



February 26/27, 2011  
2 John and 3 John  
*"Love and Truth" Part 3*  
Pastor Gary Hamrick

The apostle John wrote these epistles about 90AD. He probably wrote 3 John after he wrote the book of Revelation. The recipient(s) for 2 John - *"the chosen lady"* - may be a woman or the people in the church that met in her home. 3 John was written to Gaius, who was a faithful leader in a church in Asia Minor.

The theme for the first two studies in this series was love. In 2 John and 3 John there is also a prominent theme, and that is truth. Truth is used eleven times in these two short letters (27 verses). Two prominent verses are [2 John 4](#), which says, *"It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us."* He writes in [3 John 4](#): *"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth."*

The question today is whether John would have the same joy if he were to look at the Church today? Would he find that the Church is *"walking in the truth"*? Clive Calver,<sup>1</sup> writing in *Christianity* magazine about the Church said, "We drift on a tide of uncertainty into a sea of unknowing." We can understand why our culture is trending toward relativism because the abandonment of a moral reference point leads to truth being evaluated on an individual basis. The troubling aspect of this is that the Church is trending in the same direction. Why would people want to accept the notion that "truth is whatever you believe"? Why would they believe "there is no absolute truth, and if there was such a thing as absolute truth, how could we know what it is?" When Christian people embrace the popular ideas of the day, it's clear that the Church is in trouble.

The Bible has a great deal to say about truth, particularly about God and our relationship with him as human beings created in his image. First, the gospel

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<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clive\\_Calver](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clive_Calver)

message (concerning the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ) is spoken of as *"the word of truth."*<sup>2 3 4</sup> Second, the Bible tells us in [1 John 3:19](#), that Christians are spoken of as those who *"belong to the truth."*<sup>5</sup> Third, God the Father's Word is truth, according to [John 17:17](#).<sup>6</sup> Fourth, in [John 14:6](#), God the Son declared himself to be the truth.<sup>7</sup> And finally, in [John 16:13](#), we read that God the Holy Spirit is spoken of as the *"Spirit of truth"* who will *"guide us into all truth."*<sup>8</sup>

There are a lot of people who deny absolute truth and they like to illustrate their viewpoint with the story of two blind men who examined an elephant. The first man described the elephant as being like a hose, while the other described the elephant as being like a tree. The conclusion; it all just depends on your point of view. To people like this, everything depends on the viewpoint of the one investigating, so they'll say, "That may be true for you, but it's not true for me."

Truth is seen as a personal preference or perception that does not extend beyond an individual's perspective. This view eliminates the need for God, or an objective standard for truth, because it assumes that the standard for moral truth is self. People will conveniently deny absolute truth just to justify their own immoral behavior, which obligates them to tolerate the immoral behavior of others.

It's interesting to note, however, that when push comes to shove, the people who deny absolute truth are willing to condemn the events of 9-11-2001. They would be outraged over the murder of a loved-one or if their child were to be violated, and they would call the police if they came home to find that his or her home had been robbed.

What guides that kind of moral outrage? The simple answer is, Truth! The belief held in every human being created in God's image is that there are certain things that are right and certain things that are wrong. Truth can only exist if there is an objective standard by which to measure it, and that objective, unchanging absolute is God. At the University of Houston, political science professors reviewed some 15,000 writings of our founding fathers.<sup>9</sup> They found that 3,154 of these writings had a

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<sup>2</sup> [Ephesians 1:13](#) - *"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit..."*

<sup>3</sup> [Colossians 1:5](#) - *"... the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel..."*

<sup>4</sup> [James 1:18](#) - *"He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created."*

<sup>5</sup> [1 John 3:19](#) - *"This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence..."*

<sup>6</sup> [John 17:17](#) - *"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."*

<sup>7</sup> [John 14:6](#) - *"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"*

<sup>8</sup> [John 16:13](#) - *"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."*

<sup>9</sup> Use this link to read more about signers of the Declaration of Independence, their faith and their understanding of the importance of the Bible.

<http://www.wallbuilders.com/LIBissuesArticles.asp?id=8755>

significant impact on our Constitution. Their findings include these facts: 1.) The Bible was quoted 16 times more than any other source, 2.) 94% of the quotes were based on the Bible, 3.) 34% came directly from the Bible, and 4.) 60% used the Bible to arrive at their conclusion.<sup>10</sup>

Their research determined that the idea for three branches of government originated from John Locke's article entitled, Two Treaties of Government. It's easy to see how Locke came to this conclusion when you read [Isaiah 33:22](#).<sup>11</sup> The founding fathers substantiated the idea of separation of powers from [Jeremiah 17:9](#).<sup>12</sup> One other interesting concept is that the idea that churches should be exempt from taxes comes from [Ezra 7:24](#).<sup>13</sup> The fact is that our country and our laws were founded upon Judeo-Christian views, and our founding fathers relied upon the Bible as the framework for government and society. The evidence is irrefutable!

Today, however, there is open rebellion against truth. Terms are being redefined and lines are being redrawn. We live in a world where truth has been displaced by relevance and blurred by preference, where people say, "Every individual is the definer of their own reality." Michael Novak, in an article published in *Readers Digest*, declared, "The most critical threat to our freedom is a failure to appreciate the power of truth."<sup>14</sup>

Radical political views and immoral social agendas have wide access to a culture where an absolute God no longer defines truth. Relative truth is like a ship with neither rudder nor compass, battered by the stormy sea of thoughts and ideas. However, this is not truth at all. Once truth is recognized as God's truth, it becomes truth for us only when we accept it and obey it, so our lives can be directed by it. God's truth becomes our rudder and compass for our lives.

One thing is sure; the next generation will only be saved if Christians and churches know the truth, live the truth, stand up for the truth, and share the truth... no matter what the consequences!

### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [2 John](#) and [3 John](#) to provide an overview for this study.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.three-peaks.net/annette/Godly.htm>

<sup>11</sup> [Isaiah 33:22](#) - "For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us." (Emphasis added)

<sup>12</sup> [Jeremiah 17:9](#) - "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"

<sup>13</sup> [Ezra 7:24](#) - "You are also to know that you have no authority to impose taxes, tribute or duty on any of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, temple servants or other workers at this house of God."

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.christianity.co.nz/truth1.htm>

3. Read and briefly discuss the following verses.
- a. **John 1:14** – The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
  - b. **John 8:31-32** – “To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’ ”
  - c. **John 14:6** – *“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’ ”*
  - d. **John 16:13** – *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”*
  - e. **John 17:17** – *“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”*
  - f. **John 18:37-38** – *“ ‘You are a king, then!’ said Pilate. Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. In fact, 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.’ ‘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.’ ”*
4. Read and discuss this quote from Pastor Gary’s message: “We live in a world where truth has been displaced by relevance and blurred by preference.”
- a. Examples include: the definition of marriage,<sup>15</sup> the sanctity of life, sacredness of sex, Christian symbols (the cross, nativity displays and the 10 Commandments) have been eliminated from the public arena whenever and wherever possible, public prayer and references to God and Jesus in public discourse are no longer protected at all times as free speech.
  - b. Allow the people in your group to share other examples that illustrate the truth of Pastor Gary’s statement.
5. Read and discuss **Isaiah 5:20** – *“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.”*
- a. Pastor Gary referred to a recent e-mail that was sent to Loudoun County Public School athletic coaches, which forbids them to participate in prayer with players, including voluntary prayers or moments of silence.
  - b. Recently, President Obama instructed the Justice Department to no longer defend DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act), calling it unconstitutional.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Use this link to read about the current debate on same-sex marriage in the Maryland Senate.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/feb/24/maryland-senate-oks-bill-on-gay-marriage/>

<sup>16</sup> DOMA was passed (Congress 342-67 and Senate 85-14) in 1996 and signed into law by President Clinton. Use these links to read articles by Jeffrey T. Kuhner and Valerie Richardson in *The Washington*

6. Read and discuss this quote from Ravi Zacharias: “Like a hall of mirrors, we will end up defining ourselves. But we are naïve enough in the west to think that’s where we will end up. We won’t; nature abhors a vacuum. There are other world views from the eastern part of the world that will see this vacuum and storm in.”
7. How should Christians deal with the advancing tide of tolerance, which seems to be the national virtue?
8. How do you stand up for truth in the face of the onslaught of the immoral behavior of your extended family, friends, neighbors and co-workers?
9. Do you think that the Bible and God’s truth have a chance in the public arena in the United States?
10. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: determine in their heart that they will know the truth, live the truth, stand up for the truth, and share the truth... no matter what the consequences!

Note: Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV).

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*Times* – <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/feb/24/obamas-homosexual-america/> and <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/feb/23/obama-administration-ends-its-defense-doma/>