

## CHAPTER 10 TRUTH



*This study guide offers a suite of resources for teachers, small group leaders, or parents to generate discussion and reflection. This guide is not intended to be a structured 'lesson plan', but aims to provide questions, discussion starters, Bible passages, videos, and challenge questions that can be shaped into a structured experience.*

### DISCUSSION STARTERS

You might use one or more of these to foster engagement in a discussion about truth:

- > How do you feel about the claim that we are heading into a 'post-truth' era?
- > What is your ultimate source of authority to know that something is true?
- > How much do you rely on science for developing truth?
- > When is it enough to simply feel strongly that something is true?
- > Is it possible to know the complete truth about anything?
- > If something is true for me does it then have to be true for you?
- > Can tolerance itself ever become intolerant?

### BIBLE PASSAGES

This resource is not intended to be a Bible study. However, discussion and reflection on one or more of these passages, and how they might inform a view of the topic of the chapter, is encouraged. It would be good to direct questioning towards, "What was the original context?", "What was the author's purpose?", and "How does the passage add to a big picture view of truth?":

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. *Colossians 2:8*

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." *John 14:6*

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. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." *1 Corinthians 13:8-12*

“What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. *John 18:38*

Do not make any idols. *Exodus 34:17*

## ▶ STIMULUS VIDEOS

You might use one or more of these videos to generate engagement. Or you might use one at the end of the discussion with the focus being to critique the assumptions within the video. You might follow the viewing with questions like “What feelings did that video give you?”, or “Would this video be helpful to show young children? Why or why not?”, or “What do we learn about our culture in this video?”:



Can you be good without God?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xiAikEk2vU>



Is it true that there is no truth?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rgd5fe3jPQA>



Why be afraid of subjective moral reasoning?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0218GkAGbnU>



Absolute truth  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VaGNRP6Q-6Q>

All videos can be found at [www.thefrogandthefish.com/videos](http://www.thefrogandthefish.com/videos)

## 📖 EXTRACTS FROM THE BOOK

It might be that reading one, or both, of these extracts from *The Frog and the Fish* could be a helpful addition to your discussion time:

“In 2006, the Merriam-Webster dictionary declared its Word of the Year to be, “truthiness”. Truthiness was originally coined by the American satirical comedian Stephen Colbert and is defined as:

The quality of a claim seeming to be true, or feeling true, even if it isn’t supported by logic or factual evidence.

The humour in Colbert’s word came not because we find silly made-up words funny, but from his insightful observation that our view of what we deem to have authority for defining truth is shifting. He was observing, back in 2006, that we are moving towards a mindset where personal opinions and feelings have authority to define what is true and right. In this view, our preferences and feelings can make a partial claim to truth and be ‘truthy’. In a recent US presidential campaign, it became obvious

that the notion of absolute truth (true truth) may be increasingly disposable in Western culture. Accusations of 'fake news', coupled with the tendency for politicians to make substantial claims that are not based on any real event or factual evidence, have led cultural commentators to suggest that we have witnessed the birth of the 'post-truth' era."

*The Frog and the Fish, Chapter 10, pg. 99*

"God's word is the ultimate source of truth and authority for all of life. The biblical view of the world that it provides, gives a way of understanding all aspects of the world and life, including truth. This view has sympathies with some societal views. For example, the view that absolute truth does exist is shared with science. A perspective that the Bible shares with the relative view is that our understanding of truth is shaped by personal perceptions. This view provides a rich alternative to the extremes of both while recognising their merits."

*The Frog and the Fish, Chapter 10, pg. 103*

## CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

Perhaps the aim of your discussion/reflection with your group is to present a biblical perspective on the topic of the chapter. It might be that challenging the culturally shaped assumptions currently held needs to complement this. You might use one or more of these questions to help achieve this:

### **1. Do you believe that absolute truth exists?**

The biblical view of the world suggests an absolute truth. Things can be true and things can be not true.

### **2. What is your main source of authority for truth?**

There are many different sources of authority for truth. We can call on science, group consensus, and personal perceptions (among others) but their authority is limited, and relying on them entirely is dangerous.

### **3. How much is science a source of authority for you?**

The ability humans have to ask questions, take measurements, and make conclusions is a blessing from God and part of his good creation. However, science's ability to claim complete truth is limited.

### **4. How much are other people's views a source of authority for you?**

Exploring the views and knowledge of people with more experience than you can be wise. However, we do so remembering that these people are also affected by human rebellion and will also be blinded to ultimate truth.

### **5. How much are feelings and desires a source of authority for you?**

God has made us to have feelings. These can strongly shape how we live and it can be helpful to be aware of them. However, leaning on feelings as a source of authority for truth is dangerous.

### **6. Is it possible that lots of people can be wrong?**

Consensus can be helpful. It also can be helpful to explore what groups of people agree on. However, a similar warning applies—a large number of people can collectively agree on folly.