

Term 1, 2024

Introduction

If someone asked you "What's something you just can't live without?" I suspect your answer might be relatively trivial - your phone, chocolate, your morning coffee... But if the question were changed to "What's something no-one can live without?", well that's a different question altogether! This term we're going to be exploring eight things that matter to pretty much everyone. Eight things that we may not be all that conscious of as we sit down to breakfast, churn through our work, or look forward to a night out... but without which life tends to lose its savour. And we're going to see that each one of these eight absolutely essential things finds its fullest satisfaction in the one uniquely essential Jesus Christ.

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Kick-off

1. How would you answer the big question: "where does knowledge come from?"
2. What common beliefs have you encountered among friends or in popular culture in regard to the topic of "truth"?
a) What kinds of things do people SAY which express these beliefs?
b) What kinds of things do people DO which display these beliefs?
From God's Word
READ John 18:33-38 (see next page) 3. On trial before Pilate, Jesus claims to testify to the truth. How does Pilate respond and what do you think is motivating his response?

Read Romans 1:18-32; Hebrews 1:1-4 & John 1:1-18 (see next page) 4. From what three sources can true knowledge of God be gained?
5. What does mankind do with the truth about God? What are the consequences of this behaviour?
6. What did God do to overcome the futility and darkness caused by sin? What has God's action made possible?
To My Life 7. What are the major differences between what you've discovered in God's WORD about "truth" and what the WORLD believes about this topic?
8. What further implications flow out of your study on "truth"?
9. What features of your own life are inconsistent with the truth you have discussed this week?
10. Who could you talk with this week on the topic of "truth"?





John 18:33-38

- 18 ³³ Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"
- ³⁴ "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"
- ³⁵ "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"
- ³⁶ Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."
- ³⁷ "You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

³⁸ "What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him.

Romans 1:18-32

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, is since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

- ²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.
 ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools
 ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.
- ²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.
- ²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.
- ²⁸ Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Hebrews 1:1-4

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

John 1:1-18

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^[a] it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe.

⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me."') ¹⁶ Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and ^(b) is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

a John 1:5 Or understood

b John 1:18 Some manuscripts but the only Son, who





Kick-off

NICK-OII
1. How would you answer the big question: "Who am I and why do I matter?"
2. What common beliefs have you encountered among friends or in popular cul-ture in regard to the topic of "identity"?
a) What kinds of things do people SAY which express these beliefs?
b) What kinds of things do people DO which display these beliefs?
From God's Word
READ Genesis 1:26-2:25; 2 Kings 17:15 & 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 (see next page) 3. What does Genesis teach us about our relationship to our Creator and to the rest of creation?

4. Is our significance something that is given to us or something that we have to establish for ourselves?
5. What happens when we try to create our significance independently from God?
6. How might understanding our significance as a gift from God help us to love others better?
To My Life 7. What are the major differences between what you've discovered in God's WORD about "identity" and what the WORLD believes about this topic?
8. What further implications flow out of your study on "identity"?
9. What features of your own life are inconsistent with the truth you have discussed this week?
10. How did you go engaging a friend on the topic of "truth" last week and who could you talk to this week on the topic of "identity"?

Identity



Genesis 1:26-2:25

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, [1] and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

- ²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
- ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."
- ²⁹ Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.
- ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.
- Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.
- ² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.
- ⁴ This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.
- ⁵ Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth^[b] and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, ⁶ but streams^[c] came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. ⁷ Then the Lord God formed a man^[d] from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.
- ⁸ Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.
- ⁹ The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- ¹⁰ A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. ¹¹ The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² (The gold of that land

is good; aromatic resin^[e] and onyx are also there.) ¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. ^[f] ¹⁴ The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

- ¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."
- ¹⁸ The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."
- ¹⁹ Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam^{Ig1} no suitable helper was found. ²¹ So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs^{Ih1} and then closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib^{II1} he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

- ²³ The man said,
 - "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."
- That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.
- ²⁵ Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.
- **a** <u>Genesis 1:26</u> Probable reading of the original Hebrew text (see Syriac); Masoretic Text *the earth*
- **b** Genesis 2:5 Or land; also in verse 6
- c Genesis 2:6 Or mist
- **d** <u>Genesis 2:7</u> The Hebrew for man (adam) sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for ground (adamah); it is also the name Adam (see verse 20).
- e Genesis 2:12 Or good; pearls
- f Genesis 2:13 Possibly southeast Mesopotamia
- g Genesis 2:20 Or the man
- h Genesis 2:21 Or took part of the man's side
- i Genesis 2:22 Or part

2 Kings 17:15

17 They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their ancestors and the statutes he had warned them to keep. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the Lord had ordered them, "Do not do as they do."

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: ¹⁸ The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin^[16] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

a 2 Corinthians 5:17 Or Christ, that person is a new creation.

b <u>2 Corinthians 5:21</u> Or be a sin offering





Kick-off
1. How would you answer the big question: "Who do I belong to?"
2. What common beliefs have you encountered among friends or in popular cul-ture in regard to the topic o "love"?
a) What kinds of things do people SAY which express these beliefs?
b) What kinds of things do people DO which display these beliefs?
From God's Word
READ 1 John 4:7-12 (see next page) 3. What words would you use to describe God's love for us?

4. Why does God love us?
5. What are the source, motive, model & effect of our love for each other?
Source:
Motive:
Model:
Effect:
6. How does loving God result in us loving each other?
To My Life
7. What are the major differences between what you've discovered in God's WORD about "love" and what the WORLD believes about this topic?
8. What further implications flow out of your study on "love"?
9. What features of your own life are inconsistent with the truth you have discussed this week?
10. How did you go engaging a friend on the topic of "identity" last week and who could you talk to this week on the topic of "love"?





1 John 4:7-12

4 7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Fight Things Outsteam't Live Without





Kick-off

Nick off
1. How would you answer the big question: "Why am I here & what should I do?"
2. What common beliefs have you encountered among friends or in popular culture in regard to the topic of "purpose"?
a) What kinds of things do people SAY which express these beliefs?
b) What kinds of things do people DO which display these beliefs?
From God's Word
READ Ephesians 2 & Romans 12 (see next page) 3. Ephesians 2 paints a before (v.1-3) & after (v.4-10) portrait to show the difference that knowing Christ makes Write down all the contrasting pairs you can find in the passage.

4. What is surprising about the following summary of Ephesians 2:1-10?
Sinful behaviour → Objects of wrath
God's great love → Good works
5. What is the link between the grace (Ephesians) & mercy (Romans) BY which we've been saved and the purpose FOR which we've been saved?
FOR Which we've been saved?
6. Both passages move from the "vertical" relationship between believers and God to discuss the "horizontal"
relationships between believers. What does this reveal about our common purpose?
To My Life
7. What are the major differences between what you've discovered in God's WORD about "purpose" and what the WORLD believes about this topic?
WORLD believes about this topic:
8. What further implications flow out of your study on "purpose"?
9. What features of your own life are inconsistent with the truth you have discussed this week?
10. How did you go engaging a friend on the topic of "love" last week and who could you talk to this week on the
topic of "purpose"?

Purpose



Ephesians 2

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh [1] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)— ¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

a Ephesians 2:3 In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit.

Romans 12

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your^[a] faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,^[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. ^[6] Do not be conceited.

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," ^[Id] says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." [6]

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- a Romans 12:6 Or the
- **b** Romans 12:8 Or to provide for others
- Romans 12:16 Or willing to do menial work
- d Romans 12:19 Deut. 32:35
- e Romans 12:20 Prov. 25:21,22

Freedom



Kick-off
1. How would you answer the big question: "Can I get what I want?"
2. What common beliefs have you encountered among friends or in popular culture in regard to the topic of "freedom"? a) What kinds of things do people SAY which express these beliefs?
b) What kinds of things do people DO which display these beliefs?
From God's Word READ Galatians 5:1-15; 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1 & Romans 6 (see next page)
3. In Galatians 5 Paul warns against two equal but opposite errors in regard to Christian freedom. What are they? Which do you think is more common in our culture?

4. 1 Corinthians is full of different case studies in which Paul applies the logic of gospel freedom. What is the basic principle applied in chapter 10 (see also 6:7)?
5. What does the world seek freedom from and for? What has the Christian been freed from and for?
6. What is the difference between freedom and independence?
To My Life
7. What are the major differences between what you've discovered in God's WORD about "freedom" and what the WORLD believes about this topic?
8. What further implications flow out of your study on "freedom"?
9. What features of your own life are inconsistent with the truth you have discussed this week?
10. How did you go engaging a friend on the topic of "purpose" last week and who could you talk to this week on the topic of "freedom"?

Freedom



Galatians 5:1-15

5 ¹ It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

² Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. ³ Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. ⁴ You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. ⁵ For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

⁷ You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? ⁸ That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. ⁹ "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." ¹⁰ I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. ¹¹ Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. ¹² As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh^[a]; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ^[b] ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

10 ²³ "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. ²⁴ No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

²⁵ Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, ²⁶ for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." [3]

²⁷ If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. ²⁸ But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience. ²⁹ I am referring to the other person's conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience? ³⁰ If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—33 even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. 1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

a <u>Galatians 5:13</u> In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh (sarx)* refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit; also in verses 16, 17, 19 and 24; and in 6:8.

Romans 6

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, ^[a] that we should no longer be slaves to sin— ⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! 16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

To the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

a Romans 6:6 Or be rendered powerless

b Romans 6:23 Or through





Kick-off

Nick-OII
l. How would you answer the big question: "How can I be secure?" You may like to consider physical, emotiona relational etc. dimensions to the question.
2. What common beliefs have you encountered among friends or in popular culture in regard to the topic of "security"?
a) What kinds of things do people SAY which express these beliefs?
b) What kinds of things do people DO which display these beliefs?
From God's Word
READ Matthew 6:19-34; Romans 8:28-32; Phil 4:4-7 & 1 Tim 6:17-21 (see next page) 3. What problems does Jesus identify with earthly treasures?

4. What is the connection between storing up treasures and worrying (note the "therefore" at the start of verse 25 which links the two)?
5. What guarantee of security do we find in the gospel?
6. Where can real security be found and what will our lives look like when we find it?
To My Life 7. What are the major differences between what you've discovered in God's WORD about "security" and what the WORLD believes about this topic?
8. What further implications flow out of your study on "security"?
9. What features of your own life are inconsistent with the truth you have discussed this week?
10. How did you go engaging a friend on the topic of "freedom" last week and who could you talk to this week on the topic of "security"?

Security



Matthew 6:19-34

6 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also

²² "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, ^[a] your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy, ^[b] your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life^[6]?

²⁸ "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.
²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Romans 8:28-32

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[a] have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

a Matthew 6:22 The Greek for healthy here implies generous.

b Matthew 6:23 The Greek for unhealthy here implies stingy.

[€] Matthew 6:27 Or single cubit to your height

Phil 4:4-7

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1 Tim 6:17-21

6 To Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

²⁰ Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, ²¹ which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith.

Grace be with you all.





KICK-Off
1. How would you answer the big question: "What brings true happiness?"
2. What common beliefs have you encountered among friends or in popular culture in regard to the topic of "joy" a) What kinds of things do people SAY which express these beliefs?
b) What kinds of things do people DO which display these beliefs?
From God's Word READ Luke 15 (see next page)
3. What problems does Jesus identify with earthly treasures?

READ Acts 5:41, 2 Cor 6:10; 7:4; 8:2, Col 1:24, 1 Thes 1:6, Heb 10:34; 12:2, James 1:2 & 1 Pet 1:6 (see next page) 4. Judging by these ten verses, what is the common soil in which joy flourishes?
READ John 15:9-12 & Philippians 2:12-18 (see next page) 5. What is the connection between God's joy and ours?
6. Is joy the sort of thing that you're more likely to seek and find or to discover without even looking for it?
To My Life 7. What are the major differences between what you've discovered in God's WORD about "joy" and what the WORLD believes about this topic?
8. What further implications flow out of your study on "joy"?
9. What features of your own life are inconsistent with the truth you have discussed this week?
10. How did you go engaging a friend on the topic of "security" last week and who could you talk to this week on the topic of "joy"?





Luke 15

¹ Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³ Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'
7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

⁸ "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins^{Ia1} and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

¹¹ Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons.

¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing.
²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

²⁸ "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.
²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.
³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

³¹ "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

Acts 5:41

5 ⁴¹ The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

2 Cor 6:10, 7:4, 8:2

5 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

Col 1:24

Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

1 Thes 1:6

You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

Heb 10:34, 12:2

10 ³⁴ You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

12 'fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

James 1:2

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, ^[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds,

a <u>James 1:2</u> The Greek word for *brothers and sisters (adelphoi)* refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in verses 16 and 19; and in 2:1, 5, 14; 3:10, 12; 4:11; 5:7, 9, 10, 12, 19.

1 Pet 1:6

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

John 15:9-12

9"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

Philippians 2:12-18

2 ¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

¹⁴ Do everything without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." ^[a] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky ¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. ¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁸ So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

a Philippians 2:15 Deut. 32:5





Kick-off

READ John 3:16-18; Hebrews 9:27-28 & 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 (see next page)

3. What does the future hold for all of us?

4. How is it possible to be victorious over death?
5. What difference would it make if we lived as though death had lost it's sting?
READ Revelation 21 (see next page) 6. What will hope be like for those who trust in Jesus?
To My Life 7. What are the major differences between what you've discovered in God's WORD about "hope" and what the WORLD believes about this topic?
8. What further implications flow out of your study on "hope"?
9. What features of your own life are inconsistent with the truth you have discussed this week?
10. How did you go engaging a friend on the topic of "joy" last week and who could you talk to this week on the topic of "hope"?

Hope



John 3:16-18

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Hebrews 9:27-28

²⁷ Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— Listen, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. To the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

b 1 Corinthians 15:55 Hosea 13:14

Revelation 21

¹ Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," [a] for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death for mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

⁶ He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. ⁸ But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

⁹ One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³ There were three gates on

the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵ The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. 16 The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia^[c] in length, and as wide and high as it is long. ¹⁷ The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits [6] thick. [6] 18 The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. 19 The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. [f] 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

²² I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

a Revelation 21:1 Isaiah 65:17

b Revelation 21:4 Isaiah 25:8

[€] Revelation 21:16 That is, about 1,400 miles or about 2,200 kilometers

d Revelation 21:17 That is, about 200 feet or about 65 meters

e Revelation 21:17 Or high

f Revelation 21:20 The precise identification of some of these precious stones is uncertain.





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