



THINKING RIGHT IN A GONE-WRONG WORLD

Stretch Forth Your Wings and Fly

September 24, 2022

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

John 6:35, 36 (NIV) • “Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe.’”

John 8:12 (NIV) • “When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”

John 10:7-10 (NIV) • “Therefore Jesus said again, ‘Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.’”

John 10:11-16 (NIV) • “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep

know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.”

John 11:20-27 (NIV) • “When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. ‘Lord,’ Martha said to Jesus, ‘if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha answered, ‘I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ she replied, ‘I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.’”

John 14:1-7 (NIV) • “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’ Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the

Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

John 15:5-8 (NIV) • “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “THINKING RIGHT IN A GONE-WRONG WORLD”

This topic was irrelevant 40 years ago because absolute truth was a common belief of the culture, even if you were not religious. But in the past 40 years our world has shifted from the idea that “there is a right and a wrong” to “it’s up to me to determine for myself what is right and what is wrong.” In fact, for some, what is right for them may be wrong for someone else. And for some people, that’s fine. For the Christian believer, that is not fine; it’s a fantasy. For most things there is a clear division between right and wrong. The goal of this lesson is to help students develop a Christian framework for looking at the world—the basic assumptions that will underlie all their behaviors and choices (a worldview).

On what basis do believers have the right to say what is right and what is wrong? What does it mean to be tolerant? How did we get to the place where morality is viewed by many as a matter of personal taste rather than an enduring eternal principle? How do the claims of Christ meet the needs of those who are seeking truth? As we look at the Bible, history, and the notions of our postmodern preachers, with what kind of certainty can we believe and communicate the qualities of God’s eternal kingdom to others?

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “THINKING RIGHT IN A GONE-WRONG WORLD”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Consider the source of truth and the source of popular ideas.
2. Understand the world in which we live and why people hold views that are so different from the Christian worldview.
3. Respond to the claims of truth and the challenge to live according to our beliefs.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) jar with beans (counted), paper, pens or pencils, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk; (Activity B) see the activity, p. 133.

Connecting • Bibles, student lessons, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk, “Four Isms” handout, p. 137.

Applying • Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

2 BRIDGING

A. THE WEEK IN REVIEW

Allow 10 minutes as students are arriving to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Get a jar and fill it with a certain number of beans. (Count them first so you know exactly how many beans there are.) Supply paper and pens or pencils to the students.

Get set • Ask the students to guess how many beans are in the jar and write it on a small piece of paper. Have students call out their guesses while you write them on a white/chalkboard. Then ask the class members to list their favorite Christian songs, writing those on the board beside the bean estimates. (Gather five to 10 favorite songs from the class.)

Go • Returning to the bean guesses, reveal the actual number and then whose guess was closest to being right. Then go back to the song list and **ask: What do you think is the right answer on this list?** Invariably the students argue that when it comes to favorite songs there is no right answer. It's purely subjective, a matter of taste.

Debriefing • Ask: When you decide what to believe in terms of your faith, is that more like guessing the number of beans, or more like choosing your favorite song? Why? Or why not?—Adapted from a report by Tim Stafford, *Christianity Today*, Sept. 14, 1992.

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose is to show students the reality of objective truth. We are trying to help earliteens consider the fact that there is a truth for all people, places, and times. Gather the ingredients needed for making the recipe below.

Get set • There are two ways to do this exercise: (1) Blindfold a volunteer who will attempt to complete mixing the ingredients for a recipe for unleavened bread. You can read the steps to them but have a variety of spoon sizes, cup sizes, and containers for the blindfolded person to choose from. The closer the measuring devices are to each other, the more difficult to choose the precise measurement. (2) You demonstrate mixing the recipe by using a variety of different types of measuring devices to fulfill the recipe. For instance, if the recipe asks for a cup of flour, use a mug or a cup that would contain more than the precise measurement of a cup. For a teaspoon you can use a ladle and say, "A spoon is a spoon, what difference does it make?" or a small baby spoon and say, "Little girls use these spoons for tea all the time."

Go • Recipe: (Unleavened Bread)

- 1 cup whole-wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons oil
- 5 tablespoons cold water

Debriefing • Ask: To what degree are precise measurements important in cooking? building? landing an airplane? doing brain surgery? How is compiling a recipe blindfolded or using imprecise instruments the same as the way people relate to truth in the world today? In what areas of life do people feel that they can "guesstimate" the most? (Rank in order of where people guess the most, 1 to 5 the least.)

- ___ Their belief about what happens after death
- ___ Honesty and integrity
- ___ Purity in their relationships
- ___ The sanctity of human life
- ___ Health and responsible living

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story:

A young husband and father recorded the following actions that he did without thinking:

- >> I was hosing off the driveway, and the bags of premixed cement were dusty, so I hosed them down without thinking.
- >> My wife asked me to bring the hydrogen peroxide from the medicine cabinet. I held the bottle for a few minutes while talking with her, and then, out of habit, unscrewed the cap of the plastic bottle and began to take some myself, without thinking.
- >> After patiently ordering at the drive-through window and paying, I received my change and drove off without thinking. I didn't even notice I had left my food back at the window until my lunch break was over and I was famished.
- >> After poring over a thousand greeting cards for the perfect valentine for my wife, I walked out of the store with the card without even thinking, or paying. The gentle little lady stopped me three stores down the mall and reminded me that the cards were not free.
- >> I tried to windsurf in Hawaii. After getting the sail up and launching through the waves with the wind at my back, I managed to leave the shoreline, without thinking about how to turn around and go against the wind. "What were you thinking?" was the most popular question the rescue boat personnel had on their minds. I just wasn't thinking.
- >> Without thinking, I touched a live wire to see if it had power to it. I'm sure there is a better way to find out.

Debriefing • Ask: Can you remember doing something ridiculous without even thinking?

Say: It is not as though people are not thinking, it is more likely that they are thinking about something other than what is at hand. The same is true for truth. It is not hard to

find answers if you believe they exist. It is impossible to find answers if you believe that there are none.

Ask: Have you heard the phrase "I'll believe it when I see it"? Can it also be said, "I'll see it when I believe it"? How would you explain this being true? How much thought have we really given to some of the big questions people ask today? Have you considered why you believe that lying is wrong or why murder will never be right? Is there really a timeless reason to stay sexually pure for marriage? Do I really believe that God's will is to be content with what I have even if others have more? Do you believe these truths? Why?

Say: One of the tasks for this lesson is for us to think a little about what others believe, and especially about what Christians in God's kingdom cling to in a world where "misbelief" reigns.

Ask: What do you think is the difference between the following words: **unbelief, disbelief, misbelief**? ("Unbelief" is a state of not believing, skepticism. "Disbelief" is a synonym but implies a refusal to accept something as true. "Misbelief" is a made-up word that implies a state of believing something less than or slightly different from the truth or making up your own version of the truth.)

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Present the following ideas in your own words:

As citizens of God's kingdom we claim that certain things are true for all people, all places, and all times. It is what we call "absolute truth." We believe in God's absolute truth against the backdrop of this world we live in today that believes truth is whatever you think is true. What is right for you may not be right for me.

The way Satan's kingdom undermines God's

kingdom is subtle: (1) make Christians feel uncertain; (2) make them sound arrogant; (3) make them doubt what God says. The following verses are only a few that suggest that there is “a truth” and “a way,” as well as a dead end for those who take another path—**Proverbs 14:12; Matthew 7:13, 14; John 14:6**. As God’s ambassadors we need to be thoughtful about how to communicate with others about what we believe. Sometimes it takes more thought than we think.

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath’s section of the lesson. Then encourage discussion with the questions below. Try to draw the discussion toward the ideas in parentheses.

Ask: How are we like the eaglet? (God designed us to hone in on His truth, but the massive explosion of sin into the world has disrupted our ability to do this. Consequently, our sense of right and wrong has become distorted, and we need the example and Word of Jesus to realign our sights.)

Ask: If we thought of the Holy Spirit as our guide toward becoming what God created us to be, what lessons might we learn from this illustration? (The Holy Spirit helps us recognize our true identity as children of the heavenly King and empowers us to rise above the rubbish of sin and error and soar on the wings of truth.)

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Write the four questions or sets of questions below on a white/chalkboard where all can see. Distribute or call attention to the student lesson. Divide the students into discussion groups, preferably with an adult in each group.

Say: We are going to take a look at what some other people believe. Then we’ll discuss what might have caused it and what might be

some of its effects on the believers’ lives.

Distribute copies of the handout on page 137. Then **say:** Using the Bible passages try to develop a solid response to the four “-isms” in the handout. Try to answer the questions on the board for each “-ism.”

1. What do you think has formed their worldview (basic assumptions about life and their way of looking at things)? Why do you think they think this way?
2. How does God’s Word, history, personal experience, and the natural world speak to their worldview?
3. How does their worldview affect their sense of right and wrong when it comes to everyday activities?
4. What passages would be most helpful in speaking to people with these beliefs? What approach do you think would be most effective in convincing them to believe in God, the author of truth?

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Present the following ideas in your own words:

It doesn’t matter what part of the world you live in, the sentiment that there is one truth for all people, places, and times is quite rare. Politicians are careful not to say anything that will sound like they are imposing morality on others. Entertainers are speaking out about tolerance and accepting everyone’s differences. People get downright nasty when you say that something is “wrong.” What is going on?

Write the statements below on a white/chalkboard. **Say:** You may hear statements like these:

“I’m not into organized religion, but I consider myself to be a spiritual person.”

“Who gives you the right to determine what is right and what is wrong?”

“I’m looking for something that is real.”

“I believe that we all have to find our own way to God, and it doesn’t really matter how

we get there. We all end up in the same place in the end.”

“It doesn’t really matter what you believe if you are loving and accepting of others and their views. What we really need are more people who can be open-minded.”

“You can believe what you want, just don’t push your beliefs on me.

“I think religion is cool as long as you don’t get carried away with it.”

(You may want to let the students vote on which of the statements above is the most predominant viewpoint in their world.)

Have volunteers find and read aloud the verses from John that are listed below, in which Jesus claims to be the bread of life, the light of the world, the door, etc. After each passage is read, discuss if and how the passage relates to any of the common statements about belief that you just discussed.

>> John 6:35, 36

>> John 8:12

>> John 10:7-10

>> John 10:11-16

>> John 11:20-27

>> John 14:1-7

>> John 15:5-8

Debriefing • Ask: How does being the “bread of life” speak to the common statements above? (A sense of feeling spiritual is in every human. What could be more real than feeling full and never needing anything else?) **What does the “Good Shepherd” have to offer people in the world?** (People value love and acceptance. They have never seen it as they will in the Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.) **What about the gate? Who needs a gate or a door? How is that relevant?** (A door is how you enter the house, and it separates the inside from the outside. Frankly, the whole idea that all roads lead to heaven is wrong. There is only one way. Through the door.) **What about light?** (Ask people to look in their heart of hearts and see if they don’t feel lost, and a little in the dark. They don’t know where to go or what to do. The whole idea that Jesus claims to be a leader in dark times is huge.) **I am the**

resurrection and the life. Who can make that claim? (Good question. Jesus claims to be the source of the afterlife.) **So why would someone accept or not accept what Jesus says: “I am the way, the truth, the life”?** (For those who want a part-time religion or some belief system in name only, they don’t need to. But most people want to believe in something so bad they are willing to die for it.)

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Which of the Ten Commandments do you think is most needed today? Most forgotten today?
2. Have you ever heard people accuse Christians of being “intolerant”? What does it mean to be intolerant? (Have students come up with a definition.)
3. How do you think a Christian should relate to those who are resistant to any kind of “religious talk”? Avoid it? Confront them?
4. How can you be certain about your faith and open-minded at the same time?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

In some ways the kingdom of this world is harder to reach for God than ever before. As we approach the end of earth’s history the citizens of God’s kingdom will need to be more single-minded about sharing the good news about Christ. People tend to be more skeptical of the Bible, not because it is wrong, but because it is so rarely obeyed. Many have turned away from God’s Word as the source of truth for all people.

But in other ways people are more open to radical faith than ever before. They are seeking a faith that has power to change their life. Although many are skeptical or weary of “the Bible,” over the centuries there is still one Book alone that has had the power to shape

and change people without failure. Count on it! If you believe, you will see. Anyone who has patterned their life after the timeless truths of God has no regrets. Think about it.

FOR LESSON THIRTEEN:

THIS HANDOUT IS FOR THE CONNECTING TO LIFE ACTIVITY.

FOUR -ISMS

Atheism: The belief that there is no God. A belief that emerged as evolution became a popular notion in the modern world. Atheists often see religion as something humans created so they wouldn't feel so insignificant. Essentially, to them a human is either a complex machine or an evolved animal.

Pantheism: The belief that God is in everything. This belief really grows out of the Eastern mystical religions in which there is a force that inhabits everything in the universe, including people. Their God is in the rock, the leaves, drops of rain, and in you and me. The goal of this religion is to be reminded or become mindful of the god that is in you, and

everything else. Such an awareness is the sole object of pantheism.

Polytheism: The belief that there are many gods in a variety of shapes and forms. The "gods" are not all equal. Many believe that there is a "force" or primary deity and that there are literally millions of smaller gods. In this religion any religion can fit and be accepted from their point of view.

Agnosticism: The belief that a person can't know or is unable to know for sure that God exists. Many agnostics are frustrated by the search for truth because at some point they must believe to get to the point of certainty.



STUDENT LESSON

THINKING RIGHT IN A GONE-WRONG WORLD

Stretch Forth Your Wings and Fly

September 24, 2022

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (Psalm 19:7, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 19, The Law of God:** “The great principles of God’s law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God’s love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God’s covenant with His people and the standard in God’s judgment.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 48-50

STRETCH FORTH YOUR WINGS AND FLY

While walking through the forest one day, a man found a young eagle that had fallen out of his nest. He took it home and put it in his barnyard, where it soon learned to eat and behave like the chickens. One day a naturalist passed by the farm and asked why it was that the king of all birds should be confined to live in the barnyard with the chickens. The farmer replied that since he had given it chicken feed and trained it to be a chicken, it had never learned to fly. Since it now behaved as the

chickens, it was no longer an eagle.

“Still it has the heart of an eagle,” replied the naturalist, “and can surely be taught to fly.” He lifted the eagle toward the sky and said, “You belong to the sky and not to the earth. Stretch forth your wings and fly.” The eagle, however, was confused. He did not know who he was, and seeing the chickens eating their food, he jumped down to be with them again.

The naturalist took the bird to the roof of the house and urged him again, saying, “You are an eagle. Stretch forth your wings and fly.” But the eagle was afraid and jumped down once more for the chicken food. Finally the naturalist took the eagle out of the barnyard, to a high mountain. There he held the king of the birds high above him and encouraged him again, saying, “You are an eagle. You belong to the sky. Stretch forth your wings and fly.” The eagle looked around, back toward the barnyard and up to the sky. Then the naturalist lifted him straight toward the sun, and the eagle began to tremble. Slowly he stretched his wings, and, with a triumphant cry, soared away into the heavens.

It may be that the eagle still remembers the chickens with nostalgia. It may even be that he occasionally revisits the barnyard. But as far as anyone knows, he has never returned to lead the life of a chicken.

—Theology News and Notes, October 1976, quoted in *Multnomah Message*, Spring 1993, p. 1

- » What do you think might be the parallels between the experience of the eaglet that learned how to fly and our experience as

agents of God's kingdom on this earth? How can you apply to your life in a spiritual sense the words of the naturalist: "You belong to the sky and not to the earth"? What Bible passages help you discover who you are and, most important, Whose you are?

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Psalm 19:7-10.
- » Whether you go to a government school or a private school, think about how you would answer this question in class if your teacher said: "OK, class. Today for a writing exercise we are going to write out a declaration of our beliefs to read to the class. That's right. I want to know what you believe (for example: Where did you come from? Why are you here? Where are you going?—and this doesn't mean where you were born and where you have lived). I'm not interested in what you think or hope to be true, I want to know what you know to be true. Here is the catch: you need to say it in about 75 words. That's about five to eight sentences. And try to convince me! Go!"
- » So what would you say? What would you do? How could you use wisdom to introduce others to the truth that you hold so dear and that you strongly believe?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE LAW OF GOD

- » Read Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 22:36-40; John 14:15.
- » The Ten Commandments given on Sinai were to help us know how to honor God and live with one another in peace, harmony, and love. Jesus taught that the essence of the Ten Commandments is love for God and love

for one another. We show our love and faithfulness to God when we obey and love Him and reflect His love to others just as Jesus did when He was here on earth.

- » Can you explain how the Ten Commandments are reflected in the two main commandments that Jesus used to summarize the whole law, in Matthew 22:36-40?

- » Using the words in the word bank, complete the Bible verses below. Hint: some words are used more than once. The texts are from NKJV.

faith	patience	know	Revelation
saints	burdensome	John	keep
love	commandments		

"Now by this we know that we _____ Him, if we _____ His _____" (1 _____ 2:3).

"For this is the _____ of God, that we _____ His _____. And His _____ are not _____" (1 _____ 5:3).

"Here is the _____ of the _____; here are those who _____ the _____ of God and the _____ of Jesus" (_____ 14:12).

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read Daniel 3:16-18.
- » What is so exciting about our world today is that people are hungry for a faith that calls for a full commitment. A lot of people today are looking for what is powerful. Don't you think most people want to believe in something more than just a religion that calls them to be nice? The power of God's

timeless truth is that it has an answer for injustice—God will make it right. The Scriptures will equip believers with unexplainable joy along with the love of God, so they can stand up boldly for Him.

- » Look around your world and see if we couldn't use a few people like Joseph, Esther, Daniel, and Elijah to stand up to the compromising leaders of this world. These are the people who put their trust in God and followed His timeless principles of truth. You can be sure that they relied on God's love and perfect standard of truth as they ventured into the unknown. What about you? Think about God's timeless truths and take a stand to live by them to honor God.

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Match the verse with the phrase that has been extracted from the verse, using Biblegateway.com. All verses have been taken from the New International Version of the Bible.

- A. Philippians 2:14-16
- B. Romans 1:18-20
- C. John 18:33-39
- D. Psalm 19:7-10
- E. Daniel 3:16-18
- F. 2 Timothy 1:12
- G. Proverbs 14:12
- H. Matthew 7:13, 14
- I. John 14:6

- _____ "The law of the Lord is perfect . . ."
- _____ "No one comes to the Father except through me."
- _____ "We will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."
- _____ "Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life . . ."
- _____ "Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed . . ."

- _____ "There is a way that appears to be right . . ."
- _____ "My kingdom is not of this world."
- _____ "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven . . ."
- _____ "Do everything without grumbling or arguing . . ."

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read John 14:6.
- » Review the memory text.
- » It has been noted that God's law was not invented at Mount Sinai but was written in the hearts of His people with four letters: LOVE. If we truly followed the principle of "love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength and love your neighbor as yourself," we would see a different world than what we see today. It was only after sin made its way into our world that we ever realized that there was a law. And now we know what it is like to live in a world that puts a defiant hand up to God, saying, "No, thank You!"
- » Timeless truths are what make following Jesus worthwhile. He was there before the world began and will be there after all is said and done. Jesus said, "I am the beginning and the end" (see **Revelation 21:6**). As we approach Jesus every day, He invites us to see His most enduring, timeless quality in His nail-scarred hand. He loves us with an everlasting love (see **Jeremiah 31:3**).

Friday

APPLYING

- » Read Matthew 7:13, 14.
- » "Where the rubber meets the road" is a common saying about what is practical and doable. When a car drives normally the fric-

tion from the road causes heat and some of the rubber is left on the road. When the friction is abrupt and forceful (stopping or starting abruptly), the skid marks are clearly seen.

- » As it relates to your beliefs, do you tend to leave an unseen residue on the road or giant skid marks? When the rubber of your beliefs hits the road of the world, does it leave a mark? Is it evident which kingdom you belong to? Another way to say it would be: In your world, what do those around you really know about what you believe?
- » At right are three skid marks. Write below the marks either a belief that you demonstrate in your life already, or one you would like to demonstrate this week. Leave some rubber on the road!

1

2

3

