

TRUTH *that* MATTERS

Build Your Faith on the Rock

CREATED BY DR. STEPHEN CUTCHINS

VOLUME ONE



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Foreword



My journey to being better prepared to defend the truth about Christianity began years ago while I was serving as a part-time student pastor near Charlotte, NC, and working full-time as a public school teacher. I found that my students had questions about God and the Christian faith that I wasn't ready to answer. This led me to seek out resources and support.

During a summer student retreat, I taught from a book on Christian apologetics, and I learned that one of the authors, Dr. Norman Geisler, lived nearby in Charlotte. Nervously, I reached out to him, offering to take him to lunch. To my surprise, he agreed and, if I recall correctly, even covered the bill. That meeting was a turning point for me. Shortly after, I began studying under Dr. Geisler and other professors at Southern Evangelical Seminary (SES). The insights and training I received from them have profoundly influenced my life, and they are valued contributors to this curriculum.

What you're about to explore is a reformatted version of my doctoral dissertation from SES, developed under the guidance of Dr. Barry Leventhal and Dr. Doug Potter. Originally designed as an eight-week curriculum, our team has now streamlined it into five modules. This updated version also includes contributions from current SES faculty and president, Judge Phil Ginn.

In a world where skepticism grows, and hostility toward Christianity seems ever more common, how can we confidently address the tough questions about faith, truth, and God? What if our doubts and challenges could lead us to a deeper understanding and relationships with the One



Foreword



we seek to understand instead of pulling us away? If you or someone you lead are uncertain or struggling with questions about Christianity, this curriculum is a resource to seek answers and strengthen your faith. Let me take you on this journey.

In His grace,



Dr. Stephen Cutchins
Executive Director, Truth That Matters
The Center of Innovative Training
Southern Evangelical Seminary



How to Use This Book

Welcome!

Thank you for choosing this exciting five week curriculum where you will learn the answers to some of the most common questions people ask about the truth of the Christian faith.

Each week the Student Guide will focus on a foundational lesson in apologetics, or defense of the Christian faith, that will be enhanced by material from this Leader Guide and discussion with other group members.

Key concepts, or “Big Rocks,” are featured in each lesson to help draw attention to important points for learning and discussion.

This Leader Guide shows you what students are seeing in the Student Guide and guides you in helping students interact with and expand the material.

Helpful quotes and additional commentary are also included for helping you build on each week’s lesson.

Each day of the week, students will read the Bible verse and meditate on what Scripture has to say concerning this week’s Big Rock.

Thank you for preparing others to confidently defend the hope within them!



LESSON ONE: The Truth about Truth

✦ **Theme:** Truth

✦ **Key Question:** What is truth?

✦ **Key Verses:** 2 Timothy 4:3-4

✦ **Big Rock:** Absolute truth is true for...
all people, in all times, at all places.

✦ **Objectives:**

- Define apologetics
- Explain truth
- Discuss 2 Timothy 4:3-4
- Identify two things truth is not

✦ **Teaching Methods:**

Lecture, discussion, and Q&A

✦ **Teaching Materials:**

Teacher and student lessons

✦ **Teaching Time Allotted:** 40 minutes



LESSON ONE: The Truth about Truth

Leader Guide



Step 1 Introduction

- Tell the class that this is the first week in a 5-week series called “Truth That Matters” that is focused on Christian Apologetics.
 - Topics will include Truth, God and Jesus, Miracles, and the Problem of Evil.
 - This week: TRUTH.



Step 2 Apologetics

- Ask the class: “What is Christian Apologetics?”



Building Block Term

Apologetics =
Defense of the Christian Faith

- Ask the class if they think apologetics is important.
- Explain that the Bible commands us to be apologists.
- Have a class member read 1 Peter 3:15.
- It is important to note that apologetics is a response to the challenge, “Prove It,” and does not necessarily set out to prove, but rather to defend.



Step 3 Truth

- Introduce the Rock to Build On and discuss it with the class.



Rock to Build On

Truth = Telling It Like It Is

Ask the class if they agree or disagree with the following, and allow time for discussion:

- Truth can be described as “that which corresponds to reality.”
- Contrary beliefs are possible, but contrary truths are not possible.
- We can believe everything is true, but we cannot make everything true.
- Truth is discovered and not invented.
- The Bible is true because it “tells it like it is” and it corresponds to reality (Geisler and Turek).



LESSON ONE: The Truth about Truth

Leader Guide



Step 4
Scripture

■ Read 2 Timothy 4:3-4.



Scriptural Bedrock

"For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry."

2 TIMOTHY 4:3-4

Discuss the following based on your study of this passage:

Commentary from Dr. Tom Constable

Paul explained the reason for this charge next. "They" are the people to whom Timothy and his followers would preach. The time would come when they would "not tolerate" the truth but would only listen to speakers who told them what they wanted to hear (cf. 3:6), not what they needed to hear. Paul pictured people who would be bored by, apathetic to, and annoyed by "sound doctrine." Lenski believed that Paul was referring to people in the churches, rather than to the general population.



LESSON ONE: The Truth about Truth

Leader Guide

I think church people were probably in Paul's mind when he made this statement, but what he said has proven to be true of people generally. "In other words, they [these listeners] have made themselves the measure of who should teach them and what teaching is acceptable." "The desire for pleasure is insatiable, and is increased or aggravated by indulgence; hence the heaping up of those who may minister to it."

Moreover, these listeners would choose to believe "myths" rather than "the truth" (e.g., atheistic evolution, humanism, reincarnation, etc.; cf. 1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; Titus 1:14). The context seems to indicate that these people were believers (cf. Luke 8:13; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:12). Earle believed that the phrase "sound doctrine" (v. 3) is the key term in the Pastorals (cf. 1 Tim. 1:10). Hendriksen outlined this book as follows:

"As regards sound doctrine: Hold on to it (ch. 1), teach it (ch. 2), abide in it (ch. 3), and preach it (ch. 4)." "Timothy's major responsibility in Ephesus was to defend and proclaim sound doctrine."

This is the sixth time in this letter that Paul referred to "the truth" (cf. 2:15, 18, 25; 3:7, 8). He also referred to it five times in 1 Timothy (2:4, 7; 3:15; 4:3; 6:5). Obviously "the truth" was very important to him, and it should be to us.

Tom Constable, Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), 2 Tim 4:3-4. Reprinted with permission.



LESSON ONE: The Truth about Truth

Leader Guide



Step 5
Discussion

Lead the class in the discussion questions.



Discussion Questions

- ✦ Which people are mentioned in this passage? **Answer: "men," "teachers," and "you"(Timothy)**
- ✦ What do you think Paul is most concerned about in this passage? **Answer: Timothy**

"keeping his head" and teaching the truth, despite what the people are wanting

- ✦ Who does Paul say is going to control what is being taught? **Answer: The people (students) ... not Timothy (teacher)**
- ✦ What motivates the people to turn their ears from truth? **Answer: A selfish desire to hear only what they like, they do not want to hear truth**
- ✦ What do you think Paul means when he writes, "Keep your head"? **Answer: He wants Timothy to be grounded in truth**
- ✦ How does this passage relate to what we see in the church today? **Answer: This is very prevalent in our culture, many people believe that truth is relative and can be different for everyone**



Step 6
Objective Truth

Re-introduce the Big Rock for the lesson.

Definition of Relative Truth:

Relative Truth is: Something true for **SOME** people, not for **ALL** people ... or in **SOME** places, not **ALL** places ... or at **SOME** times, not at **ALL** times



LESSON ONE: The Truth about Truth

Leader Guide

(Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, "Truth: Absolute or Relative?" (PowerPoint presentation from series 12 Points that Show Christianity is True [Charlotte, NC: Impact, 2001]), slide 20.)

Some believe there is no truth at all.

- This is a self-defeating position.

A person may say: "There is no Truth."

- The problem: Is that a true statement?



Objective Truth" and "Absolute Truth" are the same.

"Relative Truth" and "Subjective Truth" are the same.

Truth can be understood both from what it is and from what it is not.

Truth is not what works.

Things are not true simply because they "work."

Cheating on a test may get you a good grade, but that grade does not represent the truth of what you have learned.

Truth is not what feels good.



LESSON ONE: The Truth about Truth

Leader Guide

A bad report card might cause you to feel bad, but it represents the truth (Norman L. Geisler, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, Baker Reference Library [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999], 741.)

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Truth is not what feels good.



LESSON ONE: The Truth about Truth

Leader Guide



Step 7
Application

A bad report card might cause you to feel bad, but it represents the truth (Norman L. Geisler, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, Baker Reference Library [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999], 741.)

Challenge the class with the following applications:



Application

- Realize that truth is not always what you want to hear.
- Appreciate people in your life who will tell you the truth.

Allow time for questions and discussion.

Remind the class to read the “Scriptural Bedrock” verses for each day.



Step 8
Close

Close in prayer



LESSON TWO: The Truth about God

✦ **Theme:** God

✦ **Key Question:** What do we know about God?

✦ **Key Verses:** Romans 1:18-20

✦ **Big Rock:** "What comes into our mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us." (A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy: The Attributes of God: Their Meaning in the Christian Life* (New York: Harper, 1961).

✦ **Objectives:**

- Discuss Romans 1:18-20
- Identify two ways God reveals Himself
- Identify 3 major worldviews
- Discuss 3 arguments for the existence of God
- Describe God's trinity

✦ **Teaching Methods:**

Lecture, discussion, and Q&A

✦ **Teaching Materials:**

Teacher and student lessons

✦ **Teaching Time Allotted:**

40 minutes



LESSON TWO: The Truth about God



Leader Guide



Step 1
Introduction

Tell the class that this is the second week in an 5-week series called "Truth That Matters" that is focused on Christian Apologetics.

- Topics will include Truth, God and Jesus, Miracles, and the Problem of Evil.
- This week: GOD.



Step 2
Apologetics and Truth

Ask the class: "What is Christian Apologetics?" After allowing time for them to answer, review the definition below.



Building Block Term

Apologetics =
Defense of the Christian Faith

- Remind the class that apologetics is important because "reason demands it and the Bible commands it" Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, (PowerPoint presentation from series 12 Points that Show Christianity is True [Charlotte, NC: Impact, 2001], slide 3).
- Review with the class the following definition of truth and explain that today's lesson will explore the "truth" about God.



Rock to Build On

Truth = Telling It Like It Is



Step 3
God

Introduce this lesson's Rock to Build On and discuss it with the class. Ask the class if they agree or disagree with the following, and allow time for discussion:



Rock to Build On

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, (PowerPoint presentation from series 12 Points that Show Christianity is True [Charlotte, NC: Impact, 2001]), slide 3.



LESSON TWO: The Truth about God

Leader Guide



Step 4
Scripture

■ Read Romans 1:18-20.



Scriptural Bedrock

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”

ROMANS 1:18-20

Discuss the following based on your study of this passage:

Commentary from Dr. Tom Constable

1. The reason for human guilt 1:18

In this verse Paul explained why Gentiles need to hear the gospel and experience salvation. God has revealed His wrath as well as His righteousness (v. 17) from heaven in the gospel (Cranfield, 1:109-10). As Paul would explain, the unfolding of history also reveals God's hatred toward sin and His judgment of sin. The moral devolution of mankind is not just a natural consequence of man's sinning but also a result of God's judgment of sinners.



LESSON TWO: The Truth about God

Leader Guide

The final judgment of sin will occur in the eschaton (end times), but already God is pouring out His wrath against sin to a lesser degree (cf. Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6) (See René A. López, "The First [sic] Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans," in *The Grace New Testament Commentary*, 2:627-28, 636; idem, "Do Believers Experience the Wrath of God?" *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 15:29 (Autumn 2002):45-66). Paul described wrath as revealed from heaven because it comes from God who is in heaven (G. Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, p. 219. See the excursus on the wrath of God in Romans in Newell, pp. 40-46).

"God's wrath is his divine displeasure with sin. We call it 'wrath' because it shares certain basic characteristics of human wrath. But because it is God's wrath it can have none of the sinful qualities of its analogical counterpart" (Mounce, pp. 76-77).

"Ungodliness" means lack of reverence for God. Man's neglect of God and rebellion against God are evidences of ungodliness. "Unrighteousness" or "wickedness" (NIV) means injustice toward other human beings. We see it in any attitude or action that is unloving. Together these two words show humankind's failure to love God and other people as we should (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:37-39). Verses 19-27 demonstrate man's ungodliness, and verses 28-32 show his wickedness. The "truth" refers to truth that people know about God (cf. v. 25). They suppress this truth by their wickedness.

"... whenever the truth starts to exert itself and makes them feel uneasy in their moral nature, they hold it down, suppress it. Some drown its voice by rushing on into their immoralities; others strangle the disturbing voice by argument and by denial" (Lenski, pp. 92-93).



LESSON TWO: The Truth about God

Leader Guide

Even if someone acknowledges God for who He is, he still does not honor God as much as he should. Every person suppresses the revelation of God, and approves of those who practice evil, to some extent.

2. The ungodliness of humankind 1:19-27

Verse 18 identifies people's ungodliness and unrighteousness as the targets of God's wrath. Some people are more ungodly and unrighteous than others, but all are ungodly and unrighteous.

These verses begin a discussion of "natural revelation." Verse 19 states the fact of natural revelation, and verse 20 explains the process (Witmer, p. 442). "Natural revelation" describes what everyone knows about God because of what God has revealed concerning Himself in nature (See Robert L. Thomas, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, ch. 5: "General Revelation and Biblical Hermeneutics," pp. 113-40).

It is truth about God that is immediately obvious to every normal human being. Paul was not referring to the truth that man has been able to discover through various disciplines of study (e.g., botany, biology, zoology, etc.). What God has revealed about Himself in Scripture is "special revelation." The creation bears testimony to its Maker, and every human being is aware of this silent witness (cf. Ps. 19)(See Bruce A. Baker, "Romans 1:18-21 and Presuppositional Apologetics," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155:619 [July-September 1998]:280-98). That is, it is observable, not necessarily audible.

"Napoleon, on a warship in the Mediterranean on a star-lit night, passed a group of his officers who were mocking at the idea of a God. He stopped,



LESSON TWO: The Truth about God

Leader Guide

and sweeping his hand toward the stars, said, 'Gentlemen, you must get rid of those first!'" (Newell, p. 29).

Four things characterize natural revelation: First, it is a clear testimony; everyone is aware of it. It is "evident" (v. 19). Second, everyone can understand it. We can draw conclusions about the Creator from His creation. "His invisible attributes ... have been clearly perceived" (v. 10) is an oxymoron (a figure of speech in which apparently contradictory terms appear together). Third, this revelation has gone out "since the creation of the world" in every generation (v. 10). Fourth, it is a limited revelation in that it does not reveal everything about God (e.g., His love and grace) but only some things about Him, specifically, "His eternal power and divine nature" (v. 10).

"This is the only New Testament instance of theiotes, 'divinity', 'divine nature' (NIV). If God's divinity is shown in creation, his full deity or divine essence (theotes) is embodied in Christ (Col. 2:9)" (Bruce, p. 80).

Natural revelation tells people that there is a Supreme Being, and it makes them responsible to respond to their Creator in worship and submission (See Ronald E. Mann, "False and True Worship in Romans 1:18-25," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157:625 [January-March 2000]:26-34). However, it does not give sufficient information for people to experience salvation from their sins. That is why everyone needs to hear the gospel.

"If people could be saved without ever hearing the gospel, the worst thing one could do would be to



LESSON TWO: The Truth about God

Leader Guide

send a missionary to them. Why give them the chance to reject the gospel and end up in hell if they can get to heaven simply by not hearing the gospel?" (Fruchtenbaum, p. 46).

"Utter uncompromising, abandonment of hope in man is the first preliminary to understanding or preaching the gospel" (Newell, p. 27).

Paul did not explain exactly how God reveals Himself in nature, and there have been three popular explanations: One is that He left behind clues or tracks in creation from which everyone can reason that there is a Creator. Another explanation is that God personally reveals His presence to everyone through the medium of creation. Still another view is that everyone has a vague awareness of God because we recognize that we are finite creatures living in a world that is subject to change. None of these views is demonstrably certain, and all of them have problems. More than one may be true (For a discussion of them with arguments for the third one, see Richard Alan Young, "The Knowledge of God in Romans 1:18-23: Exegetical and Theological Reflections," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43:4 (December 2000):695-707). But there is no question that God has revealed Himself in nature (See F. W. Grant, *Spiritual Law in the Natural World*, for this writer's explanation of how God's revelations in Scripture and nature harmonize).

"The being of God may be apprehended [perceived], but cannot be comprehended [fully understood]. Finite understandings cannot perfectly know an infinite being; but, there is that which may be known" (Henry, p. 1755).

Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), 1 Rom 1:18-20. Reprinted with permission.



LESSON TWO: The Truth about God

Leader Guide



Step 5
Discussion

■ Lead the class in the discussion questions.



Discussion Questions



What does it mean for something to be revealed? **Answer:**

- To cause or allow something to be seen
- Make something previously unknown known
- To open up to be viewed



In this verse, what is being revealed and to whom is it being revealed? **Answer:**

- The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness.
- God's invisible attributes are made visible.



Paul says God's invisible attributes are clearly seen in what? **Answer:**

- Creation.
- This is called general revelation.
- This is one of two ways that God reveals himself.



What is the end result of God revealing Himself in this passage? **Answer::**

- People are without excuse.
- People are condemned.
- General revelation is enough to condemn all people.



LESSON TWO: The Truth about God



Leader Guide



Is there enough information in this passage for a person to be justified?

Answer:

- No. It takes more than just general revelation.
- General revelation is sufficient for condemnation but not salvation.
- Specific revelation as contained in God’s Word—both living (Jesus) and God’s revealed message (as written the Bible)—is necessary for salvation.
- This is why it is important to spread the gospel and tell people about Jesus.



Step 6
Revelation



Discuss the following from the Student Guide.



We can't know everything there is to know about God but we can know God.

God has chosen to disclose Himself, and His self-disclosure is called revelation.

According to evangelical theology, God has revealed himself in two ways:

- General Revelation (in nature)
- Specific Revelation (in Scripture)



LESSON TWO: The Truth about God



Leader Guide


While the Bible is God's only written revelation, it is not God's only revelation.

God has more to say to us than is in the Bible." His general revelation in nature, man, history, art and music offers vast opportunities for continual exploration." (Norman L. Geisler, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 671).

Review the following chart:

<p>Special Revelation</p> <p>God as Redeemer norm for church means of salvation</p>	<p>General Revelation</p> <p>means of condemnation God as Creator norm for society</p>
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Emphasize the following statement from the student guide:



Rock to Build On

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." - A.W. Tozer

- God is like a rope that goes infinitely in both directions.
- You can hold it and see it but you can't see the ends.
- Review the following figure below from the student guide:

3 Major Worldviews



ATHEISM
No God At All



PANTHEISM
God Is All



THEISM
God Made All

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LESSON TWO: The Truth about God

Leader Guide

Explain to the class that Theism is correct.

God is the creator and sustainer of all things.

Review the "3 ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD" listed in the Student Guide:

Three Arguments for the Existence of God

Beginning or Cosmological Argument



"Anything that has a beginning has a beginner."

Design or Teleological Argument



"Anything that has a design has a designer."

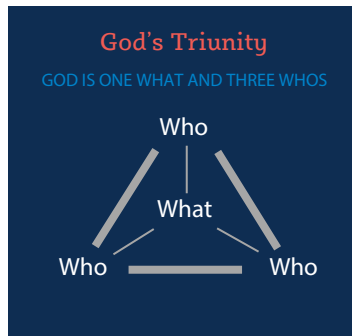
Moral Argument



"If there is a moral law there must be a moral law giver."

- Because creation has a beginning and a design there must be a beginner (GOD) and a designer (GOD).
- If there is even one thing that is morally wrong in the world there must be a moral law and a law giver (GOD).

Read the following statement from the student guide and discuss the diagram:



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LESSON TWO: The Truth about God

Leader Guide



Step 7
Application

Explain that God is like a triangle:

- One triangle has three sides, but it is only one triangle.
- Take away any of the sides and it is not a triangle.

The doctrine of the Trinity is based on two basic biblical teachings:

1. There is one and only one God.
2. There are three distinct persons who are God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Challenge the class with the following applications:



Application

- + Realize that God is real and has revealed Himself to us.
- + Tell someone something you know about God this week.

Allow time for questions and discussion.

Remind the class to read the “Scriptural Bedrock” verses or chapters for each day.



Step 8
Close

Close in prayer.



LESSON THREE:

The Truth about Miracles

✦ **Theme:** Miracles

✦ **Key Question:** Are miracles important to Christianity?

✦ **Key Verses:** 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

✦ **Big Rock:** "A miracle is a special act of God that interrupts the natural course of events" (Norman L. Geisler, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, Baker Reference Library [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999], 450).

✦ **Objectives:**

- Discuss 1 Corinthians 15:12-19
- Define the word "miracle"
- Identify three purposes for miracles
- Identify the differences between miracles and other unusual events

✦ **Teaching Methods:**

Lecture, discussion, and Q&A

✦ **Teaching Materials:**

Teacher and student lessons

✦ **Teaching Time Allotted:**

40 minutes



LESSON THREE:

The Truth about Miracles



Leader Guide



Step 1
Introduction

Tell the class that this is the third week in an 5-week series called “Truth That Matters” that is focused on Christian Apologetics.

- Topics will include Truth, God and Jesus, Miracles, and the Problem of Evil.
- This week: MIRACLES.



Step 2
Apologetics and Truth

Ask the class: “What is Christian Apologetics?” After allowing time for them to answer, review the definition below.



Building Block Term

Apologetics =
Defense of the Christian Faith

- Remind the class that apologetics is important because “reason demands it and the Bible commands it” Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, (PowerPoint presentation from series 12 Points that Show Christianity is True [Charlotte, NC: Impact, 2001], slide 3).
- Review with the class the following definition of truth and explain that today’s lesson will explore the “truth” about miracles.



Rock to Build On

Truth = Telling It Like It Is



Step 3
Miracles

Introduce this lesson’s Rock to Build On and discuss it with the class. Ask the class if they agree or disagree with the following, and allow time for discussion:



Rock to Build On

MIRACLE: A special act of God that interrupts the natural course of events.



LESSON THREE:

The Truth about Miracles

Leader Guide



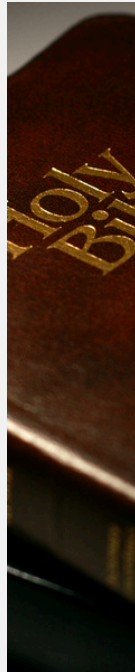
Step 4
Scripture

Read the following additional definitions for a miracle:

- “A miracle is an act of God to confirm the word of God through a messenger of God.” (Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), 202.)
- “A miracle is something which would never have happened had nature, as it were, been left to its own devices.” (Antony Flew, “Miracles,” in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan and the Free Press, 1967), 5:346.)

■ Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

Scriptural Bedrock



“Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”

1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-19



LESSON THREE:

The Truth about Miracles

Leader Guide

Discuss the following based on your study of this passage:

Commentary from Dr. Tom Constable

Belief in the resurrection of a dead body seems to have been difficult for Greeks to accept in other places as well, not just in Corinth (cf. Acts 17:32; 2 Tim. 2:17-18). Evidently some of the Corinthian Christians were having second thoughts about this doctrine because of the general denial of bodily resurrection by the Greeks.

"These deniers apparently believe that those who are truly 'spiritual' (in the Corinthians' sense) are already 'reigning with Christ' in glory (see 4:8)." (Furnish, p. 74.)

"On the whole the Greek did believe in the immortality of the soul, but the Greek would never have dreamed of believing in the resurrection of the body." (Barclay, *The Letter ...*, p. 156.)

To most Greeks the idea of the resurrection of the body was loathsome because they viewed the body as a hindrance to attaining the highest aspects of life. They had a proverb that said: "The body is a tomb," and one of the Greek writers wrote: "I am a poor soul shackled to a corpse." (Barclay, *The Letter ...*, p. 156.) So the idea of a resurrected Christ conflicted with their disbelief in bodily resurrection.

"Greek philosophy entertained no conception of a resurrection of the body." (Merrill C. Tenney, *The Reality of the Resurrection*, p. 23.)

Belief in bodily resurrection is foundational to the Christian faith. If the resurrection of the body is impossible, then the resurrection of Jesus



LESSON THREE:

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Christ is a fiction. If He did not rise, the apostles' preaching rested on a lie and was in "vain" (pointless), and consequently the Corinthians' faith would have been in "vain" (useless and hopeless).

"The fulfillment of God's purpose for Christ's victory over the grave is the key to Pauline eschatology." (Ibid., p. 77.)

This is the first in a series of conditional statements ("if ...then") that run through verse 19. They are first class conditions in the Greek text, which express the assumption of reality for the sake of the argument. In verse 13 Paul did not express disbelief in the resurrection from the dead. He only assumed that there is none in order to make a point. This was also his tactic in verses 14, 16, 17, and 19.

If there were no resurrection of the body the apostles would not only be in error but they would also be false witnesses against God. They would have been preaching something untrue about God, namely, that He did not raise Jesus Christ— when He really had. This would be a serious charge for the Corinthians to make against the man who had founded their church, who claimed to represent God. Really, by denying the Resurrection, the unbelieving Corinthians were the "false witnesses."

Paul repeated his line of thought, contained in verses 12 through 14, using other terms in order to emphasize a different point. If Christ was still dead and in the grave, then "faith" in Him for salvation is "worthless." (See Norman L. Geisler, "The Significance of Christ's Physical Resurrection," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 146:582 [April-June 1989]:148-70.) If Christ did not rise, the believer is still dead in his or her sins. He or she is without any hope of forgiveness or eternal life. So Christians who had already died ("fallen asleep in Christ") would be lost forever ("have perished"), eternally separated from God. Even though it is the death of Christ that saves us, if He had not been raised from the dead His death would have been in vain.



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"The denial of their future, that they are destined for resurrection on the basis of Christ's resurrection, has the net effect of a denial of their past, that they have received forgiveness of sins on the basis of Christ's death."(Fee, *The First ...*, p. 743.)

Paul evidently meant that, given the Corinthians' position, the believer has no future of any kind. "Perished" probably has this meaning since, even though they denied the Resurrection, they were still baptizing for the dead (v. 29). If the Christian's hope "in Christ" is just for what he or she can expect this side of the grave, then that person deserves pity. Of course there are some benefits to trusting Christ as we live here and now (cf. 1 Tim. 4:8). However we have to place these things in the balance with what we lose in this life for taking a stand for Him (cf. Phil. 3:8; 1 Cor. 4:4-5; 9:25). If we have nothing to hope for on the other side of the grave, specifically the resurrection of our bodies, the Christian life would not be worth living ("we are of all people most to be pitied"). To summarize his argument Paul claimed that if believers have no future, specifically resurrected bodies like Christ's, we have no past or present to speak of either. That is, we have no forgiveness of our past sins, and we have no advantage over unbelievers in the present.

"It is a point of very great importance to remember that the Corinthians were not denying the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; what they were denying is the resurrection of the body; and what Paul is insistent upon is that if a man denies the possibility of the resurrection of the body he has thereby denied the possibility of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and has therefore emptied the Christian message of its truth and the Christian life of its reality." (Barclay, *The Letter ...*, p. 153.)

Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. Reprinted with permission.



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Step 5
Discussion

Lead the class in discussing the following quote from the student guide:



Quote for Discussion



“Indeed, since the credibility of Christianity rests on the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:12–19), the whole of the orthodox Christian faith crumbles if miracles do

not occur. If historic biblical Christianity is to survive and make sense to the modern mind, it is necessary to provide a reasonable explanation of the supernatural. Apart from the credibility of the biblical account of miracles, we can bid farewell to orthodox Christianity. Such is the challenge before us.” (C.S. Lewis) (Norman L. Geisler, *Miracles and the Modern Mind: A Defense of Biblical Miracles* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992], 10.)

Lead the class in reading the following statement and ask how they would respond to someone if they said that miracles are not possible:

Quote for Discussion

“The Bible is laced with miracles. From the Creation to the Second Coming, from Moses at the burning bush, to Daniel in the lions’ den, from the Virgin Birth to the Resurrection, miraculous happenings seem to fill the pages of Scripture. To the believer, these are a wonderful confirmation of the power and message of God, but to the unbeliever, miracles are a stumbling block—a proof that religion is just a bunch of fairy tales after all. In the world that he lives in, there is no divine



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intervention, no interruptions to the normal order; there is only natural law. Fire consumes when it burns; lions eat whatever is available; pregnancy only happens when male sperm unite with female ova, and the dead stay dead. As far as they are concerned, the miracles of the Bible could no more be true than Mother Goose.” (Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask* [Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990], 75.)

Ask the class how important, on a scale of 1-10, miracles are to Christianity.

How important do you think miracles are to Christianity?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10



Step 6
Miracles

■ Discuss why they think miracles are important to Christianity.

Emphasize to the class the importance of miracles to Christianity.

“You cannot disprove miracles without disproving God.”

“Prove there is a God first.”

“If we admit God, must we then admit miracles? Indeed, indeed, you have no security against it.” (C. S. Lewis, *Miracles, a Preliminary Study*, Macmillan Paperbacks Edition [New York: Macmillan, 1947], 169.)



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The Purpose of Miracles

The Bible states at least three purposes of a miracle:

- (1) to glorify the nature of God (John 2:11; 11:40);
- (2) to accredit certain persons as the spokespeople for God (Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3–4); and
- (3) to provide evidence for belief in God (John 6:2, 14; 20:30–31).

Of course, not all people believe that the event is an act of God, even when they witness a miracle. But in this event, says the New Testament, the miracle is a witness against them. John grieved, “Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him” (John 12:37). Jesus Himself said of some, “They will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead” (Luke 16:31). So in this sense the result (not the purpose) of disbelieving in miracles is condemnation of the unbeliever (cf. John 12:31, 37).

Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology, Volume One: Introduction, Bible* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002), 48-49.

Miracles in the Bible:

- Mosaic (Moses)
- Prophetic (Elijah/Elisha)
- Apostolic (Christ/Apostles)
- Each period is characterized by
 - Transition (God is doing something new)
 - New Revelation (God is saying something new)
 - Confirmation (God is confirming someone new)



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Categories of Unusual Events

Miracle—For an act of God to be an unmistakable sign from God, it would have to meet certain criteria that would distinguish God’s acts from any other unusual event. Like a king’s seal, God’s sign must be unique, easily recognizable, and something only God can do. In other words, it has characteristics that cannot be explained by natural laws, natural forces, or anything else in the physical universe. What would these criteria look like? As we saw from the Cosmological, Teleological, and Moral Arguments, God alone has infinite power (power beyond that in the natural world), supreme design and purpose, and complete moral purity. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that his acts would display or contain elements of these attributes. So the criteria for true miracles include:

- An instantaneous beginning of a powerful act, as evidenced by the Cosmological Argument (the beginning of the universe);
- Intelligent design and purpose, as evidenced by the Teleological Argument (the precise design of the universe for the purpose of supporting life, and the specified and complex design of life itself);
- The promotion of good or right behavior, as evidenced by the Moral Argument (the Moral Law pressing on us) (Geisler and Turek, 210-215).

The power component of miracles (A) means that the sign could not be explained naturally. For if a natural cause is possible, then the sign cannot be definitely identified as a miracle. A miracle has an unmistakable supernatural cause—one that transcends nature. The design component (B) means that any sign done without an obvious purpose—to confirm a truth or a messenger of truth or to bring glory



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to God—is probably not a sign from God. In other words, God is not likely to do miracles for mere entertainment purposes. Just like most earthly kings will not use their seals lightly, the King of the Universe is not likely to use his seal for frivolous reasons. After all, if he were to use miracles for mere entertainment, then we would be less likely to recognize his intent when he was trying to confirm a new truth or a new messenger. So as not to “cry wolf,” miracles must be focused on promoting a truth claim and must be relatively rare if they are going to be effective. The moral component of miracles (C) means that any sign connected with error or immorality cannot be a sign from God. Error and immorality are against God’s nature because he is the unchanging standard of truth and morality. He cannot confirm error or immorality. With these criteria—instantaneous power, intelligent design, and morality—we can identify what unusual events are true signs from God. Notice that we drew these criteria from what we’ve learned about God from the natural world and what we’ve learned about the limits of nature itself. The Bible agrees with our assessment by calling events that meet these same criteria miracles (For a detailed discussion, see Norman Geisler, *Signs and Wonders* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1988), chapter 8. See also Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999]). Both the Bible and the Qur’an teach that miracles have been used to confirm a word from God (The Bible: Ex. 4:1–5; Num. 16:5ff; 1 Kings 18:21–22; Matt. 12:38–39; Luke 7:20–22; John 3:1–2; Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3–4; 2 Cor. 12:12. The Qur’an: Sura 3:184, 17:102; cf. Sura 23:45). So an event connected with a divine truth claim that had these characteristics would be a miracle—an act of God to confirm a word from God. For example, a miracle has occurred if Jesus—a man who predicted he would rise from the dead



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—actually rose from the dead. Such an event would display instantaneous power beyond natural capabilities, intelligent forethought and design, and a moral purpose by confirming that Jesus is from God (and we, therefore, ought to listen to what he has to say!). There is no natural force or other source of power that could explain such an event. Moreover, if the Resurrection actually happened, it did not occur “out of the blue” but in context. In other words, the Resurrection was an event in the context of a theistic universe, where a man claiming to be from God and performing miracles along the way predicted it would happen. Such a context suggests it’s a miracle and not just a yet-to-be-explained natural event. In short, if the Resurrection actually occurred (and we’ll investigate that question later), it has God’s “fingerprints” all over it.

Providence—Religious people, particularly Christians, throw the term “miracle” around rather loosely. Quite often they identify an event as a miracle when it could be more accurately described as providential. Providential events are those caused by God indirectly, not directly. That is, God uses natural laws to accomplish them. Answered prayer and unlikely but beneficial happenings can be examples. These may be quite remarkable and may stimulate faith, but they are not supernatural. For example, the fog at Normandy was providential because it helped conceal the Allied attack against the evil Nazi regime. It wasn’t a miracle, because it could be explained by natural laws, but God may have been behind it. By contrast, a miracle would require something like bullets bouncing off the chests of our young men as they assaulted the beach.



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Satanic Signs—Another possible cause of an unusual event could be other spiritual beings. Since God exists, it is possible that other spiritual beings exist. But if Satan and demons do exist, they have limited powers. Why? Because, as we have mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is impossible for there to be two infinite beings. Since God is infinite, no other being can be infinite. Moreover, pure dualism—an infinite Good power vs. an infinite Evil power—is impossible. There is no such thing as pure evil. Evil is a privation of or a parasite in good; it cannot exist on its own. Evil is like rust to a car. If you take away all the rust, you have a better car. If you take away all the car, you have nothing. So Satan cannot be the evil equivalent of God. In fact, Satan has good attributes such as power, free will, and rational thought, but he uses them for evil purposes. The bottom line is that God has no equal. He is the one infinite Being who is supreme over all of creation. As a result, created spiritual beings, if they exist at all, are limited by God and cannot perform the kinds of supernatural acts that only God can perform. So by natural revelation alone—without revelation from any religious book—we know that if other spiritual beings exist they are limited in their power. Incidentally, this is exactly what the Bible teaches. But just how limited are these other spiritual beings? Now we need special revelation. While we haven't gotten to the point yet of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that the Bible is true, let's assume that such beings are real and can interact with the natural world as the Bible describes. According to the Bible, only God can create life and raise the dead (Gen. 1:21; Deut. 32:39). Pharaoh's magicians, who had imitated the first two plagues, couldn't imitate the third, which created life (in the form of lice). These magicians acknowledged that the third plague was the "finger of God" (Ex. 8:19). Satan can perform tricks



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better than the best magicians—and there are many examples of these in the Bible (for a detailed discussion, see Geisler, *Signs and Wonders*, chapters 7 and 8. See the list on pages 107–108 [out of print]).—but those tricks fail to meet the characteristics of a true miracle. As we have seen, true miracles cause one to think more highly of God, tell the truth, and promote moral behavior. Counterfeit signs from Satan do not do this. They tend to glorify the person ostensibly performing the sign, and they are often associated with error and immoral behavior. They also may not be immediate, instantaneous, or permanent. In short, only God performs true miracles; Satan does counterfeit miracles. This is precisely what the Bible calls them in 2 Thessalonians 2:9 when Paul writes that, “The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders.” Of course, unless one is discerning, such signs can be deceptive and may be mistaken for miracles (Matt. 24:24).

Table 8.3 summarizes the differences between a divine miracle and a Satanic sign (For much more on this topic, see the article from which this chart is taken: “Miracles, False,” in Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 471–475):

Divine Miracle	Satanic Sign
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actual supernatural act • under Creator’s control • never associated with the occult • connected with the true God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only a <i>supernormal</i> act • under creature’s control • associated with the occult • frequently connected with pantheistic or polytheistic gods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • associated with truth • associated with good • involves true prophecies • glorifies the Creator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • associated with error • associated with evil • involves false prophecies • glorifies the creature

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LESSON THREE:

The Truth about Miracles

Leader Guide

Emphasize the following from the student guide:

A True Miracle

1. Is always immediate
2. Is always successful
3. Always lasts
4. Always glorifies God

3 Purposes of Miracles

1. Glorify God
2. Accredit certain persons as the spokespeople for God
3. Provide evidence for God

Allow time for questions and discussion.

Remind the class to read the "Scriptural Bedrock" verses or chapters for each day.

Close in prayer.



Step 7
Close



LESSON FOUR:

The Truth about Evil, Part 1

✦ **Theme:** Evil

✦ **Key Question:** Did God create evil?

✦ **Key Verses:** Gen. 1:3; Gen. 6:5

✦ **Big Rock:** God cannot create evil because God is completely good.

✦ **Objectives:**

- Discuss Genesis 1:31 & 6:5
- Explain why God cannot create Evil

✦ **Teaching Methods:**

Lecture, discussion, and Q&A

✦ **Teaching Materials:**

Teacher and student lessons

✦ **Teaching Time Allotted:**

40 minutes



LESSON FOUR:

The Truth about Evil, Part 1

Leader Guide



Step 1
Introduction

- Tell the class that this is the fourth week in a 5-week series called "Truth That Matters" that is focused on Christian Apologetics.
 - Topics will include Truth, God and Jesus, Miracles, and the Problem of Evil.
 - This week: EVIL.



Step 2
Apologetics and Truth

- Ask the class: "What is Christian Apologetics?" After allowing time for them to answer, review the definition below.



Building Block Term

Apologetics =
Defense of the Christian Faith



Step 3
Evil

- The theme for the next two lessons is the philosophical problem of evil. "The most serious intellectual obstacle that stands between many people and religious faith is the problem of evil" (Ronald H. Nash, "The Problem of Evil," in *To Everyone An Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview*; Essays in Honor of Norman L. Geisler, ed. Francis J. Beckwith, William Lane Craig, and J. P. Moreland [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004], 203).



Step 4
Scripture

- Emphasize the fact that everything God made was good. Note that the fall of man occurs between chapters 1 and 6 when Eve eats the fruit and also gives it to Adam.



Scriptural Bedrock

"Then God saw everything He had made, and indeed it was very good."

Genesis 1:31

"Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was on evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."

Genesis 6:5-7



LESSON FOUR:

The Truth about Evil, Part 1

Leader Guide



Step 5
Discussion

- Ask the class, "Why do you think God was sorry"?
- Ask the class, "Do you think that God is admitting to having made a mistake"?

Remind them that an all-good God cannot make mistakes. Everything that He does is perfect.

Breaking it down:

- When God first created the world, everything was perfect.
- By chapter six, man has disobeyed God.

God was grieved and sorry He made man.

3 Important Attributes of God



OMNIPOTENCE
God is all powerful.



OMNIBENEVOLENCE
God is all-good.



OMNISCIENCE
God is all-knowing.

Explain Omnipotence.

- Simply stated, God has the power to do all things that are in accordance with His character and will.
- The word omnipotent literally means that God is all (omni) powerful (potent).
- There are certain things that we know that God cannot do, such as lie.
- However, this is actually expressing His unlimited power to be truthful.



LESSON FOUR:

The Truth about Evil, Part 1

Leader Guide

Explain Omnibenevolence

- This brings to mind the phrase: “God is good all the time and all the time God is good.”
- No action or activity of good can be evil or immoral.

Explain Omniscience

- God knows all

Read the following statement and discuss:

With these three attributes of God in mind, it would seem that God has the power, the desire, and the knowledge to deal with the evil and pain in our world.

So did God create evil?



No. Man did.

Stress the importance of understanding that man made the choice on his own and is responsible for his actions.

- As a result, God flooded the earth.
- Ask the class, “At this point, where do you think that evil came from?”
- Guide them to understand that the evil that we see in Genesis 6 is not a result of God’s creation process but of man’s abuse of the free will that God has given him.



LESSON FOUR:

The Truth about Evil, Part 1

Leader Guide



Step 6
Answering
Evil


Remind them of 1 Peter 3:15:

“Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.”

Read this quote:

- “The problem of evil is grounded on the fact that a number of related and essential beliefs about God appear to be incompatible with the evil we encounter in the world.” (Nash, 206-207.)

Ask the class to answer the question on page two of the student guide:



Question

How would you answer a friend if they asked you to give a Theist Christian answer to this argument?

- ✚ 1. God is the author of everything.
- ✚ 2. Evil is something.
- ✚ 3. Therefore, God is the author of evil.

(Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks, When Skeptics Ask [Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990], 60.)

How would you answer a friend if they asked you to give a Christian answer to this argument?

Break It Down:

- This argument is valid (its conclusion follows from its premises), but it is not sound, because the second statement is not true.
- God is the author and creator of the world and every “thing” that is in the world, but evil is not a “thing.”
- Rather than being a “thing,” evil is the absence of something that ought to be present.
- The absence of something that should be present is called a privation.
- Evil is the privation of good.



LESSON FOUR:

The Truth about Evil, Part 1

Leader Guide

- In God's sovereignty, He gave us free will. Evil exists in our world as a direct result of man's abuse of free will. Freewill was part of God's good and perfect creation.
- However, since the time of Adam and Eve, humanity has chosen to use it for selfish motives.

At this point in the lesson, emphasize that evil is not a thing.

Use the example of light and darkness: darkness is the absence of light.

Read these quotes:

- "Evil exists in a good thing as a lack or imperfection in it, like a hole in a piece of wood." (Norman L. Geisler, *The Roots of Evil*, Christian Free University Curriculum [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1978], 20.)
- "He created the fact of freedom; we perform the acts of freedom. He made evil possible; men made evil actual." (Geisler and Brooks, 62.)

Wrap it up:

Read the following statements and discuss:

- We hold to a theistic worldview that says there is one infinite and personal God who created everything and is sustaining everything.
- There is nothing in this world that God did not create, and everything that God created was good. One of the good things that God created was free will and man used his free will to accomplish his own selfish motives in the garden.
- Because of this, evil entered the lives of humanity and continues to be a part of the human experience today.

So, did God create evil?

No, man did.



LESSON FOUR:

The Truth about Evil, Part 1

Leader Guide



Step 7
Close

Challenge the class to read the first 6 chapters of Genesis this week.

Close in prayer.



LESSON FIVE:

The Truth about Evil, Part 2

✦ **Theme:** Evil

✦ **Key Question:** Did God create evil?

✦ **Key Verses:** Job 23:10; James 1:2-4

✦ **Big Rock:** God can't stop all evil acts without destroying all freedom to choose between good and evil, which would remove freewill.

✦ **Objectives:**

- Discuss Job 23:10 & James 1:2-4
- Explain why God allows evil

✦ **Teaching Methods:**

Lecture, discussion, and Q&A

✦ **Teaching Materials:**

Teacher and student lessons

✦ **Teaching Time Allotted:**

40 minutes



LESSON FIVE:

The Truth about Evil, Part 2

Leader Guide



Step 1
Introduction

Tell the class that this is the fifth week in an 5-week series called "Truth That Matters" that is focused on Christian Apologetics.

- Topics will include Truth, God and Jesus, Miracles, and the Problem of Evil.
- This week: EVIL.



Step 2
Apologetics and Truth

Ask the class: "What is Christian Apologetics?" After allowing time for them to answer, review the definition below.



Building Block Term

Apologetics =
Defense of the Christian Faith



Step 3
Evil

The theme for these two lessons is the philosophical problem of evil.

"The most serious intellectual obstacle that stands between many people and religious faith is the problem of evil." (Ronald H. Nash, "The Problem of Evil," in *To Everyone An Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview; Essays in Honor of Norman L. Geisler*, ed. Francis J. Beckwith, William Lane Craig, and J. P. Moreland (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 203.

Truth: God Never Wastes A Hurt.



Step 4
Scripture



Scriptural Bedrock

"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil."

Job 1:1



LESSON FIVE:

The Truth about Evil, Part 2

Leader Guide

As the reader, we know that Satan and God have had a conversation and that Satan has been released to attack Job.



Scriptural Bedrock

“Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause.” So Satan answered the LORD and said, “Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!” And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes.”

Job 2:3-8

Job is experiencing a physical evil that is a direct result of the moral evil that Satan is committing.

Sometimes natural evils have a huge impact without a firm answer to the question... “why?”



LESSON FIVE:

The Truth about Evil, Part 2

Leader Guide

Read the following quote:

“In sober truth, nearly all the things men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature’s everyday performance. Killing, the most criminal act recognized by human laws, nature does once to every being that lives, and in a large proportion of cases after protracted tortures such as only the greatest monsters whom we read of ever purposely inflicted on their living fellow creatures” (John Stuart Mill, *Nature, the Utility of Religion, and Theism* [London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1874], 28).

All evil and painful events fall into one of two categories:

Moral Evil

An evil that is caused by a human choice

Physical Evil

An evil that happens in nature and is not directly brought about by human choices

Read the following quote:

“Moral evil is evil brought about by human choices and actions; any other kind of evil is what we call natural evil” (Nash, 208).



Step 5 Discussion

Discussion:

Have the class come up with as many physical evils as they can, and then do the same thing with moral evils. Examples:

- Physical: hurricanes, tornadoes, cancer, etc.
- Moral: murder, rape, stealing, etc.



LESSON FIVE:

The Truth about Evil, Part 2

Leader Guide

3 Important Attributes of God

OMNIPOTENCE

God is all powerful.

OMNIBENEVOLENCE

God is all-good.

OMNISCIENCE

God is all-knowing.

With these three attributes of God in mind, it would seem that God has the power, the desire, and the knowledge to deal with the evil and pain in our world.

So, why doesn't He stop the pain in our lives?



WHAT IF ...
God prevented every evil act from happening?

Read and discuss this quote:

"If the universe is so bad, or even half so bad, how on earth did human beings ever come to attribute it to the activity of a wise and good Creator?" (C. S. Lewis, "The Problem of Pain," in *The Complete C. S. Lewis Signature Classics* [San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2002], 379).

Breaking It Down:

- The reader is told that Job is a blameless and upright man.
- In the first few chapters, Job loses his possessions, his children, and is struck down physically.
- Why would God, being omnibenevolent, allow these evil things to happen to Job?
- It seems that what God is doing is evil and immoral.
- Job and his three "friends" spend the majority of the book trying to figure out why Job is suffering.

Ask the class to share a time when they suffered and found themselves asking God: "Why?"

Discuss the temptation to blame God.

- If God is good, then why is He allowing Job to suffer this way? Wouldn't an all-loving God want to stop this?



LESSON FIVE:

The Truth about Evil, Part 2



Leader Guide

- In his book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, Rabbi Kushner suggests that perhaps God is just limited in power (Harold S. Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* [New York: Avon, 1981]).

Read this quote:

“We can, perhaps, conceive of a world in which God corrected the results of this abuse of freewill by His creatures at every moment but such a world would be one in which wrong actions were impossible, and in which, therefore, freedom of the will would be void” (Lewis, 382).

Ask the class to answer the question:



Because God is all-powerful, He would have the ability to do this.

“Free will means the ability to make an unforced decision between two or more alternatives” (Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask* [Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990], 63).



Rock to Build On

God can't stop all evil acts without destroying all freedom to choose between good and evil, which would remove freewill.



LESSON FIVE:

The Truth about Evil, Part 2

Leader Guide



Breaking It Down

If a person is forced to not choose evil then they are forced to choose good; which is not really a choice at all.

- ✦ The same is true for love. If a person is forced to love, that is not love at all... it is akin to rape.
- ✦ Taking away free will would take away man's ability to choose to do wrong but it would also take away his ability to choose anything good.

Review:

In God's sovereignty, he gave us free will.

Evil exists in our world as a direct result of man's abuse of free will.

Free will was part of God's good and perfect creation.

However, since the time of Adam and Eve, humanity has chosen to use it for selfish motivations.

Read and discuss the following scriptures:



Scriptural Bedrock

"He knows the way that I take; He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold."

Job 23:10

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."

James 1:2-4



LESSON FIVE:

The Truth about Evil, Part 2

Leader Guide

Read the following statement and discuss:

Bad things happen to good people because people are not really good. Rather, they are prone to wander from the will of God in order to fulfill their own desires. Job was described as blameless, upright, and God-fearing; but he was not without sin nor was he immune to the powerful effects of evil. In order for God to stop every evil act from happening, He would take away the freedom to choose to do wrong. With no potential to choose evil, there is also no potential to choose good. God would be removing free will from the human experience and forcing His will on people.



Why does God allow evil?

✦ If He didn't, there would be no freedom to choose good.

Review:

- There are two types of evil, physical and moral.
- In the events of Job's life, we can see that God wants to purify us in times of pain and suffering.
- Free will would have to be taken away for God to prevent evil events from happening in our world.
- Forced love is akin to rape.
- God wants us to freely love Him.



Step 6
Application

1. Study the story of Job.
2. Watch for opportunities for God to grow you this week.
3. Thank God for the love that He has for you and the freedom He gives you to love Him back.

One Last Thought

God is much more concerned with your character than with your comfort, and He never wastes a hurt. He will always desire to help you get through the tough times and emerge better instead of bitter.



LESSON FIVE:

The Truth about Evil, Part 2



Leader Guide



Step 7
Close

One of the most exciting things for a believer is the assurance that this world is not the final destination. Because of Christ, we can be confident that all the pain and evil of this world will come to an end.

In addition, the injustices of the world will be judged righteously. As one thinks of physical evils like Hurricane Katrina and moral evils like the terrorist attacks of 9-11, it is comforting to know that this is not the best of all possible worlds. Rather, this is the best of all possible ways to get to the best of all possible worlds (Heaven). God has the power to defeat evil, the desire to defeat evil, and the knowledge of how to defeat evil. These three truths necessitate that God will one day defeat evil.

Close in prayer.

What makes

TRUTH *that* MATTERS

SES Center for Innovative Training

different?



Mission

The mission of SES is to train men and women, based on the inerrant and infallible written Word of God, for the evangelization of the world and defense of the historic Christian faith.

Distinctives

- 01** We are committed to delivering holistic training through the Innovative Training Center and holistic education through our seminary that combines strong academics with deep character and spiritual development, preparing students for success in being an ambassador for Jesus Christ.
- 02** We support students' understanding of adaptive and collaborative leadership. We promote global ministry partnerships with others seeking to stand Steadfast in the Truth as well as cultural exchanges to prepare students to interact with different worldviews in a changing culture.
- 03** We inspire creativity and critical thinking, encouraging students to become innovators ready to face future challenges and contribute positively to the future and integrity of the church.
- 04** We shape students into responsible, ethical, and spiritually-discerning leaders. We encourage strong families, community service, and congregational leadership.
- 05** We harness the latest technology to enhance learning and community and prepare students for connection geographically throughout the world while providing access to global resources.
- 06** Like assembling a puzzle, our systematic approach to Christian thinking unveils connections between seemingly unrelated truths, creating a unified whole. This distinctive integration, applied across all programs, equips you to proclaim truth in love and answer hard questions about the Gospel persuasively in an increasingly lost culture.



Resources that take your faith to the next level.



01 Discipleship and Connection

Our Virtual Faith Link Platform is designed to challenge students spiritually while encouraging personal and social growth.



02 Training and Equipping

Our training focuses on practical learning and innovative teaching methods. Graduates are well-prepared for sharing and living out the Christian faith while fostering a deep appreciation for historic Christian principles and doctrine. Our rigorous curriculum emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, and practical skills.



03 Events and Networks

Our events and networks nurture biblical love and philosophical expression, promoting well-rounded engagement with a hurting world through initiatives such as TTM Tours, the Steadfast National Conference on Christian Apologetics and Evangelism, and the Steadfast Leaders Network.



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