

STUDY 2 SHARING JESUS IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD

INTRODUCTION

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Share Christ.

We are called to be witnesses for Christ, even in a culture that is disinterested in or even antagonistic toward the truth. This study underscores why and how we can share Christ in such an environment.

Writer Bio

Brad Whitt

is the senior pastor of the historic Abilene Baptist Church in Augusta, GA, president of Real Life Today, and author of several books. He and his wife, Kim, have four children.

Dr. Brian M. Carmichael Sr.

adapted the learner pages for the *YOU* audience. He is married to Stacey of thirty-two years. They have four grown children and two grandchildren. He is the pastor of Holy Temple Baptist in Memphis, TN.

Dr. Kimberly J. Baker

wrote the Daily Readings for this study. She lives in Charlotte, NC and is a mother of three. She holds an undergraduate degree in Business Administration, Master's degrees in Health Studies, Accounting Information Systems, and Ministry, and a Doctor of Ministry in Spiritual Formation.



A STUDY ON WHY AND HOW WE SHOULD SHARE CHRIST

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In today's time, it seems that we see more than ever people leaning to their own understanding. Inflation seems to be evident when we shop at the grocery stores. Our children are bombarded by a world that pushes extreme ideas into their impressionable minds. People seem to be looking for truth and hope in videos, secular influencers, and politicians. We are living in a world where one can't voice their opinion without being shamed or bullied. We see that media—and sometimes even political views—have infiltrated not only the world but the church. It has created divisiveness.

As Christians, we know that this is a spiritual battle. In a world that seems hopeless, we have hope! We know the answers and must be equipped to spread that hope. We can't do it effectively if we are not led by God's Holy Word. We must constantly lead others to our Lord and Savior. We must model before the world what that looks like. When we start to use phrases such as; *"I think..."* we began

to take the focus off of Christ and put it on us. We must model praying for those in authoritative positions—not demeaning them or poking fun. We must model hope and not fear. We must make the main thing the main thing. Let's focus on making disciples that make disciples who make disciples!

In this unit, we will:

- Be challenged to share the good news with others no matter who they are.
- Learn to seek to make disciples whether it be in the grocery stores, doctor's office, workplace, sports games, shopping centers or just a walk in the park.
- Learn to ask pray for opportunities to share this great news!

So buckle your seatbelt, and let's learn to penetrate the darkness with the gospel of Jesus Christ—because someone is ready to hear it!

TRUTH MATTERS

Leader pages on pp. 134-137

THE POINT:
TRUTH DOES NOT RESIDE
IN OUR OWN OPINIONS
AND REASONING.

PROVERBS 16:20-25; 30:1-6

^{16:20} The one who understands a matter finds success, and the one who trusts in the LORD will be happy.

²¹ Anyone with a wise heart is called discerning, and pleasant speech increases learning.

²² Insight is a fountain of life for its possessor, but the discipline of fools is folly.

²³ The heart of a wise person instructs his mouth; it adds learning to his speech.

²⁴ Pleasant words are a honeycomb: sweet to the taste and health to the body.

²⁵ There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way to death.

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^{30:1} The words of Agur son of Jakeh. The pronouncement. The man's oration to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal:

² I am more stupid than any other person, and I lack a human's ability to understand.

³ I have not gained wisdom, and I have no knowledge of the Holy One.

⁴ Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in his hands? Who has bound up the waters in a cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is the name of his son — if you know?

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⁵ **Every word of God is pure; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.**

⁶ Don't add to his words, or he will rebuke you, and you will be proved a liar.

MEMORY VERSE

KEYWORDS

LORD (v. 20)—The title in small caps is a substitution for the Hebrew name for God *YHWH*. Ancient Jewish tradition was to refrain from speaking God's holy name, so it was always read publicly as *Adonai* ("LORD").

Instructs his mouth (v. 23)—The person with a wise heart can control their speech (Jas. 3:2-12).

What comes out of one's mouth reflects what is in that person's heart (Mark 7:18-23).

Pure (v. 5)—The Hebrew term refers to metal smithing—to melt, cast, fuse, or refine metal. It is used figuratively of purging away impurities. When God puts forth His Word it is like metal that has been refined and is flawless.

HOW CAN BELIEVERS AVOID LIVING THEIR "OWN TRUTH"?

There is a famous parable about six blind men and an elephant that originated in ancient India. In the story each blind man touches a different part of the elephant's body. One touched the side of the elephant and said, "An elephant is like a wall." The next touched the tusk and said, "An elephant is like a spear." The third blind man touched the elephant's trunk and said that it was like a snake. The next touched its leg and said it was like a tree. Another held the ear and argued that an elephant is like a fan. The last blind man grabbed the tail of the elephant and described the animal as a rope. These men were correct in their description of the various parts of an elephant but their experiences limited them. Each of them was limited by their individual experience. They could not see the whole truth.

Likewise, we have limited experiences, knowledge, and understanding. We need someone who not only can see everything but knows it all. As we study these verses together, we'll see the striking contrast between human understanding and true wisdom. Join me in discovering why truth matters and is necessary to navigate life's challenges and to live a meaningful life.

"Seems Right" is Not Right //

Proverbs 16:20-25

Have you ever been wrong? Have you ever seen something differently once you had more information or experience? One of the marks of our humanity is that our understanding is naturally limited. How is it limited? It's limited by our knowledge, experience, and inability to see our blind spots or even know what we don't know. In short, we are limited because we're human.

When I started teaching my oldest child how to drive, I had to make sure she understood that even though her car has mirrors and a camera, there are natural "blind spots" that, if she's not careful, will cause her to have a wreck. The same is true in our lives. We all have blind spots. That's why we need someone who has perfect knowledge and understanding to help us through this life.

Unlike our human understanding, which fluctuates—ebbing and flowing with social trends and scientific advancements—God's truth remains stable, constant, and unchanging because God is all those things. What a relief that is amid all the change we're experiencing today. There's something and Someone we can count on who won't change.



THE POINT: TRUTH DOES NOT RESIDE IN OUR OWN OPINIONS AND REASONING.

The world my kids are growing up in is far different from the one I experienced when I was their age. Time moves forward, and things change. We have more knowledge than we've ever had in the history of the world. We can do things that were only ideas in comic strips a couple of decades ago and never even crossed our ancestors' minds in the centuries before that. However, even though we have more knowledge, wisdom is in very short supply.

Solomon explains what comes from living according to God's wisdom. He says in verses 20-21:

- When we understand a matter, we will find success.
- When we trust the Lord, we will experience happiness.
- When we take His wisdom to heart, we will have discernment.

This wisdom("insight") will be seen in how we think (v. 22) and talk ("speech") (vv. 22,24). Why is getting God's wisdom so important? Verse 25 tells us. Even though our way of thinking may seem right, if we're not following God's wisdom and living according to His truth, it leads to death.

When I was a boy, I decided I was Superman and could fly. So, one day, I put on my cape, climbed on top of my parents' shed in the backyard, and jumped. I didn't fly. I fell —like a rock. I didn't defy gravity. I demonstrated it. Likewise, just because a person says there's no such thing as truth doesn't mean there's not. We see the effects of denying the reality and existence of truth today in our world's chaos, hurt, and death.

HOW CAN WE GUARD AGAINST DECEIVING OURSELVES?

We hear it often. "I have my truth, and you have yours." The problem with that way of thinking is that two opposing things can't both be true about the same thing at the same time. And like me thinking I could fly when I couldn't, this kind of thinking is causing great harm to many people today. Understanding why truth matters and where it comes from is essential in a world where relativism reigns. Trusting God and His unchanging Word provides stability and clarity.

As followers of Christ, we're called to live out the truth in every aspect and area of our lives. This means making decisions based on biblical principles, even when they contradict popular opinions. It means standing firm in our faith, even when challenged. Verse 21 states, "Anyone with a wise heart is called discerning, and pleasant speech increases learning." Living according to God's truth not only benefits us, but it's a powerful testimony to others.



DIGGING DEEPER TRUST

God calls for His children to put their trust in Him. In Proverbs 16:20, the word "trust" in Hebrew is *batah* means to put one's total confidence in God's ways, works, and will.

This is seen when saints can say, "all things work together for good" (Rom. 8:28) in the difficulties of life and live accordingly. Believing in its basic sense has no movement but trusting demands movement. Believing a chair can hold me does not require any action on my part but trusting that the chair will hold me means me sitting in the chair. God calls for His children to put the full weight of their lives in His hands. Do you trust God by rejoicing when you enter into various test (Jas. 1:2)? Do you trust God by rejoicing and be extremely glad when you are persecuted for your faith (Matt. 5:12)? Trusting Him means doing what the Word is instructing you to do regardless of circumstance or feeling!

In what areas are you not trusting the Lord? How will you change?

Some Things Are Too Big to Know // Proverbs 30:1-4

Do you know everything? What do we call someone who thinks they do? We call them a “know-it-all.” When someone is called a “know-it-all,” it doesn’t mean they know it all. It means quite the opposite. It’s not a compliment when someone is called a “know-it-all;” it’s an accusation of ignorance and arrogance.

To gain God’s wisdom, we must first humble ourselves and admit that we don’t know everything. This characteristic was the genius of a man named Agur. We only read about him and his father, Jakeh, in this one chapter.

What was the secret to Agur’s wisdom? Humility. He humbly admitted he didn’t know everything there was to know, so he needed the One who was all-wise and the source of all truth to come down from heaven and reveal it to him. In verse one, he declared his oration to Ithiel and Ucal, whose names mean “weary” and “worn out.” He was tired and worn out from trying to understand things that were beyond his ability to understand. He claimed to be more stupid than any other person. He confessed his lack of knowledge of the Holy One. How could he? He hadn’t gone up to heaven and come back down. He hadn’t gathered the wind in his hands. He hadn’t bound up the earth’s waters in his cloak or established the ends of the earth. There were many things he hadn’t done and didn’t know.

The questions Agur asked in verse 4 remind us of the questions God asked Job. “Where were you when I established the earth? . . . Who enclosed the sea behind doors? . . . Where is the road to the home of light? . . . Who put wisdom in the heart or gave the mind understanding?” (Job 38)

What God wanted to impress upon Job, and what Agur got, was that he didn’t know everything. There are many things that are beyond our ability to understand.

HOW DOES ADMITTING WE LACK UNDERSTANDING MAKE ROOM FOR THE WISDOM OF GOD IN OUR LIVES?

Are you willing to humble yourself? Will you acknowledge that you don’t know everything? Can you even admit when you’re wrong? If not, you can’t receive God’s wisdom or accept His truth.



God’s Word Is Always on Point // Proverbs 30:5-6

What happens when we acknowledge and accept God’s truth? Agur indicates that He purifies and protects us. There’s only one way to purify our hearts and minds—by the pure Word of God. Without it, we become spiritually sick very quickly.

God’s Word is pure. Nothing in it will dirty young hearts or destroy young lives. What a contrast with so much that we see in culture today. Everywhere we look, there is sin and depravity. There is so much wickedness and sin readily available—nearly unavoidable—that the enemy would use it to defile young and not-so-young hearts and minds. God’s Word doesn’t do that. It is pure, and it purifies.

God’s Word is also a reliable shield, always ready to protect our hearts from the enemy’s attacks. In Bible times, this shield was called a “buckler.” It wasn’t the large, heavy shield that soldiers would carry into battle that would cover their entire body. The buckler was a small, often round shield attached to the forearm and used to protect the vital areas of the soldier’s chest—his heart and lungs.

This image of God being a buckler for His people is powerful and practical. When we trust God’s Word, we find refuge and safety. God’s Word provides

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clarity, direction, purity, and purpose in a world filled with conflicting messages and deceptive philosophies. It shields us from the confusion and chaos that comes from relying on human wisdom alone.

Society is moving and changing very quickly. We face many new challenges nearly every day in our battle to protect our children and our hearts and lives. That's why we should be thankful that the perfectly pure God of Truth and His Word is a buckler that can quickly maneuver and protect us from the attacks and arrows of the enemy.

Truth matters. Truth is not, as some suggest, a distraction that keeps us from finding common ground and coming together. Truth isn't the combination of facts and experiences. Truth is not relative—"What's true for you might not be true for me." No. As one Christian said, "Truth is immortal."²⁵ It's eternal. It's unchanging. It's universal. What was true three thousand years ago is true today, will be true tomorrow, and what is true tomorrow will be true a thousand years from now if the Lord doesn't return before then.

IF ALL OF GOD'S WORD IS TRUE, WHY DO WE HAVE TROUBLE BELIEVING IT?

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the top questions that has been asked of Christianity is "Did Jesus actually claim to be God?" We do not have a recorded statement from Jesus saying, "I am God," but we have statements of Jesus making Himself equal with God like "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). The Scriptures defend the deity of Christ by showing that Jesus is indeed equal with God the Father in receiving worship or sharing honor, in authority, in works, in titles, and in placement. This coupled with the statements of individuals in the Bible like the disciple Thomas. After he saw the resurrected Christ and placed his finger in the punctured side and nailed pierced hands, he responded by with this statement, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

Biblical Truth: "but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Pet. 3:15).

Will you be ready with an answer for your belief that Christ is God?

LIVE IT

How will you respond to God's truth this week?

We live in perilous times. We have experienced the earthquake of postmodernism and now the waves of relativism are crashing all around us. The result of this lack of acknowledgment and acceptance of objective truth is that hearts are disillusioned, and lives are devastated. How then should we respond to God's truth? Choose one of the following applications:

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- **Accept and embrace the truth as the foundation for your life.** If you've not yet accepted Christ, this is the first step to discovering truth and experiencing freedom. You'll find help on the inside cover of this book.
- **Apply the truth to every area of your life.** Commit to bringing every thought and decision in line with God's truth. Make a list of truths you can apply to decisions you make this week.
- **Affirm the truth with confidence and courage.** Live it out boldly and confidently, trusting in God's promises and protection. Find someone in your neighborhood or at work with whom you can share this message of truth.

DAILY READINGS

1. IN GOD WE TRUST // PROVERBS 3:5-6

God's Word is sovereign. It is the only truth that exists despite the world's cosign on living according to one's "own truth." There can only be one truth; otherwise, it becomes relative—contingent upon who you speak to or the situation. Leaning upon one's own understanding causes us to live and believe in a limited manner. The Word, however, admonishes the believer to trust in the Lord with their whole heart instead. Trusting in God wholly and solely steers the believer away from opinionated reasoning and human-approved paths that will ultimately only lead to preventable hurt and harm and a heart polluted with pride instead of humility.

Trust God to lead you down right paths blanketed in truth and safety.

2. PLAN TO STAND // PROVERBS 16:9

There is an old adage that states, "Without a plan, you plan to fail." While this is true, if one's plans are not rooted in truth, failure is still inevitable. True success is realized through following God's instructions alone. To ensure precious time is not wasted pursuing goals and dreams God has not ordained, one must sincerely seek God through prayer and study of His Word. As Jeremiah 29:11 states, God knows the plans He has for us to give us an expected end, but the believer must follow truth in order to experience His plans. God desires to lead us down stable paths whereby we stand and not stumble, but our trust and cooperation serve as a prerequisite.

Plans approved by God always lead to success.

3. WHERE SELF-CONFIDENCE ENDS, TRUST IN GOD BEGINS // PSALM 118:8-9

Mankind, no matter how trustworthy or reliable, will never reach God's standard of reliability because God cannot fail. He is incapable of error. Even when it seems as if God has failed due to His allowance of certain trials in our lives, or His timing for

handling certain life situations is out of agreement with ours, God makes no mistakes. He is perfect in all His ways and perfect in His timing. He makes all things beautiful in its time and will make all things work together for our good. Because of these truths, God alone is worthy of our sole allegiance and trust.

Trusting God is always the best choice.

4. ONE GOD // ISAIAH 43:10-13

God is God alone. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-present. He has revealed Himself to mankind as Father in creation, Son in redemption, and Holy Spirit within the heart of every believer. Through the Son, the Word of God, He formed the heavens, the earth, and all that consists within. The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, and the firstborn of the dead (Isa. 43:10–13). The Son shed His blood so that we might be reconciled to the Father. Having been reconciled, 1 John 4:17 declares that just as Jesus was in the world, so are we. We are not Jesus, but He has empowered us to act and do on His behalf to the glory of God the Father.

What Jesus has done, no one can reenact nor reverse it.

5. WE ARE NOTHING WITHOUT HIM // JOHN 15:5

Naturally so, vines produce branches and not the other way around. The same holds true spiritually. Every believer proceeds from the Vine, Jesus. Jesus, as our Vine, nourishes and supplies life to every believer just as a physical vine does. Without this nourishment, branches could not survive. The Word of God nourishes us with right thinking so that we can perceive life through His eyes. The more we consume God's Word, the more our lives are transformed by His thoughts, which leads to better actions. Jesus matters because He is the Living Word that not only transformed the earth that was without form and void (Gen. 1:2) but transforms our lives that were once without form and void too.

Jesus is the Source of all life.