

LESSON 5:

What Is Truth?

MEN OF THE WORD

October 25, 2021

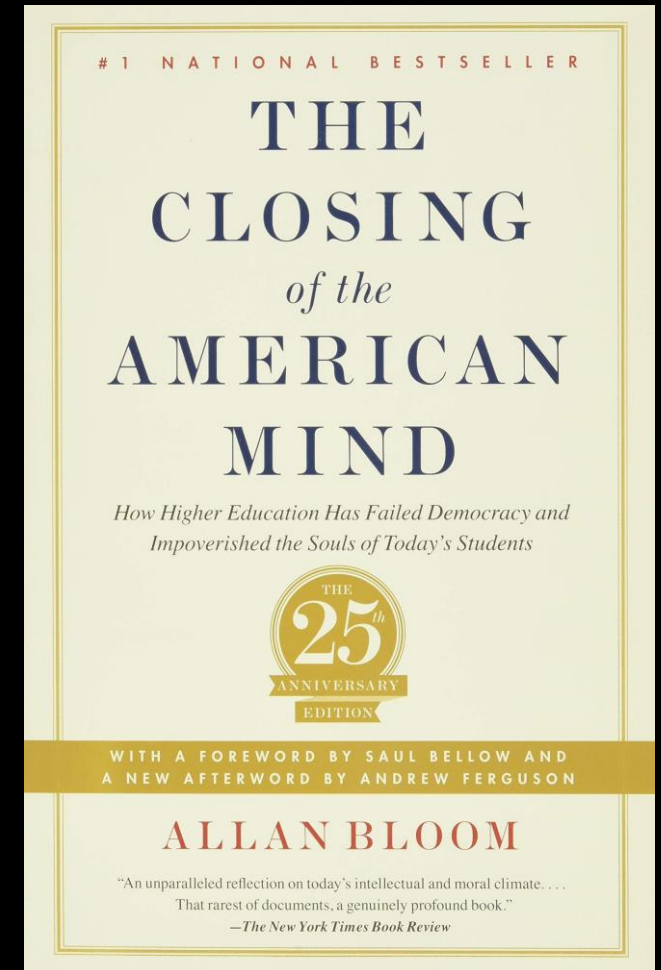
“Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered, ‘Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?’ Pilate answered, ‘I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?’ Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.’ . . .

“Therefore Pilate said to Him, ‘So You are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say *correctly* that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘What is truth?’”

—John 18:33–38

“There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative. If this belief is put to the test, one can count on the students’ reaction: they will be uncomprehending.”

—Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, 25



Religious belief is a matter of personal opinion; it is not about objective truth.

True or False?

34% Disagree

54% Agree

20%

14%

12%

28%

26%

STRONGLY

SOMEWHAT

DISAGREE

NOT SURE

SOMEWHAT

STRONGLY

AGREE



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

News Statement

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

Statements by Officials of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Commemorating the First Openly Transgender Four-Star Officer and First Female Four-Star Admiral of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps on October 19, 2021

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) publicly announced today the nation's first openly transgender four-star officer across any of the eight uniformed services of the United States. Admiral Rachel Levine, who serves as the HHS Assistant Secretary for Health and head of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps, was ceremonially sworn in as a four-star admiral. Admiral Levine now serves as the highest ranking official in the USPHS Commissioned Corps and its first-ever female four-star admiral. Admiral Levine will lead 6,000 Public Health Service officers who are dedicated to serving our nation's most underserved and vulnerable populations.

Today's historic announcement builds on the accomplishments of LGBTQ+ History Month and is a major step forward as we work to create a more inclusive society. HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra, Assistant Secretary for Health Admiral Rachel Levine, and the U.S. Surgeon General Vice Admiral Vivek Murthy issued the following statements to commemorate the first openly transgender four-star officer and the first female four-star admiral of the USPHS Commissioned Corps:

"Admiral Levine's historic appointment as the first openly transgender four-star officer is a giant step forward towards equality as a nation. This is a proud moment for us at HHS. Admiral Levine — a highly accomplished pediatrician who helps drive our agency's agenda to boost health access and equity and to strengthen behavioral health — is a cherished and critical partner in our work to build a healthier America." **U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary, Xavier Becerra**



What is TRUTH?

“One may say without exaggeration that failure to distinguish clearly between the Christian conception of truth and the conception of truth popularly cherished in the secular mind has been one of the most unfortunate neglects of our age.”

—Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind*, 106

1. Truth defined by the culture.

- It would be incorrect to assume that the culture has *abandoned* or *denied* the concept of truth.

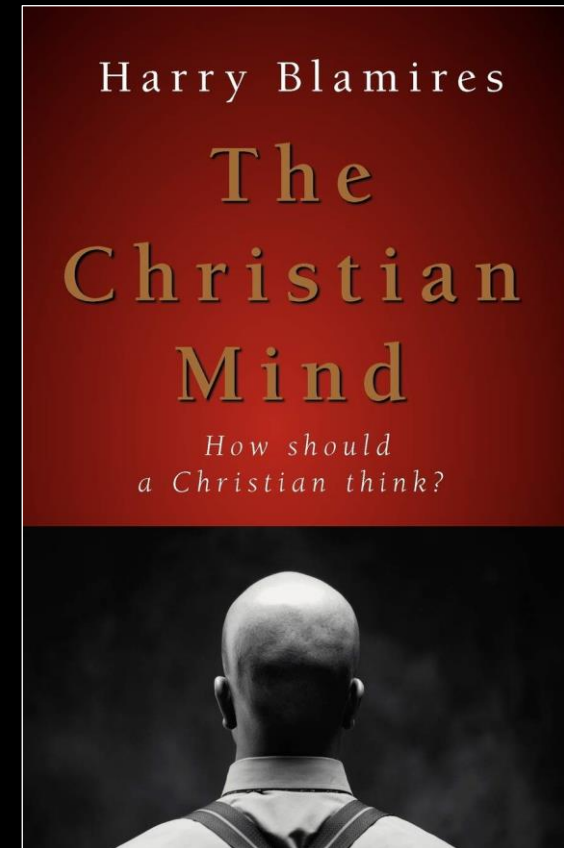


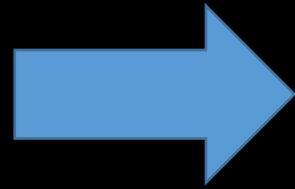
- Rather, the culture has *redefined* it under the notion of *secular humanism*.

- *Secularism* is the approach to truth which asserts that the natural world is the extent of what can be perceived as “reality.”
- Secularism contends that the supernatural realm—if it exists—is not part of our world and is thus beyond the scope of “truth.”
- Consequently, secularism defines “reality” in a way that is unaccountable to any *higher, supernatural* authority.
- It combines with *humanism*—the belief that man is the measure of all things—to ascribe ultimate authority for defining “reality” to man.
- “Truth” is therefore *subjective*—dependent upon man as the *perceiver* of reality.

“Modern secular thought ignores the reality beyond this world. It treats the world as The Thing. Secularism is, by its very nature, rooted in this world, accounting it the only sure basis of knowledge, the only reliable source of meaning and value. Secularism puts its trust in this life and makes earthly happiness and well-being its primary concern. . . . Its most basic presupposition, implicit in all its judgments, is that this which we experience directly with the senses constitutes the heart and totality of things. . . . *This World – All that Is.*”

—Blamires, *The Christian Mind*, 68





“Truth for Christ and Church”

“Truth”

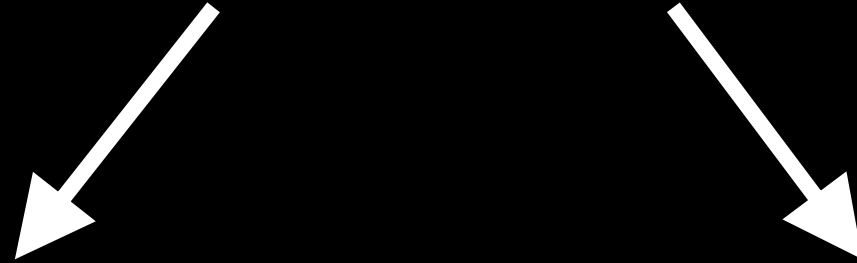
- According to the culture, truth has these qualities:
 - Relative, not absolute.
 - Subjective, not objective.
 - Evolving, not constant.
 - Private, not transcendent.
 - Anthropocentric, not theocentric.
 - Made, not found.
 - A matter of preference.
 - Socially constructed.
 - Never certain.
 - Prevailing opinion.
 - Is what is useful and preferable.
 - Happens to an idea.

“The only absolute truth is that there are no absolutes.”

2. Truth defined by God's Word.

- DEF'N: Truth is that which **corresponds** to **reality** as determined by **God**.
 - (1) “corresponds” – to be in conformity or agreement, to match, to be equivalent.
 - (2) “reality” – the state of things as they actually exist.
 - (3) “God” – the single, ultimate authority, able to define reality because of his unrestricted sovereignty and absolute knowledge.

GOD



REALITY
(state of
things)

=

TRUTH
(description
of things)

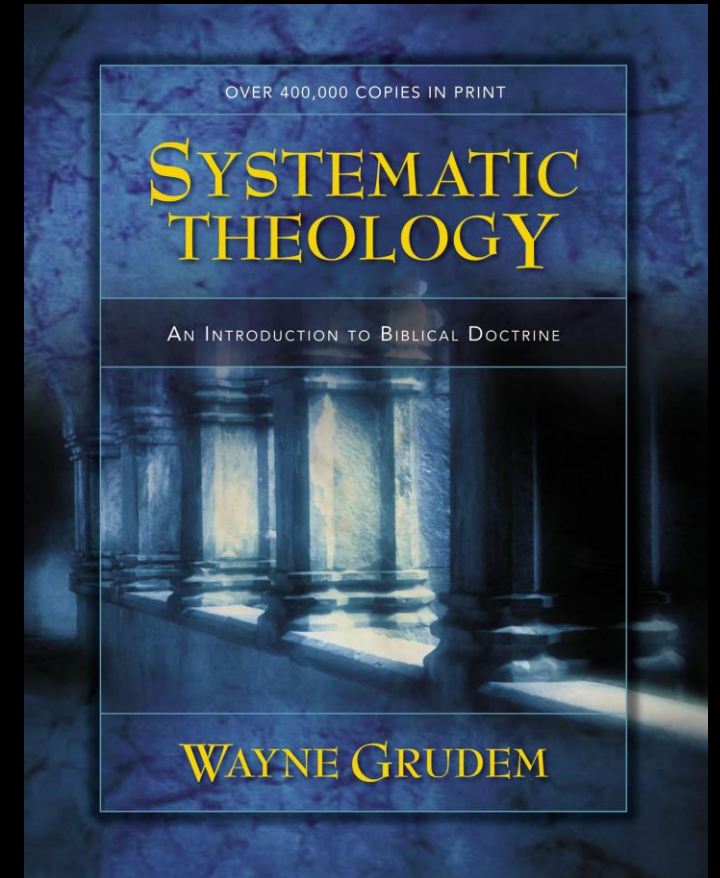


- God is the arbiter of reality/truth by virtue of his *transcendent existence*.
 - **Deuteronomy 4:35, 39** – “To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him. . . . Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.”
 - **Isaiah 44:6** – “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me.’”

- God is the arbiter of reality/truth by virtue of his *infinite knowledge*.
 - **Isaiah 40:13-14** – “Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has informed Him? With whom did He consult and *who* gave Him understanding? And *who* taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge and informed Him of the way of understanding?”
 - **Hebrews 4:13** – “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

“To say that God knows all things and that his knowledge is perfect is to say that he is never mistaken in his perception or understanding of the world: all that he knows and thinks is true and is a correct understanding of the nature of reality.”

—Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 196



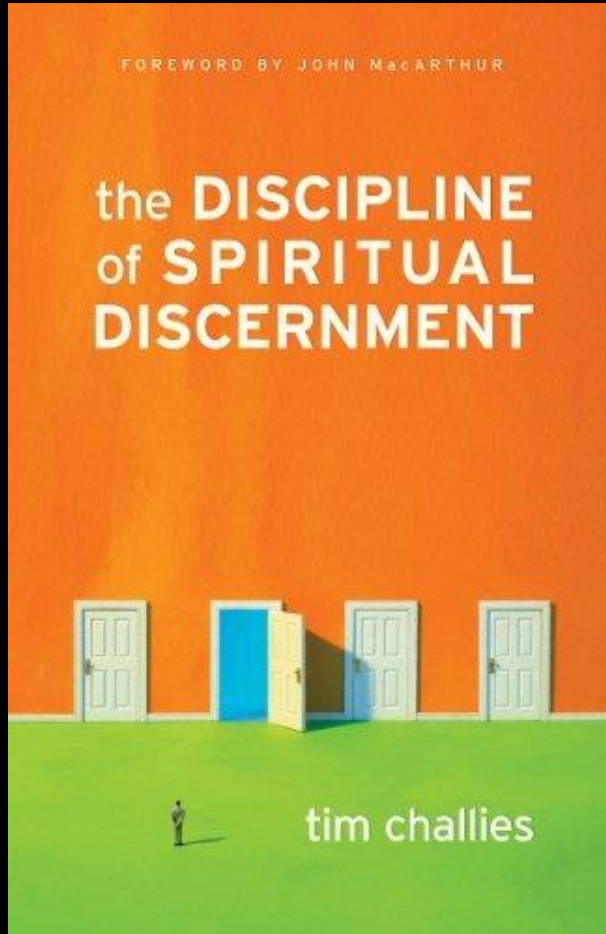
- God is the arbiter of reality/truth by virtue of his *sovereign determination*.
 - **Psalm 135:6** – “Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.”
 - **Psalm 139:16** – “Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.”
 - **Revelation 4:11** – “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God . . . for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

- God is the arbiter of reality/truth by virtue of his *revelatory nature*.
 - **Psalms 111:7-8** – “The works of His hands are truth and justice; all His precepts are sure. They are upheld forever and ever; they are performed in truth and uprightness.”
 - **Psalms 119:160** – “The sum of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.”
 - **1 Samuel 15:29** – “Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind.”

- God is the arbiter of reality/truth by virtue of his *very essence*.
 - **John 1:14** – “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
 - **John 14:6** – “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’”
 - **Revelation 19:11** – “And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.”

- Therefore, truth has these qualities:
 - Absolute, not relative.
 - Objective, not subjective.
 - Constant, not evolving.
 - Universal, not private.
 - Theocentric, not anthropo-centric.
 - Revealed, not invented.





“Truth is what God thinks; it is what God does; it is what God is; it is what God has revealed of Himself in the Bible. Truth is found in its fullest form in God, for He is truth; He is the very source and origin of all truth.”

—Tim Challies, *The Discipline of Spiritual Discernment*, 94

How then shall we respond?

1. Seek the truth.

- **Proverbs 23:23** – “Buy truth, and do not sell *it*, *get* wisdom and instruction and understanding.”
- Refuse to lean on your own intuitive interpretation of your circumstances and the world around you.
- Prioritize the pursuit of truth above the attainment of worldly values, earthly conveniences, and temporal pleasures.
- Do whatever it takes.
- Defy conformity to the culture’s antipathy to true truth.

CHRISTIAN & FAITHFUL Pass Through VANITY FAIR



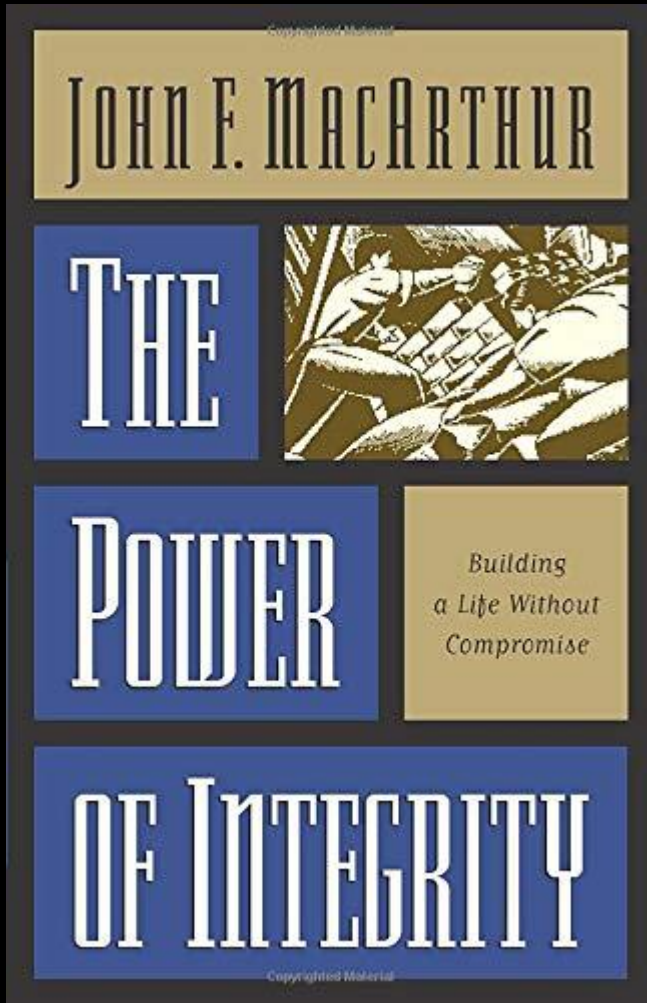
2. Think the truth.

- **Philippians 4:8** – “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on [ponder, think upon] these things.”
- The most intense spiritual battle you face is the battle over what to *think*—true thoughts or false thoughts.
- How you wage the war to think true thoughts has consequences that extend throughout life.

3. Practice the truth.

- **John 3:20-21** – “For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”
- It is the epitome of hypocrisy to claim to know truth but fail to apply it to everyday life.
- Truth is *practical*; it calls for obedience.





“Divine truth and godliness are inextricably related. No matter how sincere our intentions might be, we cannot obey God’s will if we do not know what it is. We cannot be godly if we do not know what God is like and what He expects of those who belong to Him.”

—John MacArthur, *The Power of Integrity*, 38

4. Speak the truth.

- **Colossians 3:9-10** – “Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.”
- Mortify the practice of lying, speaking falsehood, using words to deceive and mislead, inappropriate exaggeration, etc.
- Cultivate speech that communicates reality as *God* determines it.

“If you are of the truth, if you have learned the truth, if you see the sanctity of the truth, then speak truth. We are not called to be deceivers or liars. God is a God of truth, and His people are called to have an enormously high standard of truth.”

—R. C. Sproul, *Exposition of Ephesians*, 114



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**“Truth must be spoken
however it be taken.”**

—John Trapp (1601-1669)

5. Stand for truth.

- “It is easier to find a score of men wise enough to discover the truth than to find one intrepid enough, in the face of opposition, to stand up for it” (A. A. Hodge).
- We need to embrace our role as dissenters courageously in this secular culture.
- **1 Corinthians 16:13** – “Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.”

“Peace if possible,
but the truth at any rate.”

—Martin Luther



“Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason (I do not accept the authority of popes and councils because they have contradicted each other), my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot



and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God. Amen.”

—Martin Luther

NO PLACE FOR TRUTH

*Or Whatever
Happened to
Evangelical
Theology?*



DAVID F. WELLS

“Evangelicals now stand among those who are on easiest terms with the world, for they have lost their capacity for dissent. The recovery of dissent is what is most needed, and the path to its recovery is the reformation of the Church.”

—David Wells, *No Place for Truth*, 288

And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God has willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

That Word above all earthly powers,
No thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
Through him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still:
His kingdom is forever.

MEN OF THE WORD

Wednesdays 7:00-9:00 PM

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HAVE A QUESTION?

Use the QR code below to submit a question pertaining to this MotW session. We will use these questions to produce additional resources to help provide you with the answers you need.



SCAN ME