

SESSION 2: JESUS THE TRUTH

2.0 OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

Today, and throughout this study, we will be looking at Jesus, not in a religious or churchy way, but as a real person who walked the good path of God the Creator whom He called Father.

From earliest times, the people who followed Jesus became known as ***people of the way***. They lived and acted in the ways that Jesus lived and acted in relation to God and to others. What Jesus taught and how He lived was all about helping people and showing people how to walk the good path of life with God their Creator and Father.

He said, ***“I am the Great Spirit’s pathway, the truth about who He really is, and the life of beauty and harmony He offers to all. There is no other guide who can take you to the Father. To know Me is to know My Father”*** (John 14:6 FNV).

We can read about this in the Gospel of John, which is in the Bible and contains stories about the life and teachings of Jesus. It is called the Gospel of John because it was written by John, one of the earliest followers of Jesus. The word gospel means good news. For John, the life of Jesus was good news because Jesus showed him how to walk the good path of life. In this course, we will be looking at what John discovered about Jesus

In the first session we discussed John’s description of Jesus as the Word sent from God the Creator. In this session we will look at Jesus as the Truth.

2.1 REVIEW

In Session 1, we learned about Jesus being the Word of God sent to the world as the message of God’s love for us, showing us the way of walking in the good path of loving God and others.

Those of you who were in that Session were given an assignment to read John 3:16 - 21 and think about several questions. Does anyone want to comment or respond to those questions?

- What do you think the Word (message) is that God the Creator was communicating to humanity in Jesus?

- When you think of Jesus, what is the one word you would use to describe Him?

2.2 PEOPLE FOLLOW JESUS

We pick up the story of Jesus through John the Baptist who told everyone that Jesus was the one sent from God and described Jesus as “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Not only that, but he went on to say that Jesus is full of kindness for the benefit of every person.

One day after John the Baptist had pointed Jesus out to people, Jesus walked by Andrew and one of his companions; they decided to check Him out. They followed Jesus to find out where He lived. (In those days, like now, you could tell quite a lot about a person by seeing where and how they live.)

When Jesus noticed them following Him, He invited them to come along with Him, and He spent the rest of the day answering their questions and talking with them. At the end of the day, they were convinced that Jesus was indeed the person John said He was and that He came from God to show people the good path of life. They were so excited about this that they went to tell Andrew’s brother Simon Peter all about Jesus and then brought him back to meet Jesus.

The following day, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. There He met Philip and invited him to follow Him. Philip was so impressed with Jesus that he told his friend Nathanael. Nathanael was sceptical but agreed to go meet Jesus with Philip. It did not take long for him to realize that Jesus was the real deal and so he also began following Jesus.

Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and others who followed Jesus were called disciples. They believed that Jesus’ teachings were good and true, and they wanted to follow His good path. Jesus told them that if they walked in His footsteps and followed His teachings, they would come to know the truth and that truth would set them free (John 8:30-32).

Why do you think these people took Jesus at His word and followed Him?

2.3 WHO DO YOU TRUST?

When you hear or see something being advertised as “life-changing” or something that promises to bring superior results, do you take it at face value? Why do you think advertisers might make claims that exaggerate the quality or benefits of a particular product?

What goes through your mind when someone tells you, “Don’t ask questions; just trust me”?

Do you believe everything you read or hear in the news? Why or why not? What “filters” affect how you respond to the news? (E.g., appearance, gender, race, political leaning, personal experiences, etc.)

Trust Exercise:

Mark “x” in the box to indicate your level of trust in response to each person listed in the chart below where 0 = no trust at all, 5 = complete trust.

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Prime Minister of Canada						
Premier of the Province						
Jesus Christ						
Your Lawyer						
The Judge						
A Medical Doctor						
A Teacher						
A News Reporter						
A Salesperson						
A Friend						

Other:						

Discuss the responses and your reasons for them.

2.4 WHO CAN WE TRUST?

Have you ever trusted someone only to be disappointed or feel betrayed? (Discuss)

There is an old saying: *Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.*

If someone betrays our trust or misleads us, we are unlikely to completely trust that person again. We might even keep that person at a distance. We would be very unlikely to trust such a person with our deepest secrets or our lives.

What are the key things (traits) you look for in a person you can trust? (Discuss)

2.5 PEOPLE TRUST JESUS AS A PERSON OF HIS WORD

John's Gospel was written by a fisher who became one of Jesus' closest companions and knew Jesus very well. He knew what Jesus was like when He was surrounded by people, and he knew what Jesus was like when they were alone. He was with Jesus when He met with important officials, and he was with Jesus when He met with people who were down and out. Jesus cared for each person and had the same message for everyone. Jesus had integrity, which means He was true to His word, consistent, dependable, and sincere.

Jesus repeatedly stated that His words and His teachings are true (John 8:13-14, 26, 31-32). When His followers wanted to know more about this way of truth and where it leads, Jesus showed them that it is not just about words, but that He is the pathway of truth and life. He is the only guide who can lead people on the good path to the Creator, God the Father - and He can be trusted to guide us, because He Himself is the path.

John heard what Jesus said and saw what He did, both in public and in private. He describes Jesus as full of kindness (grace) and truth. Truth is one of the key words John uses to describe Jesus. Jesus is a truth teller. He speaks the truth and everything

He did measures up to what He said. He did not say one thing and do another, nor did He do anything that He tried to cover up.

Jesus could always be counted on to tell the truth and to do the right thing in the right way, even when it was unpopular or was not what those in power thought He should do.

2.6 JESUS' WORDS AND ACTIONS ARE CONSISTENT

John tells the story of Jesus through different circumstances and situations. Jesus' actions were always consistent with His teaching. What Jesus taught is how He lived. His way of living was true to the words He spoke.

Jesus taught that God the Creator loves everyone in the world, and that He came into the world to bring freedom to all people – not to condemn them. Jesus showed that same love, respect, compassion, mercy, and offer of forgiveness to every person, regardless of who they were – whether they were rich and powerful or poor and powerless, even if they were from other cultures and traditions.

What was Jesus saying or showing about Himself in each of the following stories? Discuss these stories along with any others that show how Jesus acted in accordance with His teachings.

- **Jesus gave no preferential treatment to powerful people:**

A high-ranking religious leader came to Jesus at night, so he wouldn't be seen by others. He was sceptical and had some questions. Jesus patiently and truthfully answered those questions. Jesus did not tell him what he wants to hear just because he was a powerful and respected leader. Instead, Jesus told him about God's love and the way to fullness of life.

Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3:1-18)

- **Jesus did not discriminate against people who were marginalized:**

Jesus walked through an area where people lived who were looked down on and discriminated against. They were a different race and had different beliefs. Jesus talked to a woman who was a misfit within that community. He spent time with her and spoke with her openly and honestly about her situation. He told her the same thing He told the religious leader about God's love and the way to fullness of life.

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (John 4:1-39)

- **Jesus showed mercy to the powerful and the powerless:**
 Jesus responded to a powerful royal official to help his sick child. He also responded to a man who had been sick for a long time and had been ignored by everyone. No one else had helped him.
Jesus and the royal official (John 4:43-51)
Jesus and the man who couldn't walk at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-13)
- **Jesus forgave people judged and condemned by society:**
 Jesus showed mercy and acceptance to a woman who had committed an indecent act and was being judged and condemned by the authorities.
Jesus and the immoral woman (John 8:1-11)
- **Jesus told the truth even when it would hurt Him:**
 When Jesus was betrayed, falsely accused, and brought to trial, He did not change His testimony or give in to the pressure of His accusers or the judge. His final answer to the judge was an admission of truth, even though He was facing torture and the death penalty. He said, "I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me."
Jesus on trial before Pilate (John 18:28-40)

2.7 LIVING THE TRUTH

Actions speak louder than words, particularly when there is a difference between what a person says and what a person does.

How do you respond to a person who says one thing and then does just the opposite? (*Discuss*)

Jesus' message about the good path of God's love was credible and trustworthy because Jesus lived the truth of what He was saying.

2.8 JESUS THE TRUTH

In Session 1, we looked at Jesus as the Word sent into the world from God the Creator.

As the Creator's Word, He became a flesh and blood human being and lived on earth as one of us.

As the story of Jesus unfolds, we see that people experienced Jesus as a person who was completely true to His word. He was honourable and trustworthy in all He said and did.

Jesus not only told the truth, but He is the Living Truth of everything He said. There was no discrepancy between the love He talked about, the love He showed, and the love that He continues to show to us. That is why people follow Him and follow in His way. That is why early followers were called *people of the way*.

2.9 ASSIGNMENT

In the next session we will talk about Jesus the Way. Read the stories about Jesus in John chapters 3, 4, 5, 6.

What is the way, or the path, that Jesus shows? On a piece of paper, make a list or draw pictures of what you think Jesus is saying and showing us about God the Creator's path.