

GOD'S TRUTH

a 4-week study for students

by Kathryn Entrekin

Week 1: The Truth About God

DAY 1

Lie: God is not enough.

Fill in the blanks & be honest with yourself: I want ____ in order to ____.

<i>To be finished with school</i>	...feel peace.
	...feel loved.
	...feel a sense of purpose or importance.
	...feel sure about the future.
	...be my best self.
	...make a difference in the world around me.
	...avoid feeling bored.

Reflect & discuss: What patterns do you see from your answers above?

Truth: Nothing but God can satisfy the deepest longings of my heart; the gifts God gives are only meaningful when He is at the center of my life.

Reflect & discuss: For each of the following verses, how much do you believe/not believe what they say about God? What is the biggest thing preventing you from believing each one?

Psalm 73:25	
Philippians 4:19	
Psalm 40:4	

DAY 2

Lie: God is not really involved in my life. He has too many other things to worry about.

Reflect & discuss:

- What forces or influences in your life reinforce this lie? How can you minimize their impact?
- What in your life may reflect that you have believed a version of this lie?
- What forces or influences in your life fight this lie? How can you magnify their impact?

Truth: God cares deeply and specifically for me; He listens to my prayers.

Reflect & discuss:

- What are some specific ways God has cared for you in the past?
- How does each of the following verses combat the lie above?

Luke 12:6-7	
Psalms 34:15, 17-18	
James 5:13-18	

DAY 3

Lie: God's primary job is to fix my problems and make me happy.

Think of a common problem you deal with. Without self-editing, write out a short prayer about that issue like you would normally pray about it. (Example: *God, I am stressed about school. Please help me to do well on my test.*)

Truth: God cares deeply about my holiness. My joy comes from the Lord and not my circumstances.

While we may not admit to believing the lie above, our prayer life probably reflects some level of belief in it. We all easily default to a grocery-list style prayer asking God to fix our circumstances when we don't intentionally humble ourselves before God and slow down to think about the posture of our hearts when we pray. It's not about using a magic formula so that God fixes our problems, it's about surrendering ourselves to his will and praying that he changes our hearts for his glory, not our own comfort.

Let's fight the lie above by addressing the problem you used above in a different way through prayer. You probably already know the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:9-13, ESV below); consider your problem from above and use the following guide to write out your prayer in the far-right column.

<i>Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.</i>	Adoration + Worship: Praise God for who He is	
<i>Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.</i>	Submission: Humble yourself before God and ask for His will to be done. Lay down your desire to get your own way.	
<i>Give us this day our daily bread,</i>	Physical Needs: Ask God to give you what He knows you need.	
<i>And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.</i>	Forgiveness: Confess your sins, ask for forgiveness, ask for help forgiving others as needed.	
<i>And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.</i>	Spiritual Needs: Pray that the Lord would help you withstand temptation and evil.	

DAY 4

Lie: God's primary job is to fix my problems and make me happy.

Review your problem and original prayer from yesterday and copy it below. (Example: *God, I am stressed about school. Please help me to do well on my test.*)

If it happened your way, what would it look like for God to fix your problem and make you happy in this situation?

Truth: God cares deeply about my holiness. My joy comes from the Lord and not my circumstances.

How might God be using this situation for your holiness?

Consider the following verses. How can you use them to guide how you pray and think about your situation?

Psalm 46:1	
James 1:2-4	
James 1:12-18	
Romans 5:3-4	
Matthew 6:33	
Matthew 26:39	

Week 2: The Truth About Who You Are

DAY 1

Lie: I am what I do.

In 2 sentences, tell me about yourself.

What activities did you include? What information about your character? What was also true about you 5 years ago? What is likely to be the same in 5 years?

Truth: I am who God says I am.

What do the following verses say about who you are?

True of all people: Genesis 1:26-27

If you have **not** been saved by Jesus from your sins: Romans 5:10

If you have been saved by Jesus from your sins:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Romans 6:22

Revelation 5:9-10

1 Corinthians 12:27

Romans 12:1-2

Ephesians 6:20

Galatians 4:6-7

DAY 2

Lie: I don't have anything to offer God or the church.

In what ways have you believed this lie? Or have you ever considered that you might have something to offer God or the church?

What do you have to offer God or the church? It's okay to not know yet, but trust that believers have been given gifts by the Holy Spirit and through sanctification bear fruit that bears witness to God's work in their life.

Truth: The Holy Spirit enables me to bear fruit as a believer and has given me spiritual gifts for serving God and the church.

List the fruit of the spirit from Galatians 5:22-23. Note that the verse says "fruit", not "fruits". We don't get to pick and choose which ones we want to be strong in and ignore the rest. The fruit of dependence on God and the work of the Spirit in our hearts throughout our lifetime should be made evident by all of these traits being developed in our lives, not just the ones we like or that are easier to practice.

Read the following passages and make note of any spiritual gifts you might already see being developed in you: Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, Ephesians 4:7-13.

Write a prayer asking the Lord to help you serve Him and his church with your gifts, stating your dependence on Him for the growth of fruit in your life, and helping you grow in awareness of how he has equipped you to serve Him as you serve His church.

DAY 3

Lie: What I spend my time on today doesn't really matter long-term.

Read Genesis 1:26-31 and place the following events in order that they occurred according to those verses:

___ God declared all that He had made very good.

___ God created man and woman in His image.

___ God gave mankind a job to do.

What good work did God give to mankind (see verses 26 and 28)?

What good work has God given you (what do you spend most of your time doing, Monday through Friday)? Do you see it as good work?

Truth: Work (including school) is a gift from God that I can use to worship and glorify Him.

How might your school and work connect to the good work God gave mankind in Genesis 1:26 and 28?

Read Colossians 3:23-24 and 1 Corinthians 10:31 and summarize them.

How might seeing learning and studying as a way to worship God change your attitude towards it?

Write a prayer asking God to change your attitude and perspective about school and work.

DAY 4

Lie: My success is for my glory.

What are you good at?

How do you feel and act when you succeed at those things (Example: winning a game/competition/award)?

How do you feel and act when you don't succeed at those things?

Consider the things you listed. If one of them was taken away (example: an injury impacting your talent at a sport or activity), how would that impact how you felt loved or valued? How would it impact how you connect with friends or family? How would it impact how God sees you?

Truth: My successes and my failures are for God's glory.

Read the following verses and note what they say about successes and failures according to the Bible:

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Philippians 3

Revelation 4

Consider an upcoming opportunity for success/failure (Example: a competition, a test, an interaction with a challenging person, a performance, a service opportunity).

Describe what success would look like in this situation:

Describe what failure would look like in this situation:

Write out a prayer 1) surrendering the situation and outcome to God and 2) asking for Him to be glorified through you in success and in failure. Use another sheet of paper if needed.

Week 3: The Truth About Walking with Jesus

DAY 1

Lie: My eternal security depends on how well I live and the choices I make.

What do you think “eternal security” means?

If the above statement was true, do you think you could be good enough to earn your salvation? What kind of pressure might that put on you to get it right all the time?

Do you feel a lot of pressure to get it right all the time?

Based on your last answer, do you think you might have believed some version of the lie above?

Truth: Jesus’s perfect life and finished work are the foundation of my standing before God. By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, I am saved.

What do the following verses say about your standing before God?

2 Corinthians 5:21

Ephesians 2:8-9

Galatians 5:1-6

Write out a prayer responding to the verses above. Confess if you have believed the lie above, and ask God for help walking in the freedom of His grace. Use more paper if you need more room.

DAY 2

Lie: The purpose of my walk with Jesus is to make me into the best version of myself.

Describe what the best version of yourself would look like.

Look at the lie above and the truth below. What is the difference between the two?

How does the best version of yourself contrast with what you know of the character of Jesus?

Truth: The purpose of my walk with Jesus is to make me look more like him.

Read Philippians 2:1-18.

List everything the text says about Jesus.

List all the commands Paul gives to the reader.

Write out a prayer confessing the ways you want to be a better person that don't align with who Jesus is (being rich, famous, popular, comfortable, etc.)

Write out a prayer thanking Jesus for the example he sets. Ask for the Lord to make you willing to cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in your life to make you look more like Jesus and less like the world.

DAY 3

Lie: The Bible is about me OR the Bible is not relevant for me at all.

Which lie statement above are you more likely to believe?

What influences in your life reinforce the lie you are more likely to believe?

Truth: The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to all of humanity. He is the main character and author, and by studying it, I can get to know the God of the universe.

Read Genesis 1:1. Who is the main character?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Who is the author? What is the Bible's purpose?

Read Psalm 139. Who is the main character? List 3 things you learn about Him.

Write out a prayer asking God to shape how you see His Word. Ask Him to give you a love for it and a desire to know Him through it.

DAY 4

Lie: The stories in the Bible are random and disconnected and too confusing.

In what ways have you believed the lie above?

How do you respond when you are frustrated or confused by the Bible? What do you do?

Truth: The Bible is one unified story inspired by one Author.

Match the following verses to the points of the central plot of the Bible:

CREATION FALL.....REDEMPTION.....RESTORATION

Genesis 2:15-17 & 3:1-7

Revelation 21:5

Genesis 1:1 & 26-28

John 3:16

This 4-word summary of the story of the Bible is obviously very simplified. As you read and study in various parts of the Bible, it can be helpful to ask, "How does this verse or chapter connect to the big story of scripture?", even if you don't have an answer right away.

Write out a prayer asking the Author of the Word, the Holy Spirit, to help you understand His Word and to be a good, curious student of it.

Week 4: The Truth About the Future

DAY 1

Lie: My future is all about following my dreams.

What is the thing that worries you most about the future right now?

What in the future are you most excited about and confident in?

Describe what the best version of 6 years from now would look like.

Truth: God holds my future in His hands. The purpose of my life and future is to glorify God, enjoy Him forever, grow as His disciple, and make more disciples.

Let's look at a few verses that help us think about the future biblically. Write down what each one teaches you.

Proverbs 27:1

1 Peter 1:24

Hebrews 13:20-21

James 4:14a

Write out a prayer about the situations and outcomes you listed above using what you learned from the verses above to guide you. Use another sheet of paper if you need more room.

DAY 2

Lie: God can't be trusted with my future.

What does it look like to trust God with your future?

What does it look like to not trust God with your future?

Truth: God can be trusted with my future. He keeps his promises, and He is who he says he is.

Read Genesis 22:1-19 and summarize what happened in 1-2 sentences.

Read Genesis 12:1-3. What did God promise Abraham before Isaac was even born?

How do you know Abraham trusted God with his future?

Consider the situation you wrote down from yesterday, the one that worries you most about the future. What would it look like for you to trust God in that situation the way Abraham trusted God in Genesis 22?

Write a prayer asking God to help you trust him with your future.

DAY 3

Lie: What I spend my time on today doesn't have eternal significance.

We already talked about seeing school and work as a gift from God that we can approach as worship to God. Now let's think about the in-between time. What do you do when you are not sleeping, eating, working, at school, or at your scheduled extra-curricular activities? How do you rest/unwind, socialize, who is with you when you drive between activities?

What is your brain doing in the in-between spaces? Do you fill it with music, noise, entertainment? Are you thinking or worrying about what is next on your calendar? How present are you with the people in the room or car with you? Is your brain at rest, zoned out and numb, or full of noise or worry?

Truth: How I spend my time today can have eternal value.

It can be easier to see eternal value in our scheduled activities (performing well at school, being consistent at church, competing well at your sport) and easy to forget about the in-between bits. How does Jesus handle those moments?

Mark 1:32-39

Matthew 14:6-14

John 4:1-10

From these verses, how does Jesus handle being tired or hungry? How does he handle being interrupted on a busy day of ministry?

Write out a prayer asking the Lord to help you be aware of how you can see your in-between moments as acts of worship and opportunities to love and serve others. Ask him to teach you how to look to him for true rest when you are tired.

DAY 4

Lie: When something big doesn't turn out the way I want it to, my world collapses.

Sometimes things don't turn out the way you want or expect. You don't make the team. Your application is rejected. You get dumped.

What big disappointments or hardships have you experienced that made you feel like everything collapsed?

If you haven't experienced something like this before, can you think of any stories from the Bible where someone might have felt this way, even for just a little bit?

Truth: Even when something big doesn't turn out the way I want it to, God is still good and He is still in control.

Read Proverbs 16 and pick a verse or two that stands out to you and write them out below:

What commands (if any) does it have?

What truths does it state?

What do you learn about God from these verses? What do you learn that He values because this verse was included in the Bible?

Write out a prayer responding to these verses and asking God to help you trust Him even when you face big (and little) disappointments. Ask him to help you see those situations as opportunities to grow in your trust in Him.