

"Bringing Truth to Life"

Dallas Willard, Navigators, Colorado Springs, 2008

Scribe's Comments - The session was transcribed from the audio recordings in good-faith effort but it is not verbatim. The **bold** and underline offer the scribe's emphasis and the [brackets] offer commentary or clarity to the content.



"Bringing Truth to Life" Series (separate files)

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| 1 | "Truth Overview & Relational Discipling" | [41:55] |
| 2 | "What is Truth?" | [1:05:30] |
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Session 2 – ["What is Truth and Why is it Important?"](#) (audio) [1:05:30]

We are stressing the theme **"Bringing Truth to Life"** to emphasize:

The Importance of Truth for Jesus' Purposes

John 18:36 - Jesus with Pilate

"What have you done?" What have you done to cause all this fuss?
What did He do? Jesus spoke the truth.

"My kingdom is not of this world. It's in this world but not of it."
The world is not it's source.

World (def.) "organized natural tendencies of human beings".

[\["Truth Overview" Session 1 @ 5:00\]](#)

It takes on different forms in different cultures and ages.

It always resorts to **"Power"** and **"Deceit"**. Governments can not avoid lying and using force because they are of the flesh. The ultimate power of every government is to kill...and to tax.

The Vision in Daniel 2 - All the kingdoms of the world and the...*"stone cut out without hands"* - the Kingdom of God that expands to fill the Earth and does not depend and run on human abilities.

"A Mighty Fortress" - "Above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth."

Jesus, *"I am king and for this I came into the world to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice knows the truth."*

Anyone who is set to hear the truth is on their way to God.

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I John 4 - We are apt to define God in terms of love instead of defining love in terms of God. Then you're in real trouble.

The Trinity tells us what human personality and human community is. We don't know what human life is. What it means to be lost is to not know where you are. They will probably wind up in a bad place is not being lost, that's the result of being lost.

Jesus comes into the world and simply says, "Truth!"

* Gandhi - Christians as they were kept him from coming to Christ. Uses truth as a political weapon. He used it against the right people. There are some if you used it against, its would not work. It worked when He was dealing with the British.

Truth is powerful. When we speak of "Bringing Truth to Life", we speak of transforming life.

[5:30]

"My disciples are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth. Thy Word is truth." **John 17:16-17**

The Bible a gift of God, the Word of God standing forth in human history. It contains the most important answers to the most important question, the best information for all the great questions that human beings face in life. Nothing compares, nothing even comes close. The great questions to which the Bible brings the answers and above all, the answers that are given in the person of Jesus Christ, the living word. That's we don't worry about other religions having their say. For the Christian, let everything be what it is. Don't hide anything. Whatever the religion, philosophy, thought.

Secularity in the Universities and our culture represent itself as a great openness. It is not an openness. It is rigorous form of close mindedness. If you don't believe it, just threaten it. You'll see how open minded secularism is. This is one of the myths that's been foisted off.

—> **Our Topic - Truth itself and why it is so important.**

The Great Commission

[8:50]

The foundation for the Great Commission is TRUTH.

It does not begin with "Go".

It begins with *"I have been give say over all in heaven and earth."*

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In the New Testament to the book of Revelation, you will progressively understand who Jesus is better and better.

John in Revelation 1 sees Jesus more of who He is, he faints.

Theophany in the Bible *"Don't be afraid"* when God shows up.

* Transfiguration - Don't say anything until later.

He comes to us very gently because He wants to leave us room to decide who we are going to be in relationship to Him.

The disciples had zero authority. The church has always been at its best when it had its least. Not something wrong with having something but there is an issue in what you are trusting. Jesus wanted them to know where the resource was.

In light of the fact, the natural thing to do is to tell everybody. That's why I don't push people to witness who need pushing. I don't push people. They can't keep their mouths shut. In general, I really have qualms about trying to get people to do things. We need to help them see things, understand things.

Jesus knew they would not be able to keep their mouths shut.

"As you go, make disciples."

That's the first step when you start in your action because of you know who Jesus is to be. You understand He is a King and a King has a Kingdom. We get to live in that Kingdom now. Eternity does not start later. It actually started a long time ago. We are living in eternity right now. Eternity has been around ever since God has been around and His kingdom has been around ever since God has been around. We just get invited in.

Human beings started out having their own kingdom.

That's was the basic temptation of Adam & Eve.

"How about being your own King? Did God really say that?"

It's the other kingdoms.

But God's kingdom is here - everlasting to the everlasting.

When God made man, He said, *"Let us make man in our image."*

Genesis 1:26, *"Let them have dominion."* - Be responsible.

That's what the image of God is - responsibility for good.

He made you and me to create good also.

Read **Psalms 8; Hebrews 2** - We are here under God to create what is good. You get to do that forever. This great universe is the place where the

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Kingdom will unfold forever. The people of Jesus Christ will be at the centerpiece to be a witness to the wisdom and greatness of God.

You have to have a big thought about your future.

Matthew 13

[15:30]

"Then shall the righteous shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

Colossians 3:1-4

"If you be risen with Christ, then seek the things above...When Christ, who is our life, appears you will also appear glorious."

That's your future! That's part of what Jesus is given dominion over. If the news gets good enough, you'll start bubbling over. You'll realize people need to know that. Most humans are sad because they are lost. They don't know about Jesus. They don't know the glorious truths of the Bible.

~ *Go make disciples...not Baptists, Catholics, Protestants, Christians.*

Called "Christians" in Antioch - little Christs - all nations, all kinds

Make disciples of all kinds of people. It's really ethnic groups.

~ *"Baptize them into the Trinitarian fellowship"* where the big thing is not faith and order but the presence of the Trinity.

"Two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst."

Verse trotted out most commonly when two or three showed up.

Remember, when 2000 or 3000 gather, He is there in there midst.

His presence is not a consolation prize because folks did not come. His presence and the Trinitarian presence is the governing principle of his gathered disciples.

If you don't make disciples, they don't come. You make disciples and bring them together under the Trinitarian presence. That's what it means to baptize them in the name. When we gather, we are looking for the Trinity and looking to the Trinity, we love one another. We go to church to love one another.

* Why go to church? Love your enemies, you'll find those at church.

~ *"Teach them to do everything Jesus said."*

Don't start there. Start with *"I've been given say over everything."*

Then you move on, spill over and make disciples.

"Next talk in the morning, Im going to talk mainly about disciples. What do you do? Who is a disciple?"

[20:35]

[\["in the morning" = Talk #3 — "Good News that Makes Disciples"\]](#)

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What is a disciple, In our culture as we mentioned last night it is no longer being a Christian because you can be a Christian all your life and never become a Christian. It is a common assumption.

We need to brace ourselves and get over the hump because the word is out you can't do what Jesus said.

It is very clear Jesus meant for us to do what he said. Paul meant the same thing. The problem is people try to do it and they fall into legalism. They are worse than they are before. They don't start with discipleship and living in the Trinitarian presence.

How will you love your enemy if you're not standing in the Kingdom of God? How are you going to love your neighbor and all the things Jesus said?

You can when you come to Jesus as His disciple. You'll learn the truth. You have to have the truth to guide you into reality.

Begin with a profound truth...

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son."

This is a radical, offensive truth.

What Truth is?

[23:40]

"Truth" (description) - A feature of some of our thoughts that allows us to live with realities that are not directly present to us.

Human beings live with a vast horizon. Most of it is not visible. I'm not just talking about profound religious things. For example...

* Your financial affairs you can't bring before you in vision, you have to bring them before you in truth, but not in vision. If you got the true view of your financial affairs, then you can act in a way that is sensible, profitable and good. If your view of your finances are false, things will not go so well.

In general, truth enables us to deal with a world that we cannot see. What you can see is very little. It's important.

* Is your coffee warm? Suppose you think it is warm and you drink it and it's cold. You experienced falsehood. You experience your belief coming into conflict with the reality which it is about.

One of the greatest problems today is the confusion about truth

* Secularization - Makes it so hard in the smart countries like the U.S. which it is spreading secularism across the world. People come to Northern Europe, Canada, U.S., Australian and what they learn is secularism. They go back to their countries are try to work in terms of secularism and very often have unfortunate collisions because the people there are not secularists.

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The issue of truth is vital to human life. God has arranged that we can have truth. If you couldn't have truth, you couldn't live. You have truth and you live in terms of it. You travel, you have plans for business and home. Most of that is going to be true. God arranged for truth so that we could have a life. If we couldn't have truth, we could not have a human life that we recognize.

That's why knowledge is so important because knowledge brings established truth with it. If you know something, "you are representing it as it is on an appropriate bases of though and experience."

You are not just learning opinions when you get knowledge. Opinions come out of the air. People can pick up opinions from those who are around them. You come into established opinions. People want to regard people who don't share their opinions as unbelievers, heretics. That's because knowledge is so important then they have opinions they pass off as knowledge and they base their life around it.

Jesus came to crack the wall of establish opinions. Eventually it killed him. He ran contrary to the established opinions of the people who had the power to kill him from the human point of view.

"Jesus was not crucified because he said 'Behold the Lillies', but because He said, 'Behold the Pharisees how they steal'." Vance Havner

The guys on the other side understood exactly what the deal was.

If Jesus was right, they were over.

That's the guts of human life. That's where we live. The battle for truth is desperate and it takes desperate forms when the conflict is joined.

The truth itself is God's arrangement for us. He's arranged it so we can deny the truth because what He is more interested in than anything else is our **will**, our **character**. He really has great plans for human beings but they are going to have to have character.

God's purpose for each one of us is that we should grow to the point where He can empower us to do what we want. [30:30]

That's your destiny. You're gong to come to terms with that one way or another. Go early and avoid the rush.

That's what God has in mind for you. That you can grow to the point where God can give you all the power you need to do what you want and you can do that. But your wanter is going to take a little work. That's the issue. Turning to God. But do you really want God to be God. If God is God, I'm not.

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*AA - "Not God". If you are God, you are going to need some alcohol. And a few other things. You're going to really need some help. If I'm god, I'm in trouble. One of the lessons of AA - "Not God". God is God.

Most of what we have truth about is not visible slapping us in the face making it easier for us to deny it. That is part of God's plan with truth. God does not jump down your throat.

* Apostle Paul - God knew Paul was desperately seeking Him.

The person who doesn't want God, God is certainly going to leave him alone. *"Leave Israel alone, they are wedded to their idols."*

The scariest thing about the human being from the human point of view is the power of choice.

When you make a choice, you made it. A choice is one of the things in life that can not be unmade. You can try and clean up the mess and you will probably have to.

The ideal is that our choice will be guided by truth...truths about what is best, right, good. That's where we, with our limited intelligence, are challenged and have a hard time coming to terms with what is best, what is truth.

Truth (def.) "A thought or believe or statement is true if what it is about is as it is says it to be."

[33:45]

- * "I believe the broom in the closet" is true if the broom is in the closet.
- * "Snow is white" is true if snow is white.
- * "God is love" is true if God is love.

Truth is a very simple thing. Truths are not always simple. [34:20]

[see [Session #4 "Good News that Makes Disciples" @ 1:40](#)]

[Choice is our greatest freedom and privilege. Get them to choose based on truth not feeling, desire or opinion, theirs or the masses. [not in this section]

Truth is a very simple thing. A child understands what is true. You don't have to teach children how to lie. They figure it out on their own because they understand what truth is. If they are confronted with a truth they don't like, it will get them into trouble. They learned that on their own. They figured that out. I'm sure the devil has a little help because he is the father of lies. He deceives himself.

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Children figure it out. Give a child a promise and break it, they will tell you. They learn that deceit is a way people have of manipulating reality for human purposes. You can't manipulate reality with statements or beliefs, you can only negotiate your passage among human beings. That's where what is false becomes so important.

* Girl in Sunday School [36:00]

*"A lie is an abomination to God...
and a very present help in a time of trouble"*

—> **The primary enemy of TRUTH is human WILL & DESIRE.**

Paul, **Romans 1**, *"Men knew that God existed but they suppressed the truth in unrighteousness."*

Everyone knew God existed from the things that He made but they did not want God to be God. Did not glorify God nor were they thankful. He didn't suit their plans. Desire and Will are the primary enemies of truth in the human scene. That's where we get the constant battle of the flesh & spirit.

Galatians 5:14 - "Flesh & Spirit" [38:15]

[see Willard's ["Battle Between Flesh & Spirit"](#), Calvin College]

"Whole law summed up - love your neighbor as yourself." (v. 14)

"Bite and devour, take care lest you destroy one another."

"But I say walk by the Spirit of God and you will not carry the desires of the flesh."

If you do that you will not fulfill the desire of the flesh because you're living in a world where you don't need to do that. You'll still have desires but they will be subordinated to the Spirit that is acting in you.

"For the flesh sets its desire against the spirit" [human not divine]

Go back to Romans 7 - *"The things I would not, I do. The things I would, I do not."*

The conflict between desire and will is the conflict between human spirit and the human flesh.

Desire always obsesses on its object. Desire wants that!

* A Child wants that toy. You try to explain options. "I want that toy!"

* *"I just got to have a donut."*

No, you don't have to have a donut. That's desire speaking.

You've been given the power of choice. The difference between will and the power of choice or desire - Will considers alternatives. You choose what is in your mind for better or best.

* Wanting to buy something then seeing the price, decide not to buy it.

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In the human being that is the constant battle. Human being, if they are blessed, wisdom will enable them to make good choices. If they are really blessed, it will be built into their character. If they're really blessed human beings, wisdom will be in their body.

* Joseph - Potiphar's wife - his wisdom was in his body. He didn't have to stop and think, "What shall I do?" His legs took him away.

* Peter's confession "I will not deny you" but it was not in his jaws. When the act came down, he did not think about it. He denied him. He was brave. He intended to stand up for Jesus. He intended to stand up for Jesus but when the little girl spoke, he was not ready for that.

You want character there, you want wisdom there, you want truth there. We want to grow in Jesus where what He teaches is already in our bodies just like so much that is bad is already in our bodies. Watch people's body language. You can pretty much tell what they are going to do. It comes out in terms of what they have to hesitate and think about it.

* Jack Benny - Robber, "*Your money or your life!*" "*I'm thinking*"

If you live in the flesh, then the natural outcome is what Paul calls "*the works of the flesh...(Galatians 5:19 - the list)...things like these. Those who practice those things will not inherit the kingdom of God*".

He's not talking about going to Heaven when you die. He's talking about if you live in that stuff, you are not receiving the kingdom of God in your life now because you're running your own kingdom. If you live there, the reason you're doing all those things is because your trying to run your kingdom in terms of what you want. The Kingdom of God is the range of God's effective will, where what God wants done is done.

"Your Kingdom come, your will be done."

I want His kingdom to come into my kingdom. I'm inviting his life into my life.

Satisfaction of desire is a hopeless goal. Desire says, "*If you give me what I want, you're going to be happy. Wait until that donut gets into your mouth!*"

Ephesians 4:22, "*Lay aside the old self...the deceitfulness of desire*"

Why are desires deceitful? They always promise what they can not give you. If you are going to live for desires, you're going to be an unhappy person. The only way to happiness is to learn how to live not in terms of your desires. Desires are not bad, they have to be ordered.

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LOVE is not DESIRE. When love something, you will what is good. When you desire things, you're don't care about its good. When you love something you will what is good.

[When you love yourself you will what is good and that is seen in your diet, exercise and health concerns]

* You say you love chocolate cake but you don't. You want to eat it. When you love chocolate cake, you don't desire it's good.

In our culture, one of the primary ways Satan confuses us is confusing desire with love. That's why we have terrible problems in our **marriages**. Most of those people never got married. They may have had a ceremony but they never got married. They married out of desire. When the desire went to somebody else, "I love them." No you don't love them, you desire them.

The Wisdom of Jesus

Jesus, who is the smartest man in the world, says, [50:42]

A lot of people think he's awful nice but not smart.

"If you seek to save your life, you'll lose it."

That is world wide wisdom. If for no other reason, you will die. If you give your life to what is the best for my sake and the gospel, you'll find it and you won't lose it. You start living in the Kingdom of God interactive with God and you're growing in that and your whole life becomes an eternal life, now, not later. Eternal life does not come later it comes now.

"Eternal life is knowledge of the Father, the only true God and the one He has sent." **John 17:3**

Ephesians 4:17 - *"Gentiles walk in the futility of their mind."* [52:20]

The "futility of their mind" is exactly what he was talking about in Galatians 5. That they believe their object in life is to get what they want. That is an impossible task. You want what is not consisted with other things. Desire is inherently chaotic because it only considers what it wants. It does not consider what is best. Not only are your desires conflicting, your desires are also conflicting with the desires of other people. They have a kingdom, too, and you have your kingdom. That will not work out if that's all there its. It's only when their kingdoms and your kingdom are under the Kingdom of God and accept Jesus' wonderful invitation, *"Repent, for the Kingdom of God is available"*, then there is an overarching reality in which I can meet other people, even if they are trying to run their kingdom and in the course of

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that, run over mine. That's the common thing. I can bring another kingdom to them. I can say to them,

"Say unto them, the Kingdom of God has come near to you."

How did it come near to them? In the person in those disciples.

When my kingdom comes in confrontation with another kingdom, my Kingdom is under the Kingdom of God then when they give cursing, I can give blessings. When they give hate, I can give love. Why? Because I am inheriting the Kingdom of God right now. That's where my resources are. I draw on those. I have treasures laid up in Heaven, later for sure but right now. That's where my bank is and Heaven is right here and I can draw on that. When someone curses me I can bless them. I can't do that in the flesh. I don't have the natural resources to do that. But now it is possible because, in good old fashioned terms, Jesus has come into my heart. Now I can learn to do the things He said to do. I am living in a group of disciples. It's different if you have a counter-culture of Christianity like we do now. We have a a default system of Christianity that doesn't include this.

Follow Jesus where we are and draw others with us. Many will be faithful Christians who are really looking for discipleship. They didn't get what they were led to expect when they first heard the gospel. In time it goes away because they were not introduced into discipleship and constant growth.

The Idea of Secular Education

[57:00]

A delusion foisted upon North America - Education should be secular.

"Catholic University is an oxymoron." George Bernard Shaw

The Universities were not open, responsible inquiry. We lost our universities in this country because we kept insisting that our denominational favorites were knowledge and they were not. That gave people the impression that colleges & universities were not teaching knowledge, they were not open to inquiry.

Secular University - An oxymoron as well. Has anyone demonstrated that reality is secular? No. They don't even try. It's a political compromise. It's not working well from a pedagogical point of view. If reality is not secular, that's an considerable mistake. What will the people responsible for education say as they wind up standing before God? "Oops!"

[59:35] - The idea of a secular university manages to push aside all the things that come to us from Jesus Christ and put them in a different category. Jesus becomes a religious trinket, a hoy hologram. He is not real.

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He is not a person who deals with reality. He is not honest about truth. They push him "over there". To be fair, people in secular universities want to push all religions over there. "It's a nice cultural thing."

* Large Southern University [1:00:25]
President wanted to make the university an authentic Christian university. At one stage of a very heated discussion, one of the deans said,
"This is not a Christian University, this is a Baptist University."

"Baptist" is a recognized cultural tradition so it gets in under the name "diversity". "Christian" is not a recognized cultural tradition in those circles so it does not get under the name of diversity, partly because it is notoriously not diverse. It has this guy standing there saying,
"I am the way, the truth and the life."

That doesn't sound friendly, humble. He should be saying, *"Well, this is our tradition, the other people have tradition, it doesn't fall in the domain of knowledge."*

Truth is out the window in academic circles and knowledge with it. That's why you don't have truth universities or knowledge universities. What does every university want to be? It wants to be research universities, partly because you can get money from the government for research but none for knowledge or truth. Research is a human enterprise that we can accept.

When we come with a message of truth we have to fight through all these layers in our world today. This is now spreading across the world as the accepted view of truth and knowledge and research.

[In the secular education around, knowledge of Jesus is placed in the category of faith not real knowledge. See Willard at Bethel - ["The Disappearance of Moral Knowledge"](#) @ 52:30]

Let me end with an affirmation. [1:03:25]

There is a body of Christian knowledge!

We as Christians teach knowledge of reality. That's where it is so important to understand who Jesus is and how He stands in the world. He's comfortable in any scene, does not matter where, as long as you just be honest and speak the truth. To do that you're going to have His character.

"So sanctify them in the truth. Thy Word is truth."

As we take the teachings of Jesus in our faith in Him and put them into practice then the power of God flows in reality. We don't have to worry about

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what anyone else is doing. We just do what we're doing. That's all we need to do. It will speak for itself.

We don't need to be grumpy, unhappy, pugnacious. We just rejoice in the Lord, love one another, live in the truth, that's all it takes. The Great Commission will go forward as we do that. You can't stop it. That's why the devil is so mad and his people are so unhappy.

The next two* sessions I'd like to leave room at the end for discussion.

[*He mentions "two sessions" but the YouTube posts have 3 sessions with Q&A. Also, 3/5 should be after 5/5 based on "4 Great Questions" teaching.]

~ ~ ~ End of Session 2 @ 1:05:30 ~ ~ ~

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