

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line that extends to the right.

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 answers to some of the most common questions people ask about the truth of the Christian faith.

Each week your Student Guide will focus on a foundational lesson in Christian apologetics, or the defense of the Christian faith, that will be enhanced by material from your Leader 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.

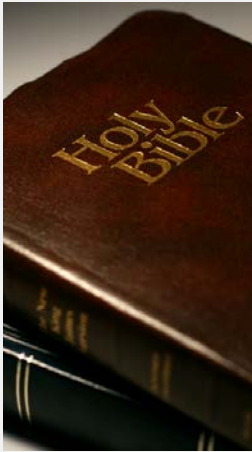
Each day of the week read the Bible verses or chapters and meditate on what Scripture has to say concerning this week’s Big Rock.

We look forward to how God moves in the next five weeks throughout your journey!



LESSON ONE:

The Truth about Truth



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

Monday	John 14:6	Christ is the Truth
Tuesday	Romans 1:18-25	The Truth is Revealed
Wednesday	Ephesians 4:25	Speak the Truth
Thursday	3 John	Walk in Truth
Friday	John 4:21-24	Worship in Truth
Saturday	1 John 2:3-6	Test of Truth



Discussion Questions

- ✦ Which people are mentioned in this passage?
- ✦ What do you think Paul is most concerned about in this passage?
- ✦ Who does Paul say is going to control what is being taught?
- ✦ What motivates the people to turn their ears from truth?
- ✦ What do you think Paul means when he writes, “Keep your head”?
- ✦ How does this passage relate to what we see in the church today?



LESSON ONE: The Truth about Truth



Rock to Build On

Truth = Telling It Like It Is

Absolute Truth is True

For All People
At All Times
In All Places



Truth Is

Objective
Not
Relative

Truth is not what works.
Truth is not what feels good.



Application

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



“The statement, ‘there is no such thing as a relative truth’ is an absolute truth.”

DR. DOUG POTTER

Associate Professor of Theology & Apologetics, Director of the D.Min. Program



LESSON ONE: The Truth about Truth

While it is true that one of the pharisaical knocks on Jesus was that He ate with sinners and tax collectors, His actions never were motivated by acceptance but rather redemption. Perhaps Pastor Sinclair Ferguson said it best: "It is misleading to say that God accepts us the way we are. Rather He accepts us despite the way we are. He receives us only in Christ and for Christ's sake. Nor does He mean to leave us the way He found us, but to transform us into the likeness of His Son. Without that transformation and new conformity of life, we do not have any evidence that we were ever His in the first place."

"Whosoever will may come" is a wonderful promise in Scripture but it undoubtedly entails a change of heart and acknowledgement of, and repentance of, the sin which permeates our lives. Not only is God a loving father but He is also holy, and it is only His grace that can save a soul and bring that soul into a saving relationship with Him.

Perhaps then this raises the question in the heart of each one of us, saint and sinner alike, "What is the evidence in your life that you belong to God?"

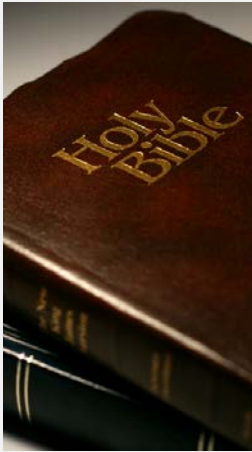


"There are none who are as deaf as those who do not want to hear."

DR. BARRY LEVENTHAL
Distinguished Professor, Southern Evangelical Seminary



LESSON TWO: The Truth about God



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

Monday	John 1:1-5	Jesus is God
Tuesday	Matthew 1	Jesus is God With Us
Wednesday	1 John 4	Jesus Became Flesh
Thursday	Matthew 26:57-68	Jesus is the Son of God
Friday	John 1:14-18	Jesus is God
Saturday	John 10	Jesus is the Shepherd



Discussion Questions

-  What does it mean for something to be revealed?
-  In this verse, what is being revealed and to whom is it being revealed?
-  Paul says God’s invisible attributes are clearly seen in what?
-  What is the end result of God revealing Himself in this passage?
-  Is there enough information in this passage for a person to be justified?



LESSON TWO: The Truth about God



Rock to Build On

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

Two Ways
God Has
Revealed
Himself



General Revelation
Special Revelation

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



Application



Realize that God is real and has revealed Himself to us.



Tell someone something you know about God this week.



“Everything flows out of our understanding of God; a mistake here affects everything else.”

DR. DOUG POTTER

Associate Professor of Theology & Apologetics, Director of the D.Min. Program



LESSON TWO: The Truth about God

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."

3 Major Worldviews



ATHEISM
No God At All



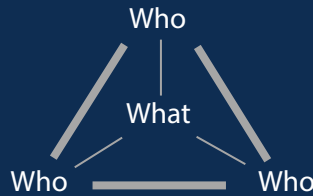
PANTHEISM
God Is All



THEISM
God Made All

God's Trinity

GOD IS ONE WHAT AND THREE WHOS



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"If God can only do things we can explain,
then He wouldn't be God."

DR. TOM HOWE
Professor of Bible and Biblical Languages



LESSON THREE:

The Truth about Miracles



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

Monday	John 2:1-11	Water Made Into Wine
Tuesday	Luke 5 1-11	Nets Full of Fish
Wednesday	John 5:1-9	A Man Healed
Thursday	Matthew 9:27-31	A Blind Man Cured
Friday	Luke 17:11-19	Ten Lepers Cleansed
Saturday	Luke 22:50-51	Jesus Heals An Ear



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)



LESSON THREE:

The Truth about Miracles

How important do you think miracles are to Christianity?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10

THERE ARE AT LEAST SIX DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF UNUSUAL EVENTS:

	ANOMALIES	MAGIC	PSYCHOSOMATIC	SATANIC SIGNS	PROVIDENCE	MIRACLES
DESCRIPTION	Freaks of nature	Sleight of hand	Mind over matter	Evil power	Prearranged events	Divine act
POWER	Physical	Human	Mental	Psychic	Divine	Supernatural
TRAITS	Natural event with pattern	Unnatural and man-controlled	Requires faith; fails for some sickness	Evil, falsehood, occult, limited	Naturally explained; spiritual context	Never fails, immediate, lasts, glory to God
EXAMPLE	Bumblebee	Rabbit in hat	Psychosomatic cures	Demonic influence	Fog at Normandy	Raising the dead

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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



Rock to Build On

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



“Since God is truth itself, He cannot do the supernatural to validate a false religion or teaching.”

DR. DOUG POTTER

Associate Professor of Theology & Apologetics, Director of the D.Min. Program



LESSON FOUR:

The Truth about Evil, Part 1



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

Monday	Genesis 1	History of Creation
Tuesday	Genesis 2	Life in the Garden
Wednesday	Genesis 3	Temptation and Fall of Man
Thursday	Genesis 4	Cain Murders Abel
Friday	Genesis 5	The Family of Adam
Saturday	Genesis 6	The Wickedness of Man



Did God Create Evil?

✚ No! When God first created the world, everything was perfect. By chapter six, man had disobeyed God. God was grieved and sorry He made man.



LESSON FOUR:

The Truth about Evil, Part 1



Rock to Build On

Evil is not a “thing.” Evil is the absence of good in the same way that darkness is the absence of light. God created the fact of freedom; we perform the acts of freedom. God made evil possible; men made evil actual.

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 did God create evil?






No. Man did.



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.)



“God’s allowance of evil and suffering is only to the extent that He can ultimately bring good out of it.”

DR. DOUG POTTER

Associate Professor of Theology & Apologetics, Director of the D.Min. Program



LESSON FIVE:

The Truth about Evil, Part 2



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

Monday	Job 1	Life of Job
Tuesday	Job 2	Job is Afflicted
Wednesday	Job 3	Job Speaks
Thursday	Job 38-40	God Questions Job
Friday	Job 41	Leviathan
Saturday	Job 42	God Restores



Why does God allow evil?

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

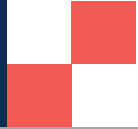
All evil and painful events fall into one of two categories:

Moral Evil or Physical Evil



LESSON FIVE:

The Truth about Evil, Part 2



3 Important Attributes of God



OMNIPOTENCE
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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?



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.



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.



"Physical evil is only possible because God has created good things with objective natures that can be corrupted."

DR. BRIAN HUFFLING
Professor of Philosophy and Theology, Director of PhD Program

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.



Steadfast in the Truth

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