

*The* **ENTRUSTED Leader's Workbook**  
***“Barnabas”* Edition**

*Seven Core Values that Impact Every Leader-to-Follower Relationship:*  
HEART-MISSION-APPROACH-STABILITY-LIFESTYLE-FORTITUDE-WORLDVIEW

**Lesson Twenty Three: TRUTH: A Navigation System for Leadership**

By  
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## **Lesson Twenty Three: TRUTH: A Navigation System for Leadership**

**CORE VALUE:** A WORLDVIEW founded on absolute truth and the words of Jesus Christ.

**BIBLE VERSE(S):** John 17:17, Psalm 119:24

**ONE SIMPLE TRUTH:** God's Word is absolute truth that serves as a fixed reference point for a leader's view of the world and navigation of the turbulent waters of leading others.

**APPLICATION:** A wise leader develops a thorough understanding of God's Word and allows Biblical truth to counsel and guide one's choices and decisions.

### **Introduction:**

Every Navigation System depends on a fixed point of reference that does not move or change. A compass utilizes the earth's magnetic field. Since the creation of the universe, travelers in the northern hemisphere have relied on a simple viewing of the North Star to direct their way. More recently, complex Global Positioning Systems can calculate a person's location, speed, and direction by receiving data from satellites. Simple or complex, accurate navigation requires a fixed point of reference that does not move or change.

Just as a compass directs travelers, so also TRUTH provides a reliable navigation system for a follower of Christ who leads in the marketplace. The landscape traversed by a leader is not so much geographical as it is relational. Every organization exists as a complex web of human relationships. Wise leaders understand that healthy human relationships and healthy organizations only exist when the TRUTH that governs human

relationships is respected by all. TRUTH helps a leader navigate the complex web of human relationships with which he or she has been entrusted.

TRUTH serves more as compass which points the right direction than a *GPS* device that provides detailed turn-by-turn data. The needle of a compass aligns with the earth's magnetic field and points to either the North or South Pole of the globe. From these fixed points of reference that do not move or change, a traveler can get his or her bearings and decide which way to proceed. The compass will not provide data for every twist in the path or every rock to step over or every pot-hole to avoid, but a compass will keep a traveler headed generally in the right direction.

TRUTH helps a leader navigate relationships in a similar manner. No relational *GPS* device exists that will exhaustively cover every detailed circumstance a leader may encounter when relating to followers. The compass of TRUTH, however, does apply to every situation and will provide adequate direction for how a leader should proceed. For example: It is universally true that all people want to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of one's station in an organization. This TRUTH stands as a fixed point of reference from the mail room to the board room. Any leader who ignores the compass heading of this reality of human existence will most assuredly pursue a path of relating to others that results in less than healthy relationships.

The leader-to-follower relationship exists as the primary context within which principles and practices of leadership come alive, find meaning, and receive practical application. The long-term health and strength of an organization depends on these relationships. Wise leaders foster healthy relationships with followers. Certain TRUTHS

foster healthy relationships when respected by a leader. Conversely, human relationships deteriorate rapidly when a leader violates these TRUTHS.

We consider something to be “true” when its essence agrees with the objective reality of existence. Consider the following definition of the English word “true” from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*: “...being in accordance with the actual state of affairs...conformable to an essential reality”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines the word “truth” as follows: “...the state of being the case...the body of real things, events, and facts...a transcendent fundamental or spiritual reality...judgment, proposition, or idea that is true or accepted as true...the body of true statements and propositions...the property (as of a statement) of being in accord with fact or reality”<sup>2</sup> When people deem a reality as “true” or “truth” this absolute fact serves as a fixed point of reference that one can count on as they navigate this journey called life.

The idea of some truth being “absolute” can have many nuances. Pertinent to this lesson becomes the idea of a truth or reality being universal or applicable to all creatures and the truth being eternal and unchanging over time. The *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines absolute as follows: “...having no restriction, exception, or qualification...perfectly embodying the nature of a thing...being self-sufficient and free of external references or relationships.”<sup>3</sup> A truth called absolute stands alone as self-evident to all. Such a reality is not influenced by any outside pressures to change or conform over time. The influence of an absolute truth comes to bear on all who come in

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<sup>1</sup>Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*., Includes Index., 10th ed. (Springfield, Mass., U.S.A.: Merriam-Webster, 1996, c1993).

<sup>2</sup>Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*., Includes Index., 10th ed. (Springfield, Mass., U.S.A.: Merriam-Webster, 1996, c1993).

<sup>3</sup>Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*., Includes Index., 10th ed. (Springfield, Mass., U.S.A.: Merriam-Webster, 1996, c1993).

contact regardless of time in history or geographic location or social/ cultural bent. The most obvious such “TRUTH” is the law of gravity. The pull of the earth’s gravity always has and always will hold a person’s feet firmly to the ground. Many such absolute laws of nature exist which rule the universe. Violate one and the consequences can be tragic.

Absolute truths also exist in the world which serves to govern a person’s relationship with God and his or her relationship with other people. These are fixed points of reference that do not change over time and are universally applicable to all mankind. Wise leaders internalize these truths and let them guide how one relates to others. Read the following passages of scripture and answer the questions that follow.

**Questions of the Biblical Text**<sup>4</sup>

“Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.” (Ps. 31:5)

“Whoever invokes a blessing in the land will do so by the God of truth; he who takes an oath in the land will swear by the God of truth.” (Isaiah 65:16)

“*He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.*” (Dt. 32:4 KJV)

Given that God is a “God of truth” discuss some implications (reliability, trustworthiness, accuracy) of basing one’s worldview on his Words.

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“And Jesus Christ was revealed as God’s Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony.” (1 John 5:6)

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<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise noted the questions listed in *The ENTRUSTED Leader’s Workbook* are based on: *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984)

“Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!” (John 14:6-7)

“Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.” (John 17:17)

List three ways in which God has revealed his truth to mankind.

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Discuss some things you can do to gain a more comprehensive understanding of truth given these three sources of truth.

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“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.” (John 16:13-14 NIV)

“We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:12-14 NIV)

Discuss what role the Holy Spirit plays in gaining an understanding of God’s truth and how vital this role is. Can a leader hope to lead according to God’s truth apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit in one’s life?

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“Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors. (Ps. 119:24 NIV)

“I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes. (Ps. 119:59 NIV)

Discuss some ways that you can make the truth of God’s Word your “counselors” everywhere you lead; home, community, and marketplace.

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**Commentary:**

Not only is God’s existence a truth, a fact, a reality, but also the essence of His existence can be said to be truth. God remains a “God of truth”. Since truth resides at the core of God’s being every word he speaks and every act he performs remains true, accurate, and consistent with reality. No “untrue” property resides in God’s being. By definition, God never speaks a word or performs an act inconsistent with the reality of his creation. God exists 100 % reliable and trustworthy. God is not just a conceptual idea created in one’s own mind, but he exists as an authentic being with whom one can have a personal relationship. A relationship based on all that is true about the world in which we live.

Your view of God's truthfulness has an enormous implication on your view of the world. If you accept God's being as truth, then to the extent that you view the world through his revelation of himself you view the world accurately and truthfully. Conversely, if you choose to view the world through a lens that contains a measure of "untruth," such as human philosophy, a false religious system, or "Hollywood", then your view of the world will be unreliable and inaccurate. When you look at the circumstances of where you lead through the eyes of the "God of truth," you can count on your worldview being reliable and trustworthy.

The God of truth has revealed his truth in at least three ways. The Holy Spirit is truth. Jesus is truth. The Word of God is truth. The more you interact with Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and God's Word, the deeper your understanding of truth becomes. This interaction can take many forms such as: praise and worship, prayers of petition, and thanksgiving, fellowship with other followers of Jesus, service, quiet time and devotions alone with God, and Bible Study.

One of the primary ministries of the Holy Spirit concerns guiding followers of Jesus to what is true. The Spirit of truth helps Christians understand God's truth. God wants you to know what he has said and provides the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer to aid in this process of understanding.

Understanding God's truth requires spiritual discernment. Natural man (anyone not born-again) cannot fully grasp God's truth, because such a person is void of the Holy Spirit. In fact, God's truth may even appear as foolishness to the lost. Those without the aid of the Holy Spirit often question or even reject the truthfulness of God's Word.

Correspondingly, the person who tries to lead others without the benefit of God's Word and the Holy Spirit does so blinded to what is really true.

The Apostle John proclaimed the Word of God to be truth. "Your word is truth." (John 17:17 NIV) The Greek term for truth is *aletheia*. Strong defines this term as follows: "objectively...what is true in any matter under consideration...in truth, according to truth...of a truth, in reality, in fact, certainly...what is true in things appertaining to God and the duties of man, moral and religious truth...."<sup>5</sup> Swanson adds additional insight into the nature of *aletheia* when he states: "**truth**, *i.e.*, that which is in accord with what really happens, facts that correspond to a reality, whether historical (in the time/space continuum)...or an eternal reality not limited to historical fact"<sup>6</sup> From these definitions we can conclude that the Words of God recorded in the Bible correspond perfectly to reality. Consequently, scripture provides a reliable source of guidance for making choices and decisions for one's life. The Bible is a fixed point of reference on which a leader can count on as he or she navigates all that comes with leading others.

David understood the value of God's Word as a basis for his view of the world. David considered the unreliability of his own judgment and ordered the steps of his life according to God's Word. The wise follow the path of God's Word even when His truth appears to be contrary or at odds to one's human perception of reality. David delighted in

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<sup>5</sup>James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996), G225.

<sup>6</sup>James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), DBLG 237.



## **Conclusion:**

You lead in a marketplace where the predominate view of truth is relative. Most people accept the myth that truth changes based on circumstances and time elapsed. People who base their view of the world on such fallacy lead others blindly without the benefit of understanding what is real. The leader who claims to follow Jesus can gain a more accurate perception of the marketplace by allowing the Holy Spirit to guide them to a deeper understanding of God's truth.

God's Word constitutes absolute truth which serves as a fixed reference point for a leader. The truth found in God's Word never changes over time. God's truth applies in equal measure to all circumstances. For a leader, God's truth provides an accurate and reliable view of the world. A leader can count on God's Word to help guide decisions and choices because the Word remains true. A wise leader develops a thorough understanding of God's word and allows Biblical truth to counsel and guide one's actions as a leader. Only the absolute truth of God's Word provides a leader with a navigation system that he or she can trust as one journeys to lead others.