

Two Truths and a Lie

One of the games we play in the FBC Youth Group is a type of get-to-know-you activity called, *Two Truths and a Lie*. We sometimes use it at the start of a new school year to introduce the leaders to the students. Each leader will say three things about himself or herself, and the students then need to figure out which two items are true and which one is not. It is important to make the three items equally plausible, and list them in random order. Thus, it would not be hard to choose the two truths about me from the following list: "I like ice cream; I own a dog; my father is the President of the United States," but another list with two truths that apply to me might be harder: "I used to live in a foreign country; I once dated an international fashion model; I have been to Space Camp."

When it comes to knowing God, the truth is easier to find. It's right there in God's Word, the Bible, and yet, people still miss it. For many who believe in Jesus, it's hard to understand how someone could not see who God is. The sad fact is, that many people not only fail to accept the truth about God, they substitute their own ideas of what truth should be. Over the next two weeks, we will see what Paul has to say about those who exchanged God's truth, the only truth there really is, for a lie.

Monday – An Uneven Exchange

1. Please read Romans 1:21-25 where Paul goes through a cause-and-effect analysis. What is the cause of the problems listed there?
2. Paul uses strong language, commenting on every part of their lives: their intellect (futile thinking, v. 21), their values (foolish hearts, v. 21), and their actions (degrading bodies, v. 24). If this is what it means to exchange God's truth for a lie, what do you think it would look like to accept the truth and reject the lie? (To answer this question, think through the thinking, values, and actions of someone who has embraced Christ and His truth).

Digging Deeper: The popular notion that truth is unknowable or relative is nothing new. Read John 18:28-40, paying particular attention to the first part of verse 38. Have you ever heard someone say something similar? Why is truth an essential aspect of our lives and relationship with Christ? What truth would you like to cling to today?

Tuesday – Sexual Impurity

"...every man who knocks on the door of a brothel is seeking God." attributed to GK Chesterton

1. In Romans 1:24-27, Paul speaks of the kind of life that results when culture exchanges truth for a lie. What actions result? What do you think that Paul is focusing on sexual sins?

de-grade, verb – to lower in dignity, or to dishonor and disgrace.

2. These verses contain several powerful phrases: "sexual impurity," "shameful lusts," "unnatural relations," and "indecent acts." Do you think Paul spoke too strongly? What do you think modern society's reaction is to this type of judgment?

Digging Deeper – Consider Chesterton's quote above. God has indeed put longings in our hearts that only he can satisfy. Why do people turn toward inappropriate means to fulfill those longings? In what ways do you turn toward other means to satisfy desires that only God can meet?

Wednesday – The Heart and Mind

"And I still haven't found what I'm looking for." U2

1. Romans 1:28-32 covers various ways the mind and heart (intellect and values) become depraved. What did these people do, according to verse 28, which led to such degradation?
2. This list includes things most people recognize as very wrong (such as murder and deceit) and some that many people consider less wrong (like gossip and arrogance). Paul, though, does not rank them in any particular order of wrongfulness. Why do you think he lumps them all together?
3. Re-read verse 32. The rejection of God's truth ultimately leads to what extreme behavior? Where, when, and how does this approval of ungodly behavior take place in our society?

Making it Personal: What can you do to retain the knowledge of God, and thereby, avoid the consequences of a depraved mind?

Thursday – Living a Lie

"It is the nature of desire not to be satisfied, and most human beings live only for the gratification of it." Aristotle

1. Paul was not the first to identify the problems involved in exchanging God's truth for a lie. Isaiah 29:13-16 appears to be an Old Testament version of Paul's teaching in Romans 1:24-32. How many similarities do you see? What are they?
2. How would you characterize the mindset found in Isaiah 29:15? Have you ever thought or acted that way? How did things turn out?

Friday – Spirit of Truth

"Spiritual growth is the process of replacing lies with truth." Rick Warren

1. In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul writes, once again, about the depraved life. How is this passage similar to? How is it different? According to verse 21, what happens to those who follow such a lifestyle?
2. In Galatians 5:22-26, Paul speaks of a life lived under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. What is the evidence of such a life?
3. In John 14:15-17, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to those who belong to God. What title does he give the Spirit in verse 17? How does this help you understand the role of the Spirit described in John 14:26 and Galatians 5:22-23?

Making it Personal: Do you display the "fruit of the Spirit" in your life? Pray for God to lead you, keeping you in step with the Spirit of Truth.