



Knowing the Truth

Overcoming the postmodernism barrier to salvation.

Note: Scripture used in this Bible Study is from the New King James Version.

Let's begin by examining how the world views truth... There are three terms that represent different world views: Ethical Theism, Modernism and Postmodernism. I'm going to give you three views of truth that describe these terms and you tell me which one best describes the prevailing wisdom today:

- 1. Truth has been revealed to people by God.**
- 2. Truth can be discerned by reason and logic.**
- 3. Truth is a product of a person's culture.**

How does the third view of truth align so well with the prevailing world view?

People believe that truth does not exist objectively, that truth is relative to the context to which they were raised. (This is one argument my brother used to dismiss my testimony about being born again – it was a result of my living in the Bible belt.)

If truth is not universal, what does that mean for how people may act?

Moral relativism says that what is right for one person is not necessarily right for another. So people act according to *"what was right in his own eyes"* (Judg 17:6).

How has moral relativism effected our society?

- It has caused children to become mass murders.
- It has caused the public to accept men sin and ignore the consequences...
 - Abortion is no longer murder of the unborn, it is a right to chose.
 - Homosexuality is no longer an abomination, it is an alternate lifestyle.
 - Gambling is no longer a vice, it is a government sanctioned lottery.
 - I like a bumper sticker I saw which called the lottery a tax on the mathematically challenged.
- It has caused people to declare what is right to be wrong...
 - Discipline of children has become child abuse.
 - Marriage is no longer a life-long commitment.
 - Public prayer is thought of as offensive.

Isaiah 5:20 - *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

Let's go back into history... Was there ever a time when people accepted the first view, that truth has been revealed to people by God?

Yes, prior to the Renaissance period which began in Italy and quickly spread through Europe in the 1300s.

What was the Renaissance period?

It was a time that was characterized by great strides in literature, learning art, and architecture.

Can reason and logic discern truth?

Yes it can, but false logic can result in false truth so we need the Word of God as a check.

How did the Renaissance period cause truth being thought of as what is revealed by God to morph into being able to discern truth by reason and logic?

In the Middle Ages and before, the major theme of art, literature and philosophy was glorifying and serving God. Renaissance artists and thinkers exalted man and his abilities. This shift gave birth to a doctrine called humanism which stressed human dignity and ability and regarded man as the center of all things, the master of his fate, the captain of his soul.

How would the view that man is the center of all things impact relationships with God?

This emphasis of man being his own boss is an unbiblical view of man and his relationship to his Creator. It would lead more people astray. If man is the center of all things, there is no place for God.

The renaissance was followed by the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason in the 1600s. While the Renaissance mind acknowledged God, Enlightenment thinkers claimed that if there was a God, then he had no contact or interest in His creation now, that people were on their own to learn truth, they could expect no help from God.

How would the view that people are on their own to discern truth impact morality?

Standards of right and wrong would not be based on the nature and character of God, they would be products of human reasoning.

The Industrial Revolution began in the 1700s, it was an explosive period of human productivity and advancement.

How do you think the Industrial Revolution built on the pervasive world view during the Enlightenment?

- Inventions, innovations, and improvements of the Industrial Age fueled more than factory furnaces; they stoked the fires of human confidence.
- The progress that people saw all around them encouraged them to look to themselves for hope and guidance.
- Man no longer felt that he needed to look to God, he only needed to look inward to himself.

How was Darwinism a product of the Industrial Revolution?

As the Industrial Revolution proved that life was getting better, this could explain how life came about in the first place. God was no longer needed to explain or understand how the world and man came to be.

Philosophers have called the original view of truth as being revealed by God, Ethical Theism, what do you think they have labeled the view that truth is discerned by logic and reason?

Modernism.

So if Modernism is the view that truth is discerned by logic and reason, what is the new view that truth is a product of one's culture called?

Post modernism.

When did this view of truth as a product of culture emerge?

Between 1960 and 1990 writes Stanley J. Grenz in his book, *A Primer to Post modernism* (per Josh McDowell, *The New Tolerance*).

If people in the time of Ethical Theism believed that truth is revealed by God, what role do you think belief reason had?

Reason can disclose truth about reality but this must be confirmed by faith and revelation.

Isa 1:18 - "Come now, and let us reason together," says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

How would Modernism view human reasoning?

People should absolutely rely on rational discovery through the scientific method and reject belief in the supernatural.

How does the view of the role of reasoning change with Postmodernism?

Since there is no universal truth transcending culture, thinking is a "social construct" (language is arbitrary - words no longer have absolute meaning and can be changed to suit the one using them.) This brings to mind

the "lawyerly" defense President Clinton used to claim he didn't lie about his affair with Monica Lewinski, "it depends on the meaning of the word 'is'."

How has the disintegration of language integrity contributed to mankind turning away from God?

The Bible no longer means what it says. Words now have to be interpreted in the context of a particular person's experiences. A verse may mean something for one person and something else for another.

Well with that background to how the world views truth, let's move on to what the Bible says. We'll take a look at four aspects of truth:

How truth...

1. contrasts with the world view
2. is a characteristic of God
3. makes a relationship with God possible
4. benefits people

Truth versus the world view

John 14:15-17

15 If you love Me, keep My commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--

17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

If we love God, what will we do?

Obey the will of Jesus.

What is the will of Jesus for everyone?

That all people would believe Him and be saved...

2 Pet 3:9 - The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

What will Jesus do for those who respond to Him?

Pray that the Father would send them the Holy Spirit.

Why is the Holy Spirit called Helper here?

Because He helps us to know Jesus...

John 15:26 - But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

He helps us to understand the Scriptures...

John 14:26 - But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

He helps us be more like Jesus...

II Th 2:13-14 - But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What will the Helper do?

Abide with us forever.

What does it mean the Holy Spirit will be with us forever?

That from the point we are born again having believed Jesus and putting our trust in Him, the Holy Spirit indwells us while we're in our mortal bodies and after we are resurrected.

What other title is given to the Holy Spirit?

The Spirit of Truth.

Why is the Holy Spirit called the Spirit of Truth?

This is one of the characteristics of God, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit reveals the truth about God, the Son...

John 15:26 - But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

As God, the Holy Spirit can not lie...

Heb 6:18 - it is impossible for God to lie

What does it mean that the world can not receive the Spirit of truth?

The Holy Spirit does not indwell unbelievers and consequently, they can not know the truth.

1 Cor 2:14 - the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

As God has commanded His children, He also observes Himself...

2 Cor 6:14 - Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

Can unbelievers know the truth?... Why?

No... Unbelievers in the world can not see or know the Spirit of Truth.

What does the truth look like to unbelievers?

Madness...

Acts 26:25 - But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason."

(Note that the truth is logical but to unbelievers it is illogical... "'Come now, and let us reason together,' says the LORD" (Isa 1:18).

Foolishness...

1 Cor 1:18 - *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

Where do believers see the Spirit of Truth?

We see the Spirit of Truth in:

- **God's Word** – prophecies that come to pass, history that archeology verifies, principles that are reinforced through personal experience.
- **In creation** – the fact that there is a creation (if there is a watch, there must be a watch maker) and the fact that there is order despite the 2ND Law of Thermodynamics (all matter left to itself will trend toward randomness)
- **In our own hearts** – our conscience bears witness of God's Law... all people in all cultures know certain fundamentals of right & wrong: Rom 2:14-15 - *for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them*
- **In the changed lives of Christians** – People who adopt an eternal perspective change how they act in the world and this gets noticed because it conflicts with the usual course of things in the world (the fruit of the Spirit). People in the world since the time Christ have been mystified by the willingness of Christians to die rather than deny the Lord.

How is it that we believers know the Spirit of Truth?

We know the Spirit of Truth in that we have a relationship with Him. We speak to Him via our prayers to the Father...

Rom 8:26 - Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

and He speaks to us through our human spirit...

Rom 8:16 - The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God

Whom does the Holy Spirit indwell?

All born-again believers in Christ...

1 Cor 3:16 - Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

What does it mean in verse 17 where it says, "He dwells with you and will be in you"?

You need to keep this in context of who Jesus is speaking to and the timing of the statement. Prior to Pentecost, the Holy Spirit hadn't actually indwelt believers. This is part

of the Dispensation of Grace, the indwelling of believers by the Holy Spirit.

How do people in the world generally react when they are confronted with the truth about God?

- Most reject the truth because this conflicts with their desire to be their own boss.
- They reject the truth because acknowledging it would force them to step out of their comfort zone.
- They become hostile toward you as they did toward Jesus because the truth reminds them of their unacceptable condition before God...

John 8:40 - But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God.

How does Satan take advantage of the propensity of man to reject the truth about God?

He fans the flames of human rebellion by encouraging it and reinforcing it with lies...

John 8:44 - *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."*

Who is Jesus calling sons of the devil?

Those who reject Him as the Son of God.

Who was a murderer from the beginning? How so?

Satan, because he encouraged Eve to reject God's Law leading to death entering the world.

What does it mean that Satan does not stand in the truth?

Satan does not support the truth and the truth does not support him. Lying is his nature.

Why is it that Satan does not stand in the truth?

There is no truth in him. He is totally dependent on his own resources.

If the truth is in you, what should you do?

Admit your sinful condition and look to God for salvation...

I Jn 1:8 - If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

How is it that Satan is the father of lies?

He told the first lie to Eve which led to all mankind having a sin nature and to be born liars.

How did the purpose of Jesus' mission to earth differ from that of Satan?

Satan came to lie and murder, Jesus came to reveal the truth and make a way for eternal life...

John 18:37-38 - Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"

Who hears the voice of Jesus?

Those who are "of the truth" hear the voice of Jesus.

What does it mean to be "of the truth"?

To have such a relationship with God that you hear his voice.

How do we hear God's voice, does this mean there should be an audible voice that believers hear?

No, during this dispensation. God may reveal Himself with an audible voice to people during this age of grace but this is not the norm. Because, *"we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Cor 5:7).

So how then do we hear God's voice?

Through circumstances and coincidences that are really not. By His Spirit speaking to our spirit (planting thoughts in our head) and by God's Word.

How do we recognize which thoughts that we have are from God?

They must be consistent with God's Word.

How did Pilate view the truth?

Truth was what he as governor declared it to be. (He was ahead of his time in Postmodern thought that says truth is not universal, it is relative, a product of one's culture.)

What is universal truth?

What God says.

How did Pilate's attitude about truth reveal that he was an idolater?

He sought to usurp God's authority to define what is true. Thus he worshipped himself as god (the creature rather than the Creator).

What will become of those who reject the truth?

They will be condemned...

II Th 2:12 - they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. They will suffer the wrath of God...

Rom 1:18 - For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness

What does it mean to be condemned?

Judged as unrighteous and sentenced to suffer God's wrath.

What is God's wrath?

His anger which is demonstrated in punishment both in this world and eternally.

What else characterizes those who suppress the truth?

They are ungodly and unrighteous.

So what is the corollary of this, if we stand on the truth, how are we to be characterized?

We are godly and righteous and will not suffer the wrath of God.

What are people really doing when they reject to truth of God?

They are believing a lie instead and are number among those, "*who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator*" (Romans 1:25)

How is it that rejecting the truth of God makes you an idolater?

Rejecting the truth of God means that you believe a lie that was given to mankind by the father of lies. So you are worshipping the devil and not God... worshipping anyone or anything other than God is idolatry (worshipping the creature rather than the Creator).

Would you expect truth to be more or less prevalent as we get closer to the time of the Lord's return?

Less prevalent...

2 Tim 3:13 - evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Let's take a look at the passage that precedes this...

2 Tim 3:1-9

- 1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:
- 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
- 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,
- 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,
- 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!
- 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts,

7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith;

9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

What time period does 2 Timothy 3:1-9 describe?

2 Timothy 3:1-9 describes the last days.

What are the last days?

The last days refer to the time just before the Lord returns. It generally corresponds to the tribulation but also has application to the pre-tribulation time where the stage is being set and there are characteristics that foreshadow the tribulation.

How does 2 Timothy 3:1-9 describe these last days?

The last days will be perilous times, very dangerous.

Why will the last days be a very dangerous time?

There will be great deception and temptation in the last days.

v1-5... Does this passage describe the day we are living in?

Yes, all these characteristics are rampant today in our materialistic society.

Who is it that has a form of godliness but denying its power?

Religions that go through the motions of worshipping God but who's participants have no personal relationship with the Lord.

What are we commanded to do if we find ourselves mixed up with those who deny the power of God?

Turn away from them.

v6 - What do those who deny the power of God do?

Creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts

Why is it just women that are subjected to those who deny the power of God?

It isn't just women. Who is it that creeps into the household as the deceiver? The husband was deceived first having been loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts.

v7 - What else do those who deny the power of God do?

They are always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth

Does the amount of one's education have any bearing on their ability to know the truth?

No, in fact there may be an inverse relationship because Modernism and Postmodernism teaches man to rely on his own resources rather than God.

v8 - Who were Jannes and Jambres?

The two magicians of Pharaoh who duplicated two of the initial miracles Moses offered to authenticate himself as God's spokesman (Exodus 7).

Why did Jannes and Jambres duplicate these miracles?

To discredit the Moses miracles as being from God so they would be justified in ignoring his message.

How do those rejecting the truth of God act like Jannes and Jambres today?

They attempt to discredit the Bible. They dedicate their lives to proving evolution. They invent stories to justify their beliefs...

2 Tim 4:4 - they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

How did Paul describe those who are like Jannes and Jambres?

As men of corrupt minds who are disapproved concerning the faith.

What does it mean they have corrupt minds?

They have flawed logic in their understanding of things. Their view of the truth is clouded by sin.

What does it mean they are disapproved concerning the faith?

They are without faith, unsaved because it is through faith that we are saved (Ephesians 2:8-9).

V9 - What will become of those like Jannes and Jambres?

They will progress no further and their folly will be manifest to all.

What does it mean that those like Jannes and Jambres will progress no further?

Their success will be limited to this world and even limited in this world. Jannes and Jambres used magic to mimic the rod turning into a snake and water turning into blood but were unable to duplicate the plague of frogs, lice, flies, livestock disease, boils, hail, locusts, darkness and the death of the firstborn.

How do we know that those like Jannes and Jambres will progress no further and their folly will be known to all?

This is what happened to Jannes and Jambres.

So how does a person's world view impact their openness to the truth?

If you can look at issues from God's perspective, you will be open to the truth. If you look at things from a worldly perspective, you will reject the truth.

Truth is a characteristic of God

What do you think is the most common characteristic that people attribute to God?

Love...

John 3:16 - *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

God is love (1 John 4:8)

How is love and truth related?

- God loves truth, that is why He has commanded us to do the same...
Zechariah 8:19 - Thus says the LORD of hosts: `The fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.
- Truth is an important aspect of love...
1 Cor 13:4, 6 - Love... does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

What does it mean to rejoice in the truth?

Taking joy in being honest & knowing the truth.

If you are rejoicing in the truth, what will you be doing?

Telling others about the truth, *"speaking the truth in love"* (Eph 4:15)

How do you speak the truth in love when the truth is not something the other person wants to hear?

- This is where tough love comes into play since it is in their best interest to know the truth.
- While it is important to speak the truth, being delicate in the way the truth is delivered (tact) is where love comes in.

Let's take a look at a classic verse that proclaims truth as an attribute of Jesus Christ...

John 1:14 - And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Who became flesh and dwelt among us?

Jesus Christ

Why is Jesus called the Word?

Jesus came to reveal God to mankind and make the way for people to have a relationship with Him. Likewise, God gave us His Word so that we may know Him. The Greek word translated "Word" in John 1:14 is "Logos" which also means to speak intelligently and refers to logic and truth.

How is Jesus described in John 1:14?

As having the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

What does it mean Jesus was full of grace?

That He looks for ways to bestow unmerited favor on those He has called.

How is it that Jesus was full of truth?

Jesus is God...

John 1:1 – *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

As God, Jesus can not lie...

Heb 6:18 - *it is impossible for God to lie*

Jesus demonstrated this godly characteristic by the things that He did...

John 10:37-38 - *If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.*

So if Jesus can not lie, what does that mean for the things that He said?

That they are absolutely true, that His prophecies will definitely happen, that we can trust what He said because the very character of God is at stake.

How was Jesus distinct from all others God sent before Him?

Jesus more perfectly revealed the nature of God since He was God...

John 1:17 - For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Does John 1:17 say that Moses did not reveal the truth in the Law?

No, the Law is still the truth from God, but it is not the whole truth. The purpose of the Law was to convict people of their sin before God and drive them to Him for Salvation. The Law itself does not save, it is God who saves. Jesus is the rest of the story from God.

Matt 5:17 – "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."

All right, so Jesus told the truth, how do we know that the Bible accurately represents what Jesus said?

One of the promises of Jesus is that He would provide a way for us to know the truth...

John 14:26 – "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

This is the ministry of the Third Person of the Triune Godhead to speak the truth about God and reveal the way of salvation...

John 15:26 – "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me."

All right, so the red text in the New Testament is accurate, what about all that black text, can we trust it to be true?

If God is Almighty, He is powerful enough to accurately bring us His Word even using His error-prone creation.

2 Pet 1:20-21 - knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Thus we can trust all the inspired Word of God as being true...

2 Tim 3:16 - All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness

So if truth is an important attribute of God, how may we be more godly ourselves?

Be honest and speak the truth...

Titus 1:1 - Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,

Truth makes a relationship with God possible

John 4:23-24 - "the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

What did Jesus mean when He said, "the hour coming and now is here"?

His coming changed how people worship. No longer did they have to go through priests to God. Now through Christ, people have direct access to God.

How did Jesus define real worship?

It is in spirit and truth.

What does it mean to worship in spirit?

The expression spirit here refers to the human spirit... the immaterial inner being in each person that has the capacity to commune with God. It is our spirit that senses and responds to the Holy Spirit...

Rom 8:16 - The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God

So worshipping in spirit is glorifying God through our human spirit... Our body can be anywhere, yet worship occurs when our attention and praise are turned toward God.

What does it mean to worship in truth?

- All need to worship God by recognizing His true character & nature as well as our need for Him.
- Worshipping in truth is knowing God and seeking His will rather than pursuing our own independent agenda.

How do we come to know God's will?

We come to know God's will by studying His Word, taking steps of faith that receive confirmation, and by seeing God work in the lives of others.

Another classic verse which proclaims that truth makes a relationship with God possible is John 14:6...

John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

What does it mean to come to the Father?

This means to have an everlasting relationship with God the Father.

How is it Jesus is the way that people come to the Father?

- Jesus provided the way by paying our sin debt with His own life.
- We may pray to the Father because we come in Jesus' name...
John 14:13 - "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

How is it Jesus is the life?

Jesus is the one who gives us eternal life...

John 5:21 - "For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will."

How is it Jesus is the truth?

- Jesus embodies all the truth of God since He is God.

- Jesus personifies the truth because He only speaks the truth.
- Jesus represents the ultimate reality.

So what role does truth have in our relationship with God?

- The one who made the way for us to have eternal life who can not lie, made a promise that all who trust in Him would come to the Father (that is have an everlasting relationship with Him).
- Embracing (or responding to) the truth is necessary to come to God.

And what is Jesus' desire for all people?

That every one would come to know Him...

1 Tim 2:4 - who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Is it possible to go to heaven any other way besides accepting the truth about Jesus?

No.

Why would a loving God provide such a narrow way that excludes so many people?

- God was not obligated to provide any way. It is out of His grace that He provided Jesus Christ.
- Any other way that people hold up as a way to God is man's plan and not of God.
- God made us in His image giving us the sovereignty to chose or reject a relationship with Him (rejecting God's way is rejecting a relationship with Him).

What would you say to someone who says that while they have not accepted God's way, they have not rejected either?

There is no sitting on the fence, to not accept is to remain in your condition of rejection...

John 3:18 - "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

How Truth Benefits People

John 8:32 - "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

How is it that we shall know the truth?

See the previous verse...

John 8:31 - Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed."

...believe Jesus and abide in His word.

So who is it that shall know the truth?

Disciples of Jesus, defined by those who believe Him and abide in His Word.

We live in a free country, why do we need to be made free?

Outwardly we may be free, but inwardly all people are in bondage to sin.

How does being in bondage to sin cause us problems in the here and now?

- Sin has consequences in the here and now.
- It keeps us from enjoying life as God has intended us to.
- Knowing that life will eventually come to an end keeps us from being too excited about life.
- Knowing that we will be judged for our sin (from God's law written on our hearts – conscience) and not dealing with it causes us to dread end of life.

What do people in the world think freedom is?

Latitude do what you want.

How does the world's concept of freedom compare to the freedom that Jesus came to bless us with?

- Unsaved people are in bondage to their sin, they may think they have the latitude to act righteously but they can not because the prerequisite for all righteousness is having a right relationship with God..
- Saved people have a right relationship with God and so are truly free from having to sin because they have the Holy Spirit who provides a righteous alternative.

How is it the truth makes us free?

- Knowing that God has provided a way for our sins to be forgiven frees us from greatest consequence of sin.
- Knowing that while in the valley of the shadow of death is only a shadow that can not harm us is very liberating.
- Truth keeps us for making bad decisions thus avoiding the consequences of sin.
- We've already learned that Jesus personifies the truth of God, it is Jesus who makes us free from the consequences of sin.

Who plays an important role in our relationship with God after we put our trust in Jesus?

The Holy Spirit...

Ephesians 1:13 - In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

What is the word of truth in Ephesians 1:13?

It is the gospel or good news of your salvation.

What does it mean in Ephesians 1:13 that we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise?

- Verse 14 elaborates, "*(the Holy Spirit of promise), who is the guarantee of our inheritance*"
- The presence of the Holy Spirit keeps us reminded of God's promise of eternal life and helps us to keep an eternal perspective.

How is the presence of the Holy Spirit apparent in our lives?

Because the Holy Spirit bears fruit in our lives *which surpasses all understanding* (Philippians 4:7)...

Gal 5:22-23 - the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

How are the fruit of the Spirit benefits from knowing the truth?

The Spirit of truth makes it possible for us to make it through trying time with a lot less pain and even be a good witness because He helps us see the situation from God's perspective. And if we know God, we know that God is in control of the situation.

Eph 5:9 - for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth

What role does the Holy Spirit play in our knowing the truth about God?

Speaks to our human spirit so that we may know and understand the things of God...

John 16:13 - "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

What does it mean in John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit will not speak on His own authority?

The very next verse says that the Holy Spirit will glorify Jesus, taking what is His and declaring it to us. So the Holy Spirit speaks on the authority of the Son who was sent by the Father thus He speaks on the authority of both the Father and the Son...

John 15:26 – "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me."

What does it mean in John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth?

- The Holy Spirit will help us understand what we need to know about spiritual matters.
- Since the Holy Spirit will be with us forever, He will continue to teach us the great truths of God into eternity.

John 14:16 – “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.”

- This is a great principle of the Bible: the spiritually wealthy will grow wealthier...

Luke 8:18 – “Whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.”

What does it mean in John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit will tell us things to come?

- The Holy Spirit helps us understand prophecies in the Bible and to “discern the signs of the times” (Matt 16:3).
- Things to come are specific truths that are clearly from God, only God can tell us about things to come: “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure’” (Isa 46:10).

What is the prerequisite to learning the truth from the Holy Spirit?

Turning from sin and entering into a relationship with God through Jesus...

2 Tim 2:25 - in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

What is the benefit to us in the here and now to know the truths about spiritual matters?

It is comforting to know the will of God when you are acting according to it. It also keeps us from making bad decisions that have dire consequences.

We’ve talked about how the truth benefits us in the here and now by making us free, gives us fruit of the Spirit, and leads to more truth. What other benefits are there for knowing the truth?

Holiness: the truth sanctifies us...

John 17:17 – “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”

How does the truth of God sanctify us?

- God’s provision and promise of eternal life makes it possible for our sins to be forgiven.
- In the here and now, the Holy Spirit leads us on the path of righteousness.

What does John 17:17 equate with truth? Why?

God’s Word... It is from the God who can not lie so by definition it is truth.

Belief: The truth has been given to us so that we may believe...

John 19:35 - And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.

How did the Apostle John know he was telling the truth about Jesus in John 19:35?

The Holy Spirit helped him to know the truth...

2 Pet 1:20-21 - no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Armor: As we discussed in our spiritual warfare series, truth is the foundation for our spiritual armor that helps us to stand against the wiles of the devil...

Eph 6:14 - Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

Assurance: The truth enables us to act in love and our ability to act in love assures us of our salvation...

I Jn 3:18-19 - My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.

How do we love in deed and truth?

We love in deed when we take action as a result of our love. We love in truth when we tell the truth out of love. Note that sometimes loving in truth is tough love, allowing others to experience consequences of their sin for themselves so that they be come to the end of their selves and be saved.

Makes us a righteous worker: Those who correctly understand God’s Word will not be ashamed at the judgment...

2 Tim 2:15 - Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Eternal: If truth is truth, it is truth forever

II Jn 1:2 - because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever: