



Sermon Study Guide

September 6, 2015 - Pastor Lionel Young

A Church of Truth and Love

2 John

THINK & SHARE Questions to get your group talking

Think back to your first visit to Calvary or when you began attending here. What is it that drew you to this particular church?

Go back over the answers your group shared and put them into the following categories. (For example, “My son liked the Calvary youth group because the leaders made him feel welcome” would go under love.)

CALVARY’S COMMITMENT TO TRUTH

CALVARY’S DESIRE TO LOVE

BOTH TRUTH & LOVE

STUDY & DISCUSS Questions that invite you to dig deeper into the week’s material and your own life

A. Sometimes we function as if love and truth are separate categories. But your group probably has at least one answer to the Think & Share question under “both truth and love,” and if you think about it, you will likely discover many of the answers could go there. How are these two concepts in fact connected?

B. What are some valuable habits and attitudes of a church that is known for being loving (but is not true to the gospel message)? What are that church’s detrimental habits and attitudes? Answer the same questions for a church that is known for embracing the truth of the Bible (but is harsh or judgmental about it)?

C. Truth is more than a set of facts. It’s probably best defined as *the clearest picture of reality*—about God, about me, about others, and about life. How does a person’s behavior provide a window into what he or she really believes about God?

D. Second John 3 says that Jesus is with us in truth and love. If those two things were opposite ends of a single spectrum, where would you fall, more on the truth side or more on the love side?

Love Truth



How do you think your tendency toward either love or truth affects how you live out your faith? How does it affect with whom and how you share the gospel? (Consider both positive effects and negative ones.)

E. John tells us that walking in the truth is critical. He rejoices because many in the church he addresses are “diligent in living out the truth.” In honesty, what keeps you from diligently living out the truth? Why do you treat God’s commands as negotiable, and what might that say about your love for Him?

PRAY & COMMIT

Questions for your breakout prayer time and challenges for the rest of your week

A. Read John 17:17. If we’re going to get an accurate picture of God’s reality (how He sees us and others)—if we’re going to get truth, then we need to be in God’s Word because that’s where the most accurate picture is. If you are in His Word regularly, share with the group what your daily plan is and what struggles you face in keeping consistent. If you aren’t currently practicing a habit of daily reading God’s Word, here are some resources: He Reads Truth or She Reads Truth (daily devotionals available via the web or an app) or *Lectio Divina* on our church website. Commit to reading the Word for a month as an experiment in spiritual growth.

B. When we accept that God’s Word is truth, inevitably we come across something in it that “crosses our will.” In fact, if that doesn’t happen, you have to wonder what kind of God you have constructed (see Timothy Keller quote below). Share with the group where God’s clear commandments have offended your sensibilities or have been met with reluctance/apathy on your part in recent weeks. Have a conversation with God about this crossing of your will this week.

“Now, what happens if you eliminate anything from the Bible that offends your sensibility and crosses your will? If you pick and choose what you want to believe and reject the rest, how will you ever have a God who can contradict you? You won’t! You’ll have...[a] God, essentially, of your own making, and not a God with whom you can have a relationship and genuine interaction. Only if your God can say things that outrage you and make you struggle (as in a real friendship or marriage!) will you know that you have gotten hold of a real God and not a figment of your imagination. So an authoritative Bible is not the enemy of a personal relationship with God. It is the precondition for it.” (Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God*)

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