on and leave bodies in the wake of decision-making, some people have that gift just to see it, to know it, to make sure that we're united.

And you say, "How do you do that? I didn't even notice that. I wouldn't have even thought of that. That is incredible." And so today, I want to add this to your list of homework. Point out someone's gift and when they try to be humble and bashful, ignore them. "Ah, it's nothing. Anyone could do it." No, it's something not nothing. And no, everyone could not do it. There are different gifts and God has given you a gift and I honor it, and I'm grateful for you, and we need you." There are the simplest things that you can't see. There might be bad things like sins. There might be good things like the gospel and you need people in your life to speak to you. God would say, "Their truth." Think about your list. Should you keep listening to those voices? He would say, "Maybe."

But pick up your pens because you know what else God would say, "Maybe not." Write that down too. Should we listen to their truth? Should we keep listening to those podcasts, watching those Instagram videos, those news stations, listening to those friends? God would say, "Maybe not." That's actually what I learned from interviewing a professional journalist, a US attorney, a private investigator, two police officers, and two pre-school teachers. Now, this past month, I did seven interviews with those people and I asked them all a single question, "Do people tell you the truth?" I asked the journalist, the attorney, the cops, the pre-school teachers. And do you want to guess what they all said to me? When they pull someone over to the side of the road, when the pre-school teacher has to have a hard talk with the children, when they're digging into a story, or they're in a courtroom. "Do people tell you the --" "I mean, we're all in favor of truth and against lies, right? "Do people tell you the truth?" And they said, "Maybe not."

One cop gave me the best example. He says, "I pull someone over on the side of the highway, they roll down the window and I say, 'Excuse me, sir. Do you know how fast you were going?' "And this guy says..." Like, come on. I ask the cop, "How do you know if someone's lying to you?" He says, "When they open their mouth." And this is what I learned too. When there's obvious evidence in the case, it's like the hand is in the cookie jar. When my wife says, "Who didn't clean up their toys?" As a pre-school teacher, the chattiest kid in the world who left the mess behind him, he suddenly

becomes a mute, right? It's like you would think people would tell you the truth but they don't.

The private investigator called this, "The self-preservation instinct." That people will tell the truth unless the truth hurts, unless the truth causes trouble. Makes me think of Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul said this, he said, "They," notice that word, "They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts."

How often do we speak the truth to each other? We get together, we vent, we're exhausted, it happens. The kids are crazy, you're raising little ones, you're changing diapers, you're running all over. Then there's teenagers, whole other stage, whole other challenges. And you know, sometimes we speak the truth of what's happening and the dishonor, the disrespect, the difficulty of it. How often, though, do we ask each other, "Are you exasperating your kid?" Remember that passage in Ephesians 6, verses 4 and 5, "Now, parents, do not exasperate your children." Are your rules a bit too strict, a bit too much? Do we ever ask each other that? And the answer is probably, no. We speak some of the truth, but not the whole truth.

If you're watching at home and you're not really a church person, or you just caught this message on TV and you don't have a pastor. You don't have a place because you know what? Sometimes the church is about money, and sometimes church people are hypocrites, and sometimes they have an agenda, and sometimes they're not -- they're not really good people. And, you know what? That might be absolutely true, but is it the whole truth? The Jesus who knew that, the Bible that says, "Let's not give up meeting together." The New Testament that constantly speaks of community, and authority, and shepherds, and pastors, and the body of Christ.

Do you and your non-church going friends speak the whole truth? And church people, do we? Now, it's easy to be frustrated with the weekend sports schedules and our kids and grandkids who don't come to church anymore, but do we ever ask ourselves the question, "Are we a church that smells like Jesus?" Now you see it, right? I think it's super quiet right now because I'm not making stuff up. When a bunch of women get together or men, or pastors, or teenagers, or parents, or Republicans, or Democrats, it's so easy to speak half the truth because half the truth keeps us comfortable.

But friends, Jesus was not half the truth. He was the way, the truth, and the life. And so, I need you to think very critically about the list that you wrote down a few minutes ago. Is your list diverse enough that you are not just getting convenient and half-truths, but the whole truth that will challenge you and comfort you? That will sharpen you and speak grace to you? If we're going to be a different sanctified kind of people, then we can't pick and choose. We need to speak the whole truth to each other. So, what should we do? Are those people being honest with us? Well, God would say, "Maybe. Maybe not."

Which is why there is a passage I want to come back to. I spoke it to you last week. I'm going to speak it to you next week. And the passage some of you memorized is this, John 17:17. Jesus was praying, he said, "Father, sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth." I love that fact. This is the source of truth that we can always trust. Your word is truth. Jesus the son of God believed. It's not bias, it's not convenient. This book will take you to the lowest lows and the highest highs. It will humble you. It will confront you. It will sharpen you, and it will take you by the hand and lift you up to a kind of peace and forgiveness and joy that this world simply cannot give.

The word is truth. But here's an amazing detail in Jesus' prayer. He said, "Father, I want you to sanctify them." Sanctify them. He didn't pray, "Father, sanctify him or her or just one." What Jesus was praying the night before he bled was "them." A group of people who would be sanctified, set apart, different, so shaped by the word that they would love not just pieces of it, but all of it put together.

And so, here's my challenge for you today, if you're taking notes. I want you to find them. As you think about your list for the next six months, find them. Find people, listen to people, subscribe to people who are sanctified, who are so shaped by the truth. That they don't just say the easy things that are convenient, they start here with themselves. If you find someone whose ideas and solutions will cost them personally, I can almost guarantee you are closer to the truth of God. If you find a political party or a single politician whose ideas will cost him or her personally, you're closer to the truth that will set people free. If you find a group of Christians, a Bible study or a church, don't just vent and lament about the world out there. But it starts here with confession, lament, repentance, and humility. You are one step closer to them. And if you find them, you'll be surrounded by the truth.

"You are what you read," my professor said. You are what you listen to. You are what you binge. If he was right, then find them so they can take you by the hand and lead you to Jesus who is the truth. Because Jesus once prayed, "Father, sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth." Let's pray.

Dear God, I thank you so much for community. I thank you for this church. I thank you for Time of Grace, for all the people that have sharpened me, encouraged me, helped me to see my unique spiritual gifts, and most importantly have reminded me of you.

Honestly Father, you know, I feel so emotionally healthy right now in life and it's because I don't have to fake it and I'm surrounded by people of faith who can hear my confessions and give me Jesus Christ. And while that is my prayer for everyone here, for everyone listening who's disconnected, for everyone who has yet to do life together with other sanctified people. We're tempted, God, to find people that make it easy, but really deep down we want people who will sharpen us, grow us, challenge us, and remind us that by the blood of Christ we are loved, we are forgiven, we are safe, and we're saved.

And so, I pray heavenly Father in a thousand ways you would open doors. I pray that the people here who have found community would praise you for it today and the



people who haven't will take a courageous step, would join a group, would make a confession, would do today's homework, and through it, you would sanctify them and give them what Jesus prayed for.

I thank you God for friends. I thank you for family. We thank you for church and most importantly today, we thank you for truth. We ask it all in Jesus' name, Amen.