

S T U D Y G U I D E



Choosing My Religion

by R.C. Sproul



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LIGONIER MINISTRIES

Renew your Mind.

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It's All Relative

INTRODUCTION

How often have you heard someone say, “That may be true for you, but it’s not true for me”? This is a telltale sign of a relativist. When it comes to issues of life, ethics, religion, and God, truth for the relativist becomes a matter of expedience, preference, and whim. In this lesson, Dr. Sproul considers the impossibility of living consistently with such a worldview.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To consider how relativism disregards absolute truth
2. To recognize that it is impossible for all religions to be equally true
3. To show that truth matters and ultimate truth matters ultimately

SCRIPTURE READING

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.” Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”

—John 18:36–38

LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. The issue is truly a question of ultimate reality.
 1. We want to know what is real and true.
 2. When it comes to reality and what is true, personal feelings are not relevant.
 3. Justice and trials deal with evidence in order to determine truth.

4. That which is not real is not true.
 5. Opposite ideas that are completely contradictory cannot simultaneously be true.
- B. Truth or reality cannot be wrong for you and right for me.
1. Mathematics is not relative, and neither are theology, morality, or ethics.
 2. Relativism makes truth a personal preference by espousing the idea that things that are wrong for some people might be right for others.
 3. The only absolute for relativists is that there are no absolutes.
- C. Whether religion is meaningful to some and irrelevant to others does not determine the existence of God.
1. Religious activities do not have the power to create God.
 2. Unbelief and disinterest do not have the power to kill God.
- D. Several notions are commonly held in the culture today, especially by young people.
1. God is whatever you want Him to be.
 2. All religions are equally valid and true.
 3. All religions believe in the same God.
- E. It is impossible for all religions to be equally true.
1. All religions do not believe the same things.
 2. In some cases, religions believe contradictory things.
 3. Beliefs about the personal and divine attributes of Jesus vary greatly among religions.
- F. These matters arise during arguments about religion.
1. People who do not argue about religion simply do not care.
 2. People who argue about religion care about ultimate truth.
 3. Truth matters, and ultimate truth matters ultimately.
 4. Ideas can change lives.
- G. Encountering a powerful, important, catalytic reality causes people never to be the same afterward.
1. Realizing that Jesus is real changes the whole course of one's life.
 2. Either Jesus is real or He is not real; it cannot be both.
- H. The philosophy of relativism holds that all religions—or no religion at all—are equally true.
1. Though we must reject the idea that all religions are equally true, we are called to love people regardless of their religious beliefs.
 2. It is virtuous and tolerant to think that everyone has an equal and legal right to express freely whatever religion they believe.

3. The law of this land gives us the legal right to be theologically wrong, but God never gives us the right to be wrong about Him.
4. The issue is not whether a supreme being exists but instead about who God is and what He is like.

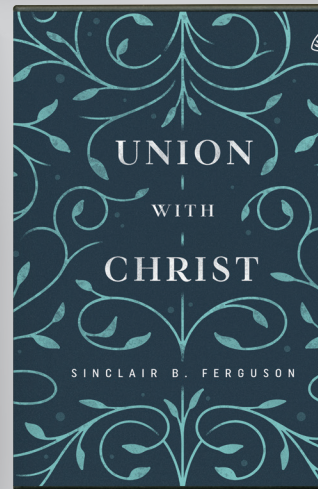
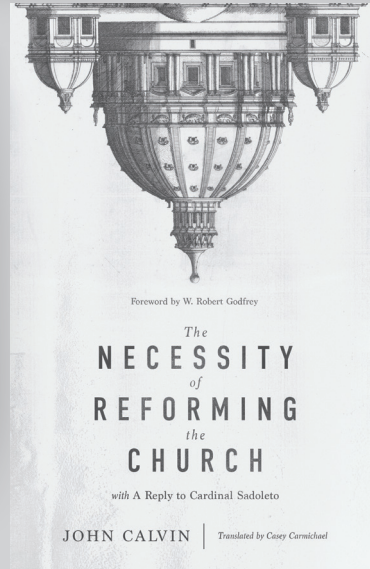
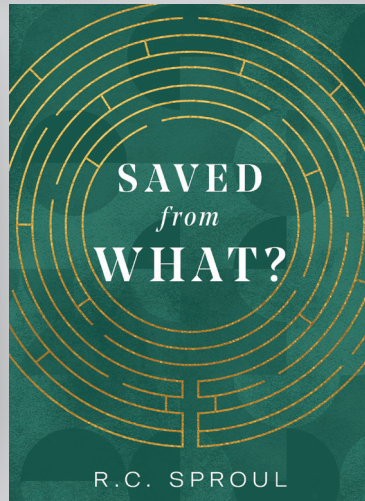
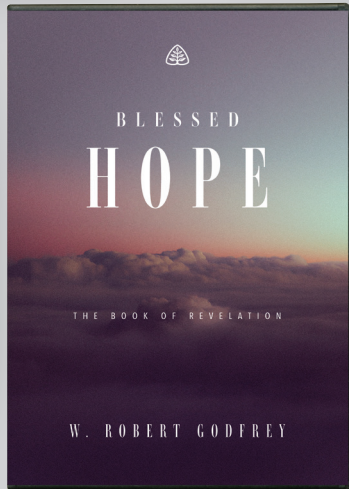
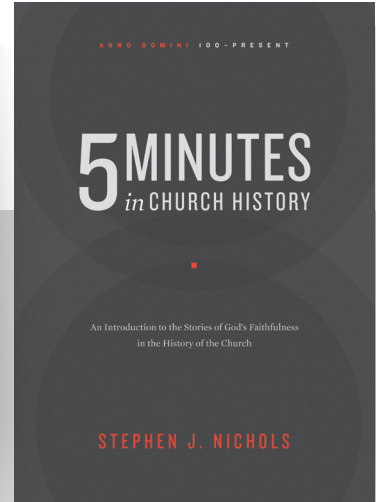
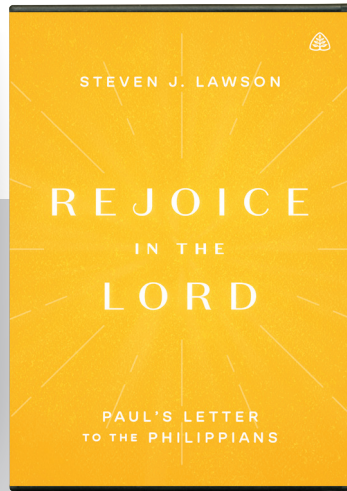
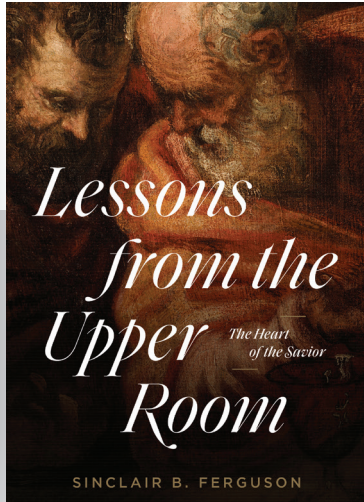
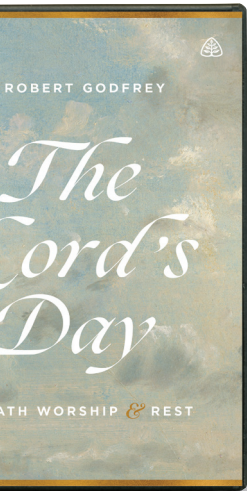
STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Opposite ideas that are completely contradictory can simultaneously be true.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Relativism makes truth a personal preference by espousing which of the following?
 - a. Only one religion is true and all the rest are false.
 - b. There are absolute truths that apply to everyone.
 - c. Things that are wrong for some people might be right for others.
 - d. Truth always trumps personal experience.
3. Why is it impossible for all world religions to be equally true?
 - a. All religions do not believe the same things.
 - b. Love is not the central teaching in all religions.
 - c. Racial and cultural values vary greatly.
 - d. The Bible speaks of truth in all religions.
4. Coming to the conclusion that Jesus is real leads to which of the following?
 - a. A change to the whole course of life
 - b. A relativistic truth
 - c. A religious experience that proves the reality of God
 - d. Arguments about religion
5. Regardless of the various religious beliefs they encounter, what are Christians called to do?
 - a. Convert others
 - b. Debate others
 - c. Love others
 - d. Support others
6. Which of the following rights does not God not give us?
 - a. To argue about cherished beliefs
 - b. To be wrong about Him
 - c. To claim to possess ultimate truth
 - d. To tell others that they are wrong

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Dr. Sproul define truth? How would you respond to someone who says that truth does not exist or that truth is relative?
2. Why do people argue about religion? Describe a time when you participated in a religious argument. Would you do anything differently?
3. How does the Constitution give us the legal right to be theologically wrong? Does God offer the same right?
4. Do people truly believe there are no absolutes? How do Christian truth, love, kindness, and patience factor into dealing with those who live in a manner that disregards absolutes?

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the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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