

The State of Theology Study Guide (2025) © 2025 by Ligonier Ministries

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### Introduction

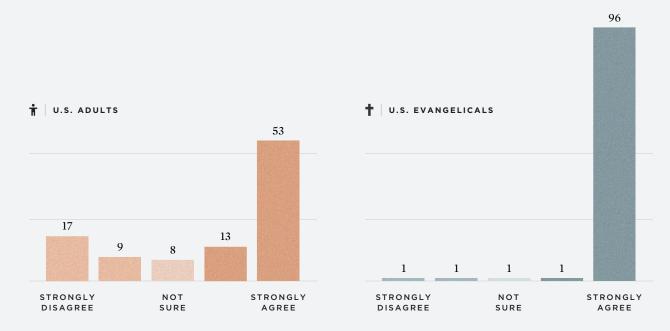
- 1. God is a perfect being and cannot make a mistake.
- 2. There is one true God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- 3. God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.
- 4. God is unchanging.
- 5. Biblical accounts of the physical (bodily) resurrection of Jesus are completely accurate. This event actually occurred.
- 6. God loves all people the same way.
- 7. Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God.
- 8. God created marriage to be between one man and one woman.
- 9. The Holy Spirit is a force but is not a personal being.
- 10. The Holy Spirit gives a spiritual new birth or new life before a person has faith in Jesus Christ.
- 11. The Holy Spirit can tell me to do something which is forbidden in the Bible.
- 12. Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature.
- 13. Even the smallest sin deserves eternal damnation.
- 14. God counts a person as righteous not because of one's works but only because of one's faith in Jesus Christ.
- 15. Everyone is born innocent in the eyes of God.
- 16. The Bible, like all sacred writings, contains helpful accounts of ancient myths but is not literally true.
- 17. The Bible is 100% accurate in all that it teaches.

- 18. Modern science disproves the Bible.
- 19. God chose the people he would save before he created the world.
- 20. Hell is a real place where certain people will be punished forever.
- 21. There will be a time when Jesus Christ returns to judge all the people who have lived.
- 22. Worshiping alone or with one's family is a valid replacement for regularly attending church.
- 23. Christians should not allow their religious beliefs to influence their political decisions.
- 24. Every Christian has an obligation to join a local church.
- 25. Sex outside of traditional marriage is a sin.
- 26. Abortion is a sin.
- 27. People should be able to choose their gender regardless of their biological sex.
- 28. The Bible's condemnation of homosexual behavior doesn't apply today.
- 29. God is unconcerned with my day-to-day decisions.
- 30. The Bible has the authority to tell us what we must do.
- 31. Religious belief is not about objective truth.
- 32. The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe.
- 33. It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- 34. Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin.
- 35. Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation.

**EVERY FEW YEARS,** Ligonier Ministries has partnered with Lifeway Research to survey the beliefs of Americans on a number of theological and ethical issues. Like past surveys, the 2025 State of Theology survey reveals some encouraging results, but it also reveals confusion and a lack of theological knowledge among evangelicals. In this resource, we will take a look at each of the thirty-five questions on the survey in an attempt to help readers understand the orthodox Christian view on these issues as well as the biblical grounds for it. This resource is designed for individual or group study and not only features helpful explanations of the survey questions but also has questions for reflection and discussion as well as suggestions for further study. To take the survey yourself and explore the data, go to The State Of Theology.com. You can also create a group survey that you can send to your friends, family, or church. It's completely confidential and is a great way to start a discussion on what the people in your community believe.

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### GOD IS A PERFECT BEING AND CANNOT MAKE A MISTAKE.



CHRISTIANS STRONGLY AFFIRM that God is a perfect being because to deny that God is a perfect being is to deny that God is God. An imperfect being, by definition, is not God. The great Princeton theologian Archibald Alexander rightly said, "The very idea of God is that of a being infinitely perfect." God's work is perfect (Deut. 32:4). His way is perfect (2 Sam. 22:31; Ps. 18:30). His law is perfect (Ps. 19:7; James 1:25). His knowledge is perfect (Job 37:16). All this is true because God Himself is perfect (Matt. 5:48). Westminster Confession of Faith 2.1 expresses this biblical truth in the following words: "There is but one only, living, and true God: who is infinite in being and *perfection*" (emphasis added; see also Westminster Larger Catechism 7).

The Apostle James makes it clear that to be perfect means to be complete, to lack nothing (James 1:4). Theologically, this idea is most obviously related to God's attributes of self-existence (aseity) and self-sufficiency (independence). Unlike the being of creatures, which is contingent and

dependent, God's being is necessary and independent. In other words, God cannot *not* exist, and God depends on nothing else for His existence. The One who is "I am" does not have the potential to be anything more or less than what He is. He is, therefore, infinitely and unchangeably blessed in His being, and He is infinitely and unchangeably blessed in His being because His being is infinitely and unchangeably perfect.

For God to make a mistake, there would have to be in Him some imperfection in His holiness, goodness, knowledge, or wisdom. The fictional pagan gods make mistakes because they are created in the image of man, and human beings are less than perfect in goodness and knowledge. God, on the other hand, is neither malicious nor ignorant. Instead, He is perfect in all His attributes because He is His attributes. He cannot, therefore, make mistakes. To suggest otherwise is blasphemous. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What do we mean when we say that God is perfect?
- 2. How do God's self-existence and independence relate to His perfection?
- 3. Why would it be wrong to say that God made a mistake?
- 4. Choose one Old Testament passage and one New Testament passage that were cited above. How does each text demonstrate how God's perfection can give you comfort in times of uncertainty?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"Perfectly Perfect" from The Attributes of God with R.C. Sproul

"I AM: The Aseity of God" from Moses and the Burning Bush with R.C. Sproul

"I AM: The Being of God" from Moses and the Burning Bush with R.C. Sproul

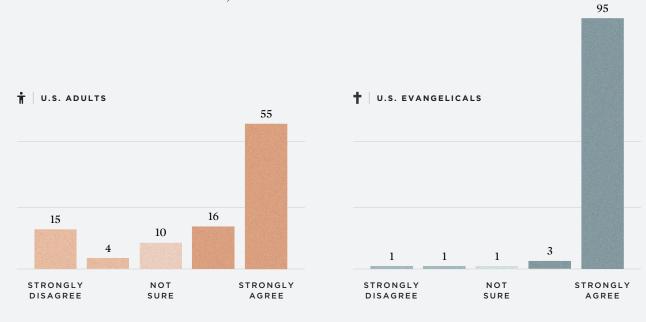
"Surprised by the Perfect Being" by Matthew Barrett in Tabletalk

### QUOTE

"There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection."

-Westminster Confession of Faith 2.1

## THERE IS ONE TRUE GOD IN THREE PERSONS: GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON, AND GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT.



**IN THIS SHORT SENTENCE** we find a concise statement of the orthodox Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Although the word *Trinity* is not found in the Bible, it is a helpful way to speak of a doctrine that is a "good and necessary consequence" of what is expressly taught in the Bible (see WCF 1.6).

The doctrine of the Trinity is grounded in several explicit teachings of Scripture. First, according to Scripture, there is one, and only one, God. We read, for example, in Deuteronomy 4:35, "To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him." Second, Scripture affirms that the Father is God. Jesus often speaks of "God the Father" (e.g., John 6:27). Paul speaks numerous times of "God our Father" and "God the Father" (e.g., Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3).

Third, Scripture also affirms that the Son is God. In the prologue to the gospel of John, the "Word," who is revealed to be Jesus (1:14), is identified as God (v. 1). Fourth, Scripture affirms that the Holy Spirit is God. He is equated with God in Acts 5:3–4. Elsewhere, the New Testament authors identify the Holy Spirit with Yahweh through their use of Old Testament quotations. Compare, for instance, Isaiah 6:8–10 with Acts 28:25–27 and Psalm 95:7–11 with Hebrews 3:7–11. Fifth and finally, although the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are affirmed to be God, Scripture also distinguishes the three. They are distinguished, for example, by use of the language of sending, loving, speaking, interceding, etc. (see Luke 3:22; John 3:16–17; 3:35; 11:41–42; 14:16; 15:26; Rom. 8:26–27).

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The biblical doctrine of the Trinity is summarized in the Nicene Creed:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life; who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the prophets.

The doctrine of the Trinity is fundamental to the Christian faith. If any element of it is rejected or altered, every other Christian doctrine is negatively affected. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why is the doctrine of the Trinity fundamental to the Christian faith?
- 2. What would it mean for one's understanding of God if one denied either the deity of Christ or the Holy Spirit?
- 3. What are some phrases in the Nicene Creed that affirm the deity of each person in the Trinity? How does it distinguish each of their persons?
- 4. How does understanding the Trinity shape our worship of God and prayer to Him?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

**Delighting in the Trinity** by Michael Reeves

*The Mystery of the Trinity* with R.C. Sproul

*The Holy Trinity* by Robert Letham

"The Trinity" by Ligonier Ministries

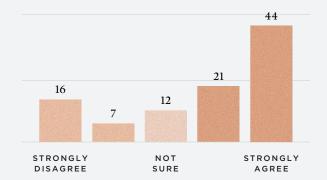
"What Jesus Taught about the Trinity" on Things Unseen with Sinclair B. Ferguson

### QUOTE

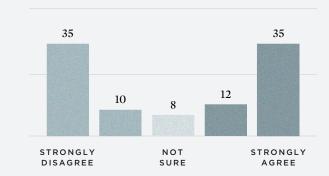
"We worship one God in Trinity and the Trinity in unity, neither confounding their persons nor dividing their essence." —Athanasian Creed

## GOD ACCEPTS THE WORSHIP OF ALL RELIGIONS, INCLUDING CHRISTIANITY, JUDAISM, AND ISLAM.

### ₩ U.S. ADULTS



**↑** U.S. EVANGELICALS



IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD, it is common for people who believe in God to affirm that God accepts the worship of all religions as long as the worshiper is sincere. There is no evidence for such a view in Scripture, however. In fact, from Genesis to Revelation, Scripture reveals the exact opposite.

This is clearly seen in the first of the Ten Commandments: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). The ancient Near Eastern world in which Israel lived was filled with all manner of religions and "gods." God rejects these other religions. Why? Because the "gods" of these other religions are actually demons, and the worship of these demons is an abomination (Deut. 32:16–17; Lev. 17:7). The Apostle Paul teaches the same in the New Testament (1 Cor. 10:20).

During His temptation, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13 to Satan, saying, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve" (Matt. 4:10). That is religious exclusivism. In the incarnation, the Word who was with God and who was God became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1, 14). He is now the one Mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5). There is no other.

Jesus Himself clearly expressed the exclusivity of Christianity when He said: "I am the way, and the truth, and

the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). "No one" means no one. This is why Peter, when filled with the Holy Spirit, proclaimed the following regarding Jesus: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). For those seeking salvation, there is no one else.

If God accepted the worship of all religions, there would have been no need for the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ because there were plenty of existing religions already during the first century. If God accepted the worship of all religions, there would also have been no need for the Great Commission and the evangelization of the nations. If God accepts the worship of all religions, the evangelism that Jesus commanded is a waste of time.

God does not accept any religion other than the one He graciously provided. He does not accept religions that substitute worship of the creature for worship of the Creator. God does not accept false worship. God does, however, accept the worshipers of any religion when they repent of those religions and trust in Christ. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why do you think the idea that all sincere worship is accepted by God is popular in today's culture?
- 2. Does God care how Christians worship Him? Why or why not? What might this imply about the worship of *other* religions?
- 3. What are the consequences for evangelism and missions if we believe God accepts all worship? Would you evangelize if this were the case? Why or why not?
- 4. How should Christians respond lovingly and truthfully to those who hold pluralistic views of religion?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"Don't All Religions Lead to God?" by Stephen J. Nichols in Tabletalk

"Is There Only One Way of Salvation?" by James N. Anderson in Tabletalk

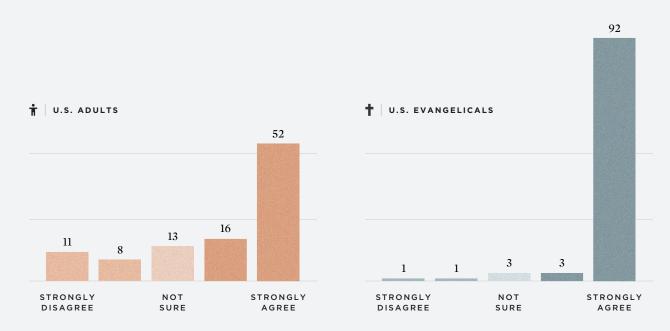
"Pluralism and Relativism" from Christian Worldview with R.C. Sproul

*A Field Guide on False Teaching* by Ligonier Ministries

### QUOTE

"There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." —1 Timothy 2:5

## 4 GOD IS UNCHANGING.



THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS contemporary revisionist doctrines of God such as process theology and open theism. According to these revisionist doctrines, God is not omniscient and God is not immutable. God changes, according to proponents of these doctrines, and one of the ways God changes is by gaining more and more knowledge. Note that if we affirm that God learns, we would have also to affirm that God is ignorant of at least some things. No one has to learn something he or she already knows, and this is true of God as well. If we say that God adapts to different circumstances, that is simply another way of saying that God changes. To adapt is to change.

Classical Christian theism, which is grounded in the teaching of Scripture, affirms that God is immutable and omniscient. One of these is a negative attribute, and the other is a positive attribute. Immutability is a negative attribute in that it is not directly saying what God is. Instead, it is saying what God is not. It is saying that the Creator, unlike His creatures, does not change (see Mal. 3:6; James 1:17). God always has been and always will be what He is—infinitely

perfect. As the Puritan Stephen Charnock explains, "He who hath not being from another, cannot but be always what he is: God is the first Being, an independent Being; he was not produced of himself, or of any other, but by nature always hath been, and, therefore, cannot by himself, or by any other, be changed from what he is in his own nature."

Omniscience is a positive attribute. It takes something that God and creatures do have in common in an analogous way and elevates it to the level of infinite perfection. Human beings have knowledge, but our knowledge is limited and imperfect, and we gain it through various learning processes. God has knowledge, but God's knowledge of Himself and of all things is perfect. God knows everything (1 John 3:20), including the future, which He makes known to us in part (Isa. 46:10).

If God learns, His knowledge is dependent. If God adapts to different circumstances, His being is dependent on those circumstances. Ultimately, to say that God learns and that God adapts to different circumstances is to say that God is a dependent being, and a God who is dependent isn't God. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why is the idea that God learns or adapts incompatible with His divine nature?
- 2. What is the difference between a negative attribute and a positive attribute of God?
- 3. How can God's immutability provide comfort and assurance to Christians?
- 4. Why is a God who is dependent or changeable not worthy of worship?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: The Immutability of God" with R.C. Sproul at the 2004 National Conference, *A Portrait of God* 

"The God Who Doesn't Change" from The Attributes of God with R.C. Sproul

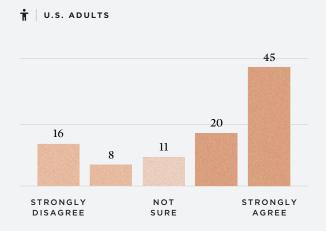
"Does God Change His Mind?" by James Dolezal

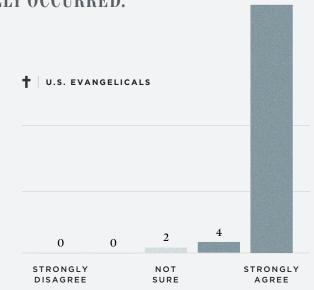
All That Is in God by James Dolezal

### QUOTE

"God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." —Westminster Shorter Catechism 4

# BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS OF THE PHYSICAL (BODILY) RESURRECTION OF JESUS ARE COMPLETELY ACCURATE. THIS EVENT ACTUALLY OCCURRED.





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TO DENY THE BODILY RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ is to deny one of the central tenets of Christianity. It is, in fact, a rejection of Christianity. The Apostle Paul made this abundantly clear when he included the bodily resurrection of Christ in his summary of the Christian gospel (1 Cor. 15:4). He goes on to say, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (v. 14). If that were not clear enough, he then says, "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (v. 17). He says both of these things in the context of a lengthy discussion of bodily death and resurrection.

The Gospels also clearly teach that the resurrection of Jesus was the raising from death of the same body that was crucified. It's why the tomb was empty (Luke 24:3). When Jesus appears to the disciples after His resurrection, He goes out of His way to make it clear to them that He has been raised bodily:

And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. (Luke 24:38–40)

He goes so far as to tell Thomas to touch the wounds He suffered at the crucifixion (John 20:26–27).

Numerous alternatives to bodily resurrection have been suggested by skeptics over the centuries, but none of them explains the actual evidence we have. The "swoon theory" suggests Jesus did not really die on the cross. He merely fainted, and then the cool air of the tomb revived Him. He rolled the massive stone away and walked out. Given what we know about Roman scourging and crucifixion, this would have required a miracle on par with bodily resurrection.

Others have suggested that the many people who saw Jesus after His death and burial experienced a mass hallucination. A hallucination involves perceiving something that is not actually present in the world outside the mind. In other words, a hallucination is internal to the individual experiencing it. It is completely subjective. In order for the hallucination theory to even approach plausibility, one would have to posit multiple people, one after another, experiencing the same subjective hallucination. On top of that, one would have to suggest that hundreds of people simultaneously experienced the same hallucination (1 Cor. 15:6). In short, one would have to change the very definition of hallucination in order for the hallucination theory to be plausible. There are other theories that have been suggested, but like the swoon theory and the hallucination theory, they cannot account for the actual evidence.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why is the bodily resurrection of Christ essential to the Christian faith?
- 2. Read Luke 24. What details does Luke provide to confirm the physical nature of the resurrection?
- 3. What are the major alternative theories to the resurrection, and why do they fall short?
- 4. How does belief in the bodily resurrection impact a Christian's hope for the future?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

Alive: How the Resurrection of Christ Changes Everything by Gabriel N.E. Fluhrer

"Resurrection" from What Did Jesus Do? Understanding the Work of Christ with R.C. Sproul

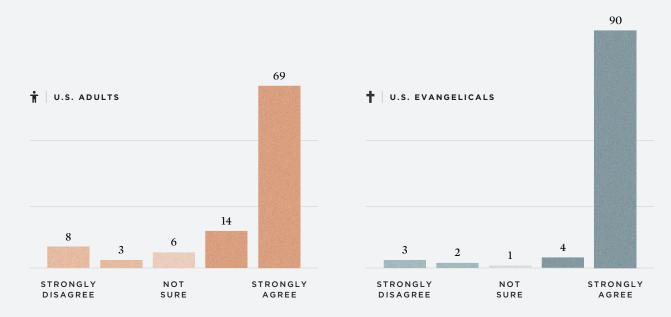
"The Resurrection of Christ" by Ligonier Ministries

"The Resurrection of Christ" from Objections Answered with R.C. Sproul

### QUOTE

"The resurrection of Christ is the most important article of our faith, and without it the hope of eternal life is extinguished." —John Calvin, *Commentary on John* 

# GOD LOVES ALL PEOPLE THE SAME WAY.



**THIS STATEMENT IS** often believed because many people assume God's love must be identical for everyone. But while God is indeed loving, the Bible shows that He does not love every person in exactly the same way. There are distinctions between God's love for all mankind and His particular love for His children.

First, there is God's general love for all people. This is seen in His care for creation and His kindness to both the righteous and the wicked (Ps. 145:8–9; Matt. 5:44–45; Acts 14:16–17). Jesus says that God "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45).

Second, there is God's saving love, which is shown only to His elect—those whom He chose before the foundation of the world to redeem in Christ (Eph. 1:4–5). This is God's personal, covenantal love that is manifested in the death of His Son for His people. Jesus said, "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15), which means that He did not lay down His life for every person without exception.

God does love all people, but He does not love them all in the same way. His general love is real and generous, but His special love for His people is salvific. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What is the difference between God's general love and His saving love?
- 2. Why is it important to affirm that God's love is not identical for every person?
- 3. Why do many people assume God's love must be the same for everyone?
- 4. What are the dangers of misunderstanding or misrepresenting God's love?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"<u>Is It Biblical to Say That God Loves Everyone?</u>" with R.C. Sproul at the 2007 National Conference, *The Next 500 Years* 

"Does God Love Everyone?" with Derek W.H. Thomas on Ask Ligonier

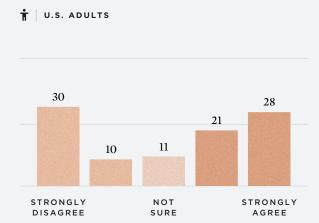
"Does God Love Us Just the Way We Are?" with John MacArthur and R.C. Sproul

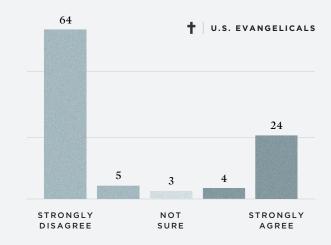
Loved by God with R.C. Sproul

### QUOTE

"Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." -Romans 9:13

# JESUS WAS A GREAT TEACHER, BUT HE WAS NOT GOD.





ARIANS, WHO BELIEVE JESUS IS the first and greatest being created by God, affirm that Jesus was a great teacher, but those who believe that Jesus was a mere man often affirm the same thing. They will say that Jesus was simply a great teacher. Many people in our day affirm something along these lines. What many of them do not understand is that one cannot affirm that Jesus was merely a man and at the same time affirm that He was a great teacher. Why? Because if He was merely a man, what He taught is delusional at best and demonic at worst. Many years ago, C.S. Lewis made the same basic point in his book *Mere Christianity* when he argued that given the things Jesus said and did, He is either a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord.

The problem with the claim that Jesus was merely a great teacher but not God is that His teaching and actions repeatedly included both explicit and implicit claims that

He is God. If a teacher is not God and yet claims to *be* God, then that teacher is not a great teacher. He or she is either a liar or insane. So what did Jesus teach through His words and actions?

Jesus claims to have existed with the Father before the creation of the world (John 17:5, 24). He uses the Old Testament name of God in reference to Himself (8:58). He claims authority to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6; see Isa. 43:25). He encourages His disciples to pray to Him (John 14:13–14). He taught that He is to be the object of men's faith (14:1). He claims sovereign authority to judge all mankind (5:21–27; see Matt. 28:18). He claims omnipresence (18:20). He claims a kind of knowledge that requires omniscience (11:27). Anyone who is not God and says all these things is not a great teacher. Jesus said these things. He can be a great teacher only if He is God incarnate. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why is it logically inconsistent to say Jesus was a great teacher but not God?
- 2. Why would Jesus need to be considered either Lord, liar, or lunatic?
- 3. How do other areas of Christian doctrine fall apart when the deity of Christ is rejected?
- 4. What harm is there in viewing Jesus as only a moral teacher and not the incarnate Son of God?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"Christ" in Christianity and Liberalism by J. Gersham Machen

"Jesus Christ" by Ligonier Ministries

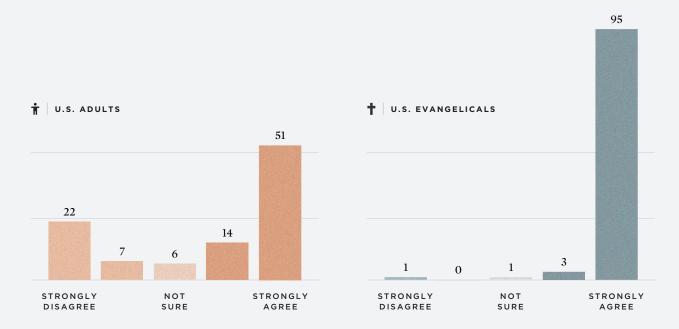
**The Majesty of Christ** with R.C. Sproul

Who Is Jesus? by R.C. Sproul

### QUOTE

"A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic . . . or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse . . . You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God." —C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* 

### GOD CREATED MARRIAGE TO BE BETWEEN ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN.



FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, God clearly defined what marriage is. In Genesis 2:24, we read, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." This verse describes God's original design for marriage—a covenantal union between one man and one woman. Jesus Himself confirms this in Matthew 19:4–6, pointing back to this creational reality.

Marriage is not something humans invented or get to redefine. It is a divine institution, given by God for His glory and our good. Marriage also reflects the faithful, loving relationship between Christ and the church (Eph. 5:31–32). Just as Christ is faithful to His bride, the church, marriage is meant to be a covenant of faithfulness between a husband and a wife.

In our culture, many have tried to expand or redefine marriage to include relationships that Scripture calls sinful, including same-sex unions. But the Bible does not allow for these redefinitions. Whenever it speaks of marriage, it speaks of a man and a woman, and when it mentions same-sex relations, it condemns them as contrary to nature and to God's will (Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:26–27).

The truth that marriage is between one man and one woman is not just about maintaining a rule—it's about reflecting God's good design and protecting what He calls holy. When we honor God's design for marriage, we honor the Creator Himself. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Where did marriage come from? How does the answer to this question help us approach the notion that marriage is redefinable?
- 2. How should Christians respond to cultural changes that challenge the biblical definition of marriage?
- 3. Read Malachi 2:10–16. How does it reinforce the importance of marriage between one man and one woman? Why is it significant that marriage is described as a covenant?
- 4. What is lost when marriage is separated from its biblical meaning and purpose?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

A Field Guide on Gender and Sexuality by Ligonier Ministries

**Christian Marriage** with R.C. Sproul

"Jesus' Teaching on Marriage and Gender" on Things Unseen with Sinclair B. Ferguson

"Marriage and Family" by Ligonier Ministries

One Man and One Woman: Marriage and Same-Sex Relations by Joel R. Beeke and Paul M. Smalley

### QUOTE

"The first ordering principle the Lord gave us was the marital union of one man and one woman. Before sin corrupted everything, God brought husband and wife together to fulfill His call that we multiply and rule the earth." —R.C. Sproul

### THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A FORCE BUT IS NOT A PERSONAL BEING.

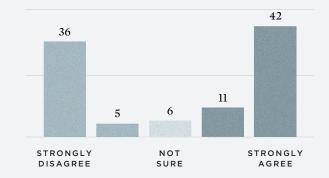
### ₩ U.S. ADULTS

# 28 30 18 16 8 STRONGLY NOT STRONGLY AGREE

THE IDEA THAT the Holy Spirit is a force rather than a person is an old heresy dating back to at least the fourth century, but it has survived to this day. It is the view, for example, of the Jehovah's Witnesses, who argue that the Spirit is God's "active force." They argue that Scripture speaks of the Holy Spirit's being "poured out" on someone or "filling" someone. A person cannot be "poured out" or "fill" something, they argue, so the Holy Spirit must not be a person. They argue that when Scripture uses personal language in regard to the Holy Spirit, it is using figurative language.

Those who argue in this way have the facts precisely backward. In the first place, the language of "pouring out" and "filling" is applied to subjects in the Scripture about whose personality there is no doubt. David (a human person) cries out, "I am poured out like water" (Ps. 22:14). Paul (another human person) speaks of being "poured out" like a drink offering (Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6). Since we know that David and Paul were real persons, we know that the language of "pouring out" is being used figuratively. What about the language of filling? In Jeremiah 23:24, God declares that He fills heaven and earth. This does not mean that God is an impersonal force. Jesus is also said to "fill" all things (Eph. 1:23; 4:10). Jesus, too, is not an impersonal force. In short, if

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someone is said to be "poured out" or to "fill" something, it is not proof that that someone is not a person.

Additionally, personal language is applied to the Holy Spirit in a multitude of ways and in a multitude of contexts that make it impossible to conclude they are all examples of personification of an impersonal thing. Scripture regularly uses personal pronouns when speaking of the Holy Spirit (e.g., John 15:26; 16:13–14; Acts 10:19–20; 13:2). The Holy Spirit is "He," not "it." Scripture ascribes to the Holy Spirit personal properties such as understanding (Isa. 11:2; 1 Cor. 2:10–11) and will (1 Cor. 12:11; John 3:8). Scripture also ascribes numerous personal activities to the Holy Spirit, including speaking (Mark 13:11), revealing (Luke 2:26), guiding (John 16:13), teaching (Luke 12:12), bearing witness (John 15:26), loving (Rom. 15:30), warning (1 Tim. 4:1), and appointing people to office (Acts 13:2).

Has a force such as gravity ever appointed anyone to office? Has a force such as magnetism ever exhibited understanding and will and the ability to speak and love? No. The Holy Spirit does these things because the Holy Spirit is not a force. The Holy Spirit is a personal being, the third person of the Trinity.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How do Jehovah's Witnesses describe the Holy Spirit, and why is their view considered heretical?
- 2. What would you say to someone denying the personality of the Holy Spirit? How would you warn them of the dangers of denying who He truly is?
- 3. Look up and read some of the Scripture references above that use personal language for the Holy Spirit. How strongly do each use specific attributes of personhood for the Holy Spirit?
- 4. How does denying the personality of the Holy Spirit affect the doctrine of the Trinity?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

*A Field Guide on False Teaching* by Ligonier Ministries

"The Holy Spirit" by Ligonier Ministries

The Holy Spirit, Tabletalk (January 2024)

Who Is the Holy Spirit? by R.C. Sproul

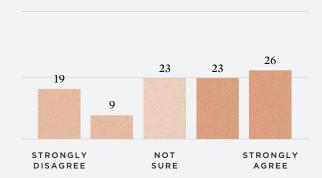
Who Is the Holy Spirit? with Sinclair B. Ferguson

#### QUOTE

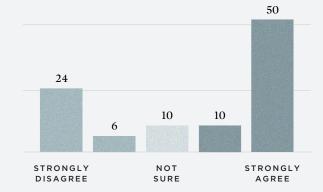
"The Holy Spirit is not merely a quality to be found in the divine nature. He is not simply an influence or power from God. He is not the working of God's power in our sanctification. He is a holy, intelligent person." —John Owen, *The Holy Spirit* 

## THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES A SPIRITUAL NEW BIRTH OR NEW LIFE BEFORE A PERSON HAS FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

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THE IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL TRUTH communicated in this statement is that regeneration precedes faith. Regeneration must occur first because every descendant of Adam is born dead in sin (Eph. 2:1; see Rom. 5:12). Eventually our spiritual death will be followed by our physical death (Gen. 3:19). This is why Jesus said to Nicodemus, "You must be born again" (John 3:7). Those who are spiritually dead—and that includes every human being—must be brought to spiritual life. We must be spiritually resurrected, and this is not something we can do ourselves. It is a sovereign work of God. We cannot be regenerated by having faith because dead people cannot do anything.

Our situation is similar to that of Lazarus (John 11). Lazarus was dead and could do nothing about it. Jesus stepped forward and commanded Lazarus to come out of the grave. It was impossible for Lazarus to respond, however, unless God gave him life first. In a similar way, we are all spiritually dead when Christ comes and commands us to believe in Him. It is impossible for us to respond until and unless God first gives us spiritual life. God first regenerates us (gives us spiritual life), and as a result we have faith, which itself is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8–10).

Throughout his ministry, Dr. R.C. Sproul often said that this little phrase, "regeneration precedes faith," captures the essence of Reformed theology. He could not have been more right. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What does it mean to say that regeneration precedes faith? What else must be true since regeneration precedes faith?
- 2. Why is it necessary for the Holy Spirit to give new life before we can believe?
- 3. Why is Lazarus an excellent example of the truths of Reformed theology—that salvation is by God's sovereign work?
- 4. How should the truth that regeneration precedes faith affect our view of evangelism and prayer?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit with R.C. Sproul

"The New Birth" by R.C. Sproul

"Regeneration" by Ligonier Ministries

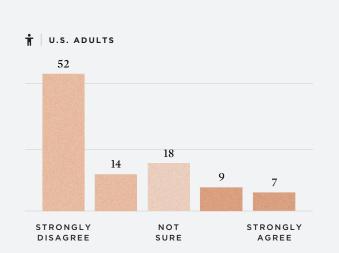
"TULIP and Reformed Theology: Irresistible Grace" by R.C. Sproul

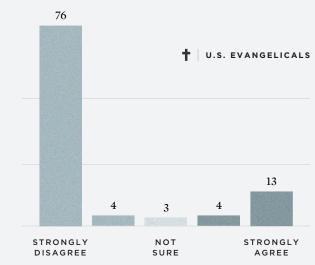
### QUOTE

"The flesh is not merely weak with respect to the power of rebirth. It is utterly impotent. It has no power whatever to effect rebirth. It cannot aid or enhance the Spirit's work."

-R.C. Sproul, *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit* 

## THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN TELL ME TO DO SOMETHING WHICH IS FORBIDDEN IN THE BIBLE.





FOR THIS STATEMENT TO BE TRUE, two things would have to be possible, both of which are false. First, the Holy Spirit would have to be able to contradict Himself. Scripture, the Bible, is the very Word of the triune God: "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (2 Tim. 3:16). The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is closely associated with the inspiration of Scripture: "No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). In other words, that which is forbidden in the Bible is forbidden by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit cannot command you to do something He Himself has forbidden because He doesn't contradict Himself (Num. 23:19).

Second, for the Holy Spirit to be able to tell you to do something forbidden in the Bible, the Holy Spirit would have to be able to sin. Encouraging someone to sin is a sin (Jer. 28:15–17). When God forbids something in Scripture, that law is an expression of His will. Sin, by definition, "is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God" (Westminster Shorter Catechism 14). As John puts it, "sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). The Holy Spirit is holy. If a spirit is telling you to do something forbidden in the Bible, you can be certain that it is an unholy spirit. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Have you ever heard a teaching that was claimed to be Spirit-inspired yet seemed to go against Scripture? What was it and why is it impossible for the Holy Spirit to contradict Scripture?
- 2. What is the major contradiction in the very idea that the Holy Spirit would lead someone into sin?
- 3. Why must personal experiences or feelings be tested against the Word of God?
- 4. How does this issue relate to the sufficiency and final authority of Scripture?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"The Authority of Scripture" from Reformation Truths with Michael Reeves

**The Doctrine of Scripture** with R.C. Sproul

*The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* with R.C. Sproul

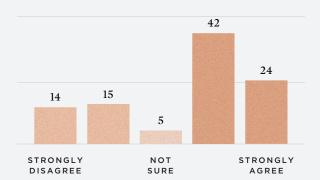
*Thus Says the Lord* with R.C. Sproul

### QUOTE

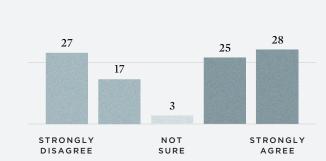
"It's bad enough to blame the devil for our own decisions, but we put ourselves in grave danger when we appeal to the Spirit to justify our transgressions." —R.C. Sproul

### EVERYONE SINS A LITTLE, BUT MOST PEOPLE ARE GOOD BY NATURE.

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THE IDEA THAT PEOPLE ARE basically good by nature echoes the ancient Pelagian heresy, which affirmed that Adam's sin affected Adam alone. According to this view, human nature was not affected by Adam's fall. Scripture teaches otherwise, asserting that Adam's sin affected all his natural-born posterity (Rom. 5:12–14). By nature, human beings are "children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). This is the theological point behind the phrase *total depravity*—the *T* in TULIP. This doctrine is found throughout both the Old and New Testaments (e.g., Gen. 6:5; Pss. 14:1–3; 143:2; Eccl. 7:20; Isa. 64:6; Mark 7:18–23; Rom. 1:21–32; 3:10–18, 23; 8:5–8; Gal. 4:3; Eph. 2:1–3; 4:17–19; Titus 3:3).

Christians can become confused because Scripture teaches that human beings were created by God in His image (Gen. 1:26–27), and God calls all that He created good (v. 31). If everything that God created is good, and if God created human nature, then isn't human nature necessarily good? Yes. As originally created, human nature was good. However, part of human nature is the human will. The first human beings had the responsibility to align their created wills perfectly with God's will—to obey Him. Instead, they disobeyed God. Like Satan, they turned their will, as it were, perpendicular to God's will, introducing sin and misery into the world and into their own natures. In other words, they

sinned. When they did this, human nature was distorted and corrupted. Like begets like, and all humans are now born with a corrupted and fallen human nature. Human beings are now born slaves to sin.

This is why the claim that "everyone sins a little" is also incorrect. We tend to measure ourselves against other human beings, and we like to pick the absolute worst specimens for comparison. We like to compare ourselves to people like Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, or Mao Zedong, It's easy to feel good about ourselves if the standard is refraining from killing millions of human beings. But this is not the standard by which the Word of God measures sin. The standard is God's will, and the requirement is perfect obedience to that will. "Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it" (James 2:10; see Gal. 3:10). The question is not, Did you refrain from murdering millions today? The question is, Did you perfectly "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" today, and did you perfectly love "your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-39)? How often did you fail to do this perfectly? Was it just "a little"? No. We fail to do this a lot, and that means we sin a lot. This is why we need the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. He is the only One who has ever perfectly fulfilled the law. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Do you struggle with the doctrine of total depravity? Why or why not?
- 2. What does the Bible teach about the nature of humanity after the fall? How have you experienced the truth of total depravity and the effects of the fall?
- 3. Why is it important to measure ourselves by God's standard rather than human standards?
- 4. Read Romans 3:9–26. How does it make the case for the truth of total depravity? How does this truth lead us to appreciate the righteousness of God in Christ?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

The Bondage of the Will by Martin Luther

"Radical Corruption" by R.C. Sproul

"The Sinfulness of Man" from Reformation Truths with Michael Reeves

"TULIP and Reformed Theology: Total Depravity" by R.C. Sproul

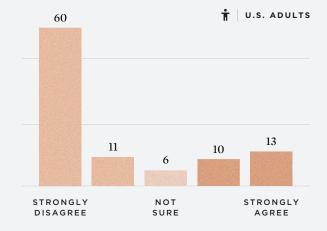
**What Is Reformed Theology?** with R.C. Sproul

**Willing to Believe** with R.C. Sproul

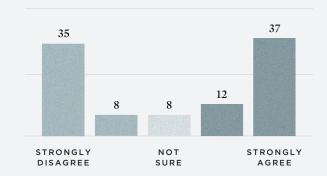
### QUOTE

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." —Romans 3:23

### EVEN THE SMALLEST SIN DESERVES ETERNAL DAMNATION.



**†** U.S. EVANGELICALS



affirm because we frequently lose sight of the true nature of sin. We fail to grasp the true nature of sin because we do not grasp the true nature of the holiness of God. When we begin to understand better the holiness of God, we begin to get a clearer understanding of how utterly evil sin is. To be as blunt as possible, all sin is satanic. Every time we commit any sin, we are following in Satan's footsteps. We are turning against our holy God, spitting in His face, and defiantly saying to Him, "Not Thy will, but my will be done."

A seemingly "small" sin, eating a piece of fruit, led to the fall of humanity and the curse under which all creation still groans (Rom. 8:18–24). Many people, even Christians, look at this and ask how a just God could inflict such a punishment for eating a piece of fruit. What they fail to realize is that in the act of eating that piece of fruit, Adam and Eve were doing much more than biting and chewing food. They were trusting the serpent rather than God (Gen. 3:3–6) and disobeying a direct command of God (2:17). In doing so, they were choosing to follow Satan rather than God.

The moment they acted on that temptation, they became, in effect, Satanists and "children of the devil" (1 John 3:10).

Because God is holy, His will is completely holy. It is perfectly pure and good and beautiful. It is light without any darkness (1 John 1:5). To depart from it in any way, even to the smallest degree, is to blasphemously declare that our fallen and corrupt human wills are to be preferred to God's will. Yes, there are degrees of sin (John 19:11). But all sin is a choice of our will over God's will. Once the created will has chosen itself over God, holiness and justice require that it be judged, and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). On its own, that fallen will cannot return to perfect alignment with God's will because it has already become deformed and corrupted. Satan and those angels who followed him did this, and hell was prepared for them (Matt. 25:41). Satan deceived our first parents, and they likewise chose their own will over God's will. By His grace, however, God offers redemption for human beings who repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God. ♦

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why is the idea that even small sins deserve eternal punishment challenging to people?
- 2. How does our view of God's holiness affect our understanding of sin? How does God remain holy in forgiving sin?
- 3. How does sin align us with the devil? How might this give you pause when you are tempted?
- 4. What biblical truths can help us to have a proper view of sin when we're tempted to think that "small" sins don't really matter?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"God's Holiness" by Ligonier Ministries

**The Holiness of God** by R.C. Sproul

"Keeping God's Law" from Themes from James with R.C. Sproul

"Saved from God's Justice" from Themes from Hebrews with R.C. Sproul

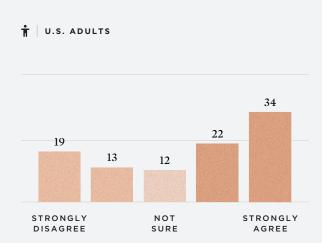
**Saved from What?** by R.C. Sproul

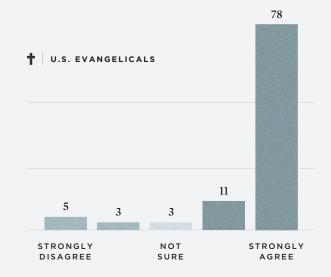
"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards

### QUOTE

"Every sin, even the least, being against the sovereignty, goodness, and holiness of God, and against his righteous law, deserveth his wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come; and cannot be expiated but by the blood of Christ." —Westminster Larger Catechism 152

### GOD COUNTS A PERSON AS RIGHTEOUS NOT BECAUSE OF ONE'S WORKS BUT ONLY BECAUSE OF ONE'S FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.





THIS STATEMENT CONCERNS the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone. Westminster Shorter Catechism 33 provides us with a good concise summary of this doctrine: "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone." Justification is an act of grace (Rom. 3:24). Grace, by definition, is a gift, not a wage earned for works we have done (4:4). By this act of God's grace, He pardons all our sins (vv. 6–8), and in Him we "become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21). This is because Christ's perfect righteousness is imputed to us (Rom. 4:11; 5:19). We receive this by faith alone (Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9).

The doctrine of justification by faith alone was at the heart of the sixteenth-century Reformation debate. Over time, Roman Catholic theologians had conflated justification with regeneration and sanctification and had developed a complex doctrine of grace and salvation rooted in their sacramental system. According to Rome, redemption was accomplished objectively by Christ. Its application to people is called *justification*. This subjective aspect of redemption requires the cooperation of man. In Roman Catholic theology, there are a number of different categories of grace, but key to the doctrine of justification is the idea that grace is God's supernatural gift to man in the work of redemption.

The most important distinction for the doctrine of justification is the distinction between actual grace and habitual grace. Actual grace is a gift from God that enables us to act as we ought. Habitual grace is sanctifying/justifying grace that is infused into the soul, thereby changing the soul and restoring it. The Council of Trent, a sixteenth-century Roman Catholic council, defined habitual grace's effects in terms of regeneration and sanctification. One receives this grace by means of the sacrament of baptism, and if it is lost through mortal sin, it can be regained through the sacrament of penance (i.e., confession or reconciliation).

The Protestant Reformers rejected the idea of human cooperation in the work of justification and distinguished justification from regeneration and sanctification. Instead of saying that we are justified because we have been made inherently righteous, they argued, based on the biblical texts cited above and many others, that our sins are imputed to Christ and His perfect righteousness is imputed to us. We receive this righteousness by faith and by faith alone. Therefore, we are declared righteous (justified) on the grounds of Christ's perfect righteousness that has been imputed to us. This justification cannot be separated from regeneration and sanctification, but it must be distinguished from them. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Read Romans 3:21–4:8. How does it support the doctrine of justification by faith alone?
- 2. What is the difference between imputed righteousness and infused righteousness? Based on this difference, which would give you the greatest assurance and why?
- 3. What's the difference between justification, regeneration, and sanctification? Why is it important to distinguish between them?
- 4. In what sense does faith justify us? In what sense does it not justify us?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

Justification: Understanding the Classic Reformed Doctrine by J.V. Fesko

"Justification" by Ligonier Ministries

*Justification by Faith Alone* with R.C. Sproul

"<u>Justification by Faith Alone</u>" in Foundations: An Overview of Systematic Theology with R.C. Sproul

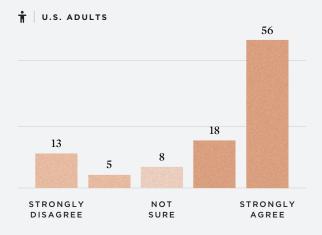
Justified by Faith Alone with R.C. Sproul

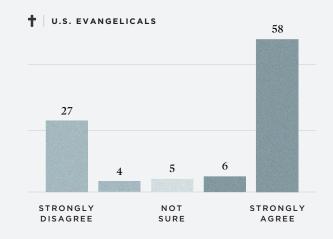
### QUOTE

"To the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness." —Romans 4:5

## LEDVONE IS DODN IN

### EVERYONE IS BORN INNOCENT IN THE EYES OF GOD.





THE IDEA THAT EVERYONE is born innocent in the eyes of God is one of the fundamental doctrines of an ancient heresy known as Pelagianism. Pelagius was a monk who lived at the same time as Augustine and whose teachings resulted in a long controversy in the early centuries of the church. Pelagius argued that Adam's fall affected no one but Adam. He denied that any guilt or corruption was passed on to Adam's descendants. In other words, he denied what theologians refer to as *original sin*. We are all born innocent and free of sin, according to Pelagius, and if we choose we can live a life completely free of sin. Augustine and others battled Pelagius and his disciple Caelestius for years, arguing that such a view of man is completely contrary to Scripture.

According to Scripture, all have sinned. All have fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). This goes back to conception (Ps. 51:5), and it's rooted in our relation to our first father, Adam (Rom. 5:12). Rather than being born innocent, we are all spiritually stillborn. As Paul explains in Ephesians 2:1–3, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the

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spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind." We were by *nature* children of wrath. We were not by nature innocent.

The Canons of Dort helpfully summarize the biblical doctrines:

Man after the fall begat children in his own likeness. A corrupt stock produced a corrupt offspring. Hence all the posterity of Adam, Christ only excepted, have derived corruption from their original parent, not by imitation, as the Pelagians of old asserted, but by the propagation of a vicious nature. Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto, and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, or to dispose themselves to reformation. (III–IV.2–3) •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why is the idea that people are born innocent appealing to some people?
- 2. What is Pelagianism, and why has the church historically rejected it?
- 3. Why do you think it is important to affirm how Adam's sin affected everyone's standing before God, such that no one is innocent?
- 4. What statements in the Canons of Dort do you find most condemning of our fallen condition? Why should we speak so frankly about how bad we are by nature?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"The Battle for Grace Alone" by R.C. Sproul

"The Fall" from Dust to Glory: An Overview of the Bible with R.C. Sproul

"The First Controversy: Augustine vs. Pelagius" by Keith A. Mathison

"God's Just Judgment" from Psalm 51 with R.C. Sproul

"Man" by Ligonier Ministries

"The Pelagian Captivity of the Church" from Willing to Believe with R.C. Sproul

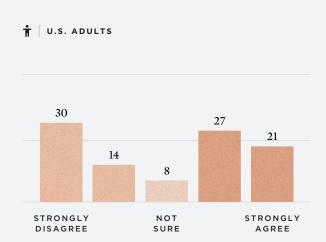
"Who Was Pelagius?" on 5 Minutes in Church History with Stephen J. Nichols

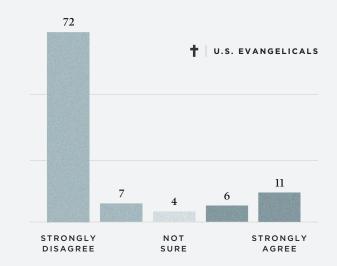
### QUOTE

"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

—Psalm 51:5

# THE BIBLE, LIKE ALL SACRED WRITINGS, CONTAINS HELPFUL ACCOUNTS OF ANCIENT MYTHS BUT IS NOT LITERALLY TRUE.





THE ROOT OF THE MISTAKE in this statement is the assumption that the Bible is one among many in the broad category of "sacred writings." Christians reject that premise. The "sacred" writings of other religions are nothing more than the works of human imagination. Holy Scripture, on the other hand, is absolutely unique in that it is *theopneustos* or "God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3:16). Above and behind its human authors stands the divine Author (2 Peter 1:20–21). It is, therefore, the very Word of God.

The phrase "literally true" is often used by Christians in ambiguous ways that can cause confusion. Everything the

divine Author intended to affirm as true in Scripture is true, but sometimes the divine Author chose to use metaphors and other figurative language to teach these truths. Isaiah 55:12, for example, speaks of a time in the future when the hills will sing and the trees will clap their hands. That which God intends to teach here is true, but He uses figurative (nonliteral) language to do so. As John Calvin said about the language in this verse, "They are metaphors, by which he shows that all the creatures bow to the will of God, and rejoice and lend their aid to carry on his work." •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What do you think is the motivation behind describing accounts in the Bible as myths?
- 2. Why is it incorrect to place the Bible in the same category as other "sacred writings"? What makes something sacred? Why is the Bible sacred?
- 3. What is the difference between something being "literally true" and being "true" even if figurative language is used?
- 4. What are the implications for Christian belief and life if the Bible were mythical and not true?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"An Historic Faith" by R.C. Sproul

**Knowing Scripture** with R.C. Sproul

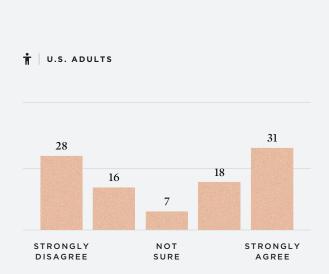
"The Neo-Orthodox View of Scripture (Part 1)" and "The Neo-Orthodox View of Scripture (Part 2)" from The Doctrine of Scripture with R.C. Sproul

"The Word of God" by Ligonier Ministries

### QUOTE

"From the opening chapters of Genesis to the end of the book of Revelation, the entire dynamic of redemption takes place within the broader setting of real space and time, of concrete history." —R.C. Sproul

# THE BIBLE IS 100% ACCURATE IN ALL THAT IT TEACHES.



TO 10 1 STRONGLY NOT STRONGLY DISAGREE SURE AGREE

affirm this statement is to substitute the word *God* for *the Bible* in the statement. God, of course, is 100 percent accurate in all that He teaches. No Christian would deny that statement, but is the substitution of those words legitimate? Yes, because the Bible is God's Word. Paul writes: "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (2 Tim. 3:16). Peter explains how this relates to the human authors: "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

God, then, is the primary author of Scripture, and His Word is truth (John 17:17). He cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18). Based on the fact that Holy Scripture is God-breathed, the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy states, "We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses" (article 11).

To understand what "100 percent accurate" means, we also have to keep in mind other relevant facts about Scripture. For example, God accurately reveals some truths by means of figurative language. This means that to understand what the Bible is accurately teaching, it is absolutely necessary to understand the various genres found in Scripture. Poetry, for example, is not interpreted in the same way that historical prose is interpreted. Both are accurate, but each follows different rules appropriate to the genre. Furthermore, some of what is found in the biblical prose narratives are records of sinful thoughts, words, and deeds. These sins are accurately reported, but they are not commended.

In short, Scripture is the authoritative Word of God, and everything God intended to teach in it is 100 percent accurate. Readers, however, have to understand some of the different ways that He taught truths in the Bible. God is always accurate. Our interpretations sometimes are not. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What is the relationship between God and His Word? How should that inform how we approach this survey statement and the Bible itself when we read it?
- 2. What biblical genres are most difficult for you to interpret and why?
- 3. How can Christians grow in their ability to interpret Scripture accurately and faithfully?
- 4. What dangers arise from denying the complete truthfulness of Scripture?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"The Authority of Scripture, Part 2: The Doctrine of Inerrancy" in Why We Trust the Bible with Stephen J. Nichols

### The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

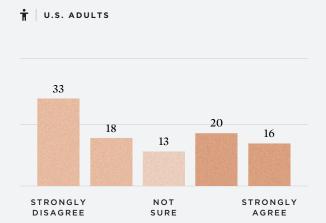
"Infallibility & Inerrancy" from Foundations: An Overview of Systematic Theology with R.C. Sproul

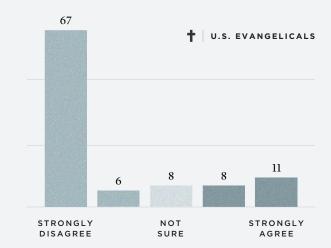
"Inspiration, Infallibility, and Inerrancy" from Hath God Said? with R.C. Sproul

### QUOTE

"We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses." —The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

# 18 MODERN SCIENCE DISPROVES THE BIBLE.





whether it is true, we have to take a step back and look at the various relationships among aspects of God's creation, God's Word, and the human interpretations of both. God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them (Gen. 1:1). God also breathed out the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16). God reveals Himself in both (Rom. 1:19–20; Ex. 34:6–7). God's revelation of Himself in His created works is called *general revelation*. His revelation of Himself in Scripture is called *special revelation*. Since God is the One revealing Himself in both, His general revelation and His special revelation cannot contradict each other. Things get more complicated, however, when we bring fallible human beings into the picture.

Human beings can study the stuff of creation (the works of God's hands) and/or what God reveals about Himself in those works. The natural sciences study the stuff of creation (stars, rocks, oceans, animals, energy, molecules, etc.). Natural theology studies what can be known of God through a consideration of these created things. In a similar way, human beings can also study the materials used to write the Bible and/or what God reveals about Himself in the Bible. Papyrology, for example, studies the physical materials used to write the Bible (papyrus, inks, etc.). The fields of biblical theology and systematic theology study what can be

known about God through a consideration of the content of the biblical texts. Because all these studies are carried out by fallible human beings, the results of any of them can be mistaken. Natural scientists and natural theologians can each misinterpret the stuff of creation in their own particular ways. Papyrologists and theologians can each misinterpret Scripture in their own particular ways.

Modern science, the fallible human study of creation, cannot disprove the Bible, which is God's special revelation. The only thing that science can potentially disprove is fallible human interpretations of the biblical text, but it has to be remembered that the scientists are also fallible and capable of misinterpretation. Scientists can disprove incorrect interpretations of creation by other scientists. Sometimes science can disprove incorrect interpretations of the Bible. If, for example, someone reads Revelation 7:1 and its language about the four corners of the earth and concludes that the earth is actually a flat square, then the natural science that studies the planet God created can correct that misinterpretation and help us see that Revelation must be speaking metaphorically here. Science cannot disprove the Bible, but it can occasionally disprove faulty human interpretations of the Bible that touch on the stuff of creation.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What is the difference between general revelation and special revelation? To what degree is God revealed in both (see Rom. 1:19–20)?
- 2. Can general and special revelation ever contradict one another? Why or why not? What does this mean for our approach to science?
- 3. What might be the case if science and Scripture ever seem to contradict?
- 4. How can we affirm both the value of scientific inquiry and the authority of Scripture?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"All Truth Is God's Truth" by R.C. Sproul

"The Christian and Science" by R.C. Sproul

"Christians Need Not Fear Scientific Inquiry" by R.C. Sproul

"<u>Does Science Contradict the Biblical Doctrine of Creation?</u>" with Stephen J. Nichols on *Ask Ligonier* 

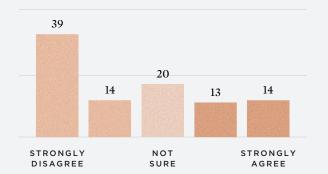
A Reformed Approach to Science and Scripture by Keith A. Mathison

### QUOTE

"Let every good and true Christian understand that wherever truth may be found, it belongs to his Master." —Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 

## GOD CHOSE THE PEOPLE HE WOULD SAVE BEFORE HE CREATED THE WORLD.

### TU.S. ADULTS

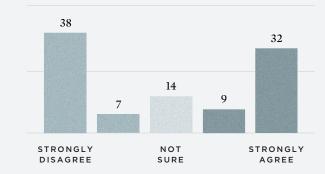


THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION has been at the center of controversy in the church for centuries, but this is not due to a lack of explicit teaching in Scripture. From beginning to end, Scripture places the salvation of sinners in the sovereign hands of God. God reveals in His Word that He sovereignly works all things according to His will (Eph. 1:11). He also reveals that those who are saved are saved not because of their works but solely on the basis of God's grace (2 Tim. 1:8-9). We are taught by God's Word that His election unto salvation occurred before the creation of the world (Eph. 1:3–6; 2 Tim. 1:9). Those whom God predestined for salvation before the foundation of the world He calls in time (Rom. 8:28) and draws to Christ (John 6:44). As creatures of God and as sinners, deserving of God's wrath, we have no right to question the ethics of election (Rom. 9:20). We know God is good and that all He does is good. When we do not fully understand something, that knowledge alone should be enough for us.

The Canons of Dort helpfully explain the nature of God's work of election:

Before the foundation of the world, by sheer grace, according to the free good pleasure of his will, he chose in

### **†** U.S. EVANGELICALS



Christ to salvation a definite number of particular people out of the entire human race, which had fallen by its own fault from its original innocence into sin and ruin. Those chosen were neither better nor more deserving than the others, but lay with them in the common misery. He did this in Christ, whom he also appointed from eternity to be the mediator, the head of all those chosen, and the foundation of their salvation. (1.7)

Our response to the biblical doctrine of election should be one of humility rather than arrogance. It is a mystery we can barely begin to fathom. With Paul, we should cry out:

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. (Rom. 11:33–36) \( \infty \)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. In your experience, why have you or people you have known struggled with the doctrine of election?
- 2. How does election make sense of the Bible's language about God's grace?
- 3. Should we evangelize people if God has already elected them to salvation? Why or why not?
- 4. What responses should godly reflection on the doctrine of election evoke in us? Which have you experienced and why?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

**Chosen by God** by R.C. Sproul

"<u>Election & Reprobation</u>" from Foundations: An Overview of Systematic Theology with R.C. Sproul

"Limited Atonement" from What Is Reformed Theology? with R.C. Sproul

**Predestination Collection** by Daniel R. Hyde

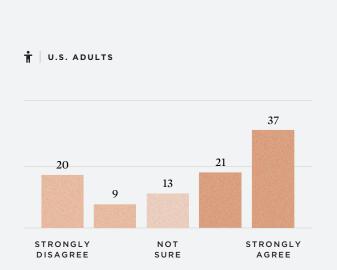
"TULIP and Reformed Theology: Limited Atonement" by R.C. Sproul

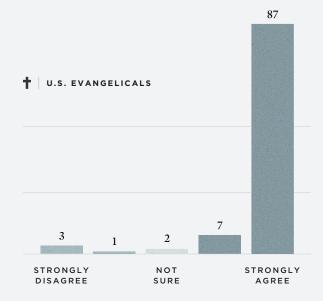
"TULIP and Reformed Theology: Unconditional Election" by R.C. Sproul

### QUOTE

"He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will." —Ephesians 1:4–5

## HELL IS A REAL PLACE WHERE CERTAIN PEOPLE WILL BE PUNISHED FOREVER.





**CHRIST HIMSELF SAID** more about the doctrine of hell than anyone else in Scripture. If Christians, by definition, are those who follow Christ, we cannot simply ignore what He said on this subject. Jesus Himself spoke of hell as a fearful reality, a place of eternal punishment for those who die without faith and remain unrepentant.

Jesus speaks of hell as a reality in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:22, 29–30). A little later He says: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (10:28). Jesus describes hell as a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth (13:42).

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He says physical mutilation would be preferable to hell (18:8–9; Mark 9:43). Regarding how long the punishment of hell will last, Jesus says that it is as eternal as the bliss of heaven will be for the redeemed (Matt. 25:46; John 3:36). The same word describes the duration of both.

Jesus, who would know better than anyone else, told us in no uncertain terms that hell is real, that hell is eternal, and that hell awaits all who reject Him. We may find this teaching disconcerting. We may find it disturbing. But if we reject it, we are calling Jesus untruthful.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why do you think the doctrine of hell is controversial? Why is it significant that Jesus spoke more about hell than any other person in Scripture?
- 2. Read one of Jesus' descriptions of hell in Matthew 8:5–13. What does this passage reveal about the only means of escape?
- 3. How does hell relate to God's character?
- 4. What are the problems of downplaying or denying the reality of hell?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"5 Things You Should Know about Hell" by Aaron L. Garriott

"Annihilation or Eternal Punishment?" by Robert Peterson

"The Disappearance of Hell" by John MacArthur

**Hell** with R.C. Sproul

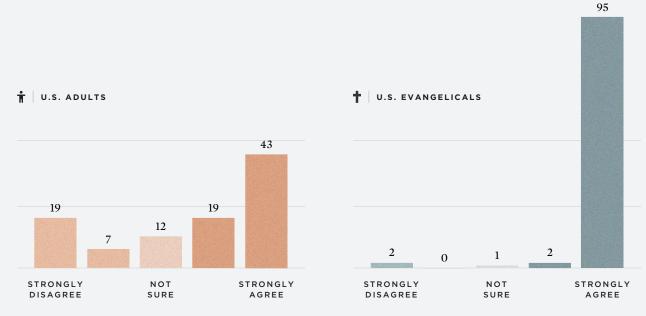
Hell on Trial: The Case for Eternal Punishment by Robert Peterson

"What Does the Bible Teach About Heaven and Hell?" from Facing the Last Enemy: Death and the Christian with Guy Prentiss Waters

### QUOTE

"Almost all the biblical teaching about hell comes from the lips of Jesus." -R.C. Sproul

## THERE WILL BE A TIME WHEN JESUS CHRIST RETURNS TO JUDGE ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIVED.



IN THE NICENE CREED, Christians confess that we believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, who after His death and resurrection "ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead." This creedal statement is a concise summary of biblical doctrine. The biblical account of the ascension of Christ is found in Acts 1:9. The same passage promises that Jesus will return at some unspecified time in the future (Acts 1:11). Peter's sermon in Acts 2 speaks of Christ's being seated at the right hand of the Father (vv. 34–36). That is where He is now. He has received His kingdom and all authority in heaven and on earth (Dan. 7:13–14; Matt. 28:18). He is now putting all enemies beneath His feet (1 Cor. 15:25).

Paul's most extensive discussion of the future second advent of Christ is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18, but he

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supplements it in other places such as 1 Corinthians 15. As Paul explains, at the second advent of Christ, the dead in Christ will be raised first, and then those Christians who are alive at the time of His return will be caught up with Him (1 Thess. 4:16–17). The dead in Christ will be raised imperishable, and those who are alive will be changed (1 Cor. 15:52). At the final judgment, Jesus will be the judge (John 5:22; Acts 10:42; Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10). The nature and results of this final judgment are vividly described in Revelation 20:11–15. All stand before the Great White Throne. Those whose names are not found written in the Book of Life are cast into the lake of fire. The redeemed will enter a new heaven and new earth, where they will be face-to-face with the Lord forever (Rev. 22:1–5). ♦

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How can the reality of judgment be used for evangelism? How does it connect to the gospel?
- 2. How should we live in light of Christ's second coming and judgment?
- 3. Do you get the impression from Scripture that people will get a second chance to make things right before judgment? Why or why not?
- 4. Why should Christians rejoice when reflecting on judgment and Christ's second coming?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"The Coming Judgment" on Things Unseen with Sinclair B. Ferguson

"<u>The Final Judgment</u>" from Foundations: An Overview of Systematic Theology with R.C. Sproul

"The Final Judgment" from Blessed Hope: The Book of Revelation with W. Robert Godfrey

"The Final Judgment" by Ligonier Ministries

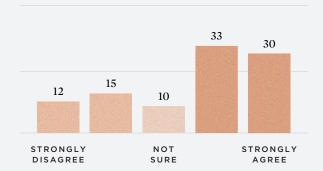
"What Does the Bible Teach About the Final Judgment?" from Facing the Last Enemy: Death and the Christian with Guy Prentiss Waters

### QUOTE

"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only... Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." —Matthew 24:36, 42

## WORSHIPING ALONE OR WITH ONE'S FAMILY IS A VALID REPLACEMENT FOR REGULARLY ATTENDING CHURCH.

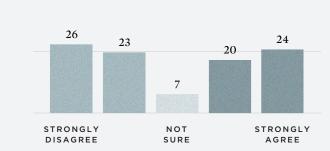
### **★** U.S. ADULTS



WORSHIPING ALONE and with one's family is encouraged in Scripture and in the Reformed tradition. In fact, the Westminster Assembly produced a short Directory for Family Worship that explains both. We see the beginnings of family worship very early in Scripture during the patriarchal period under the leadership of men such as Abraham, who was required to circumcise the males in his household (Gen. 17). At the time of the exodus, each family was to observe the Passover in their home (Ex. 12:3, 26–27). All families were to teach their children the law (Deut. 6:6–7). Jewish worship became more institutionalized with the establishment of the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the sacrifices, but individual worship, family worship, and corporate worship were all observed. After the destruction of the temple, the synagogue was established as a form of corporate worship and was still in existence at the time of Christ and the early church (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; Acts 13:5; 17:7).

All three forms of worship are still to be practiced today. As individuals, we are to worship God in private prayer (Matt. 6:6). As families, we are to continue to worship together (Acts 16:15). But neither of these replaces corporate worship.

### **↑** U.S. EVANGELICALS



Given the long Jewish history of corporate worship and the fact that the first converts to Christ were Jews (2:41), God would have to have stated clearly that a radical change had taken place in what He expected if corporate worship had suddenly been made optional for Christians. This did not happen. And the early church "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (v. 42).

Paul's writings assume corporate worship. In 1 Corinthians 11:18, he writes, "For, in the first place, when you come together as a church . . ." It is assumed that the Corinthian Christians will be coming together to meet as a church. The same is assumed in 1 Corinthians 14:23 when Paul discusses worship in the corporate gatherings. Corporate worship is required for differently gifted believers to build one another up. It is why the author to the Hebrews writes,

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Heb. 10:24–25)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Is private and family worship important? Why or why not?
- 2. Are private and family worship enough? Why or why not?
- 3. How does the Bible provide a pattern of corporate worship among God's people, assume it, and command it?
- 4. What are some aspects of worship that are only possible corporately?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

<u>Created for Worship</u> with Jason Helopoulos

"How Should We Then Worship?" by R.C. Sproul

**Let Us Worship God: Why We Worship the Way We Do** by Derek W.H. Thomas

"Worship" by Ligonier Ministries

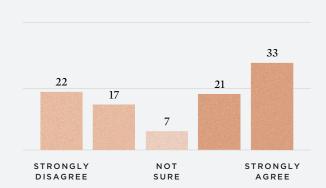
**Worship** with R.C. Sproul

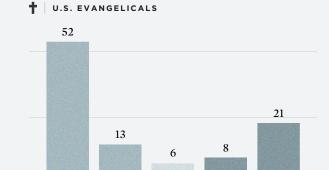
### QUOTE

"There is no Lone Ranger Christianity." —Jason Helopoulos

### CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT ALLOW THEIR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS TO INFLUENCE THEIR POLITICAL DECISIONS.

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STRONGLY

AGREE

STRONGLY

DISAGREE

IN THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTEXT, this statement speaks most directly to the post-Enlightenment secularist view of the relation between church and state. The secular view, which is widely assumed in the West, considers religious faith a purely private affair that should have no place in the public square. In other words, secularism insists that Christians should not express their beliefs publicly, nor should they take stances on political issues based on their Christian faith.

Scripture does not allow Christians to remain silent about their beliefs, and it encourages them to be salt and light in the midst of fallen cultures (Matt. 5:13–16), but Christians disagree on exactly how they should speak to the political and cultural issues they encounter. One reason for this is that Christians come from all tribes, tongues, and nations. They exist and have existed in a huge variety of cultures and countries. Each nation, each political structure, and

each culture is different. Scripture does not provide detailed instructions on how Christians should interact with every potential kind of political and cultural context that might arise in history. It provides general principles, and Christians have to use biblically informed wisdom to apply those principles in their specific context. Sometimes they disagree on how best to do that.

In addition to learning the general principles of the law to know what is good and what is just, we can also learn by studying the biblical examples of men such as Joseph and Daniel who served pagan rulers and remained faithful to God. We can learn from the prophets who publicly called out both Israelite and pagan rulers when they were in sin. We can learn from the example of Paul and the other Apostles who faithfully proclaimed the gospel and established the church in the midst of the pagan Roman Empire. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why is the secularist view about the relationship between church and state out of accord with a biblical worldview?
- 2. How can we discern when and how to speak publicly about political or cultural matters? What should be our tone and intention?
- 3. What are some key issues where Christian ethics and politics often intersect? Can Christians remain silent about these issues?
- 4. How and to what extent can Christians maintain unity in the church even when they differ on key issues?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"Citizens of Heaven" by Keith A. Mathison

**Church and State** with R.C. Sproul

*Truth and Consequence* with R. Albert Mohler

"Principles for Voting" by R.C. Sproul

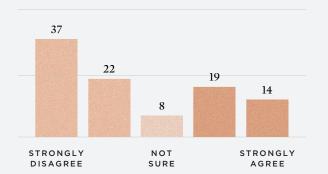
### QUOTE

"When you enter the voting booth, don't leave your Christianity in the parking lot."

-R.C. Sproul

### EVERY CHRISTIAN HAS AN OBLIGATION TO JOIN A LOCAL CHURCH.

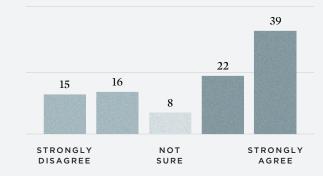
### TU.S. ADULTS



EVERY CHRISTIAN HAS an obligation to join a local church because every Christian has an obligation to faithfully follow Christ, and the local church is the community Christ Himself has provided for us to fulfill that obligation. It is important to note that we are not saying that joining a local church is necessary for salvation. There have been circumstances (such as that of the thief on the cross) in which joining a local church was not possible. These are rare exceptions, however, and rare exceptions are not the rule. The norm as described throughout the New Testament is Christians' being a part of a local church. It is simply assumed that this is what true Christians will do (1 Cor. 11:18), and neglecting it is strongly warned against (Heb. 10:25).

All true believers are united to Christ, who is the Head of the church, so whether we like it or not, we are part of the universal invisible church (Eph. 5:23). But that universal church exists in local gatherings of flesh-and-blood believers. Most of Paul's letters are addressed to such specific local churches, whether in Rome, Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, etc. The seven letters in Revelation 2–3 are likewise addressed to specific local churches. There is no debate in the New

### **†** U.S. EVANGELICALS



Testament over whether the existence of these local congregations of believers is a good thing. There is also no suggestion that being a part of one is optional.

The church is the bride of Christ, and Christ loves the church. He loves the universal church (Eph. 5:25), and He loves the local church (Rev. 3:9). To refuse to join that which Christ loves is not only to despise His bride (1 Cor. 11:22) but to show contempt to Jesus Himself. The Christianity of the Bible, the Christianity that Jesus founded, is not a kind of individual mysticism. It involves a community of forgiven sinners bearing one another's burdens. Do the people in these local churches behave perfectly? No. Simply reread Paul's letters to such churches. He repeatedly points out disobedience, false doctrine, and foolishness.

To be in communion with Christ is to be in communion with the saints. Most of us know we cannot say we love God and hate our brother (1 John 4:20), but what many of us don't seem to understand is that refusing to join the local church indicates some level of contempt for our brothers and sisters in Christ. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Read John 15:12, Romans 12:10 and 15:7, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Ephesians 4:2, 1 Peter 4:9, and 1 John 1:7. Would these commands be possible apart from the church? Why or why not?
- 2. How might baptism and the Lord's Supper reinforce the idea that being part of a local church is necessary for Christians?
- 3. How could not joining a church bring dishonor to Christ? Should we join a church even if it may be difficult in some ways? Why or why not?
- 4. What are the benefits that you have experienced in being part of a church?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

Church Membership, Discipline, and Apostasy, Tabletalk (August 2024)

**What Is the Church?** by R.C. Sproul

"How Can We Persuade Someone That Church Membership Is Important?" with Sinclair B. Ferguson on *Ask Ligonier* 

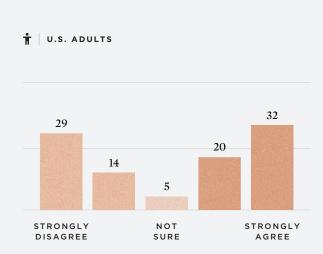
"Is Church Membership Necessary?" with Stephen J. Nichols on Ask Ligonier

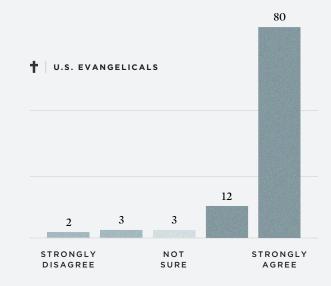
Why Should I Join a Church? by R.C. Sproul

### QUOTE

"To those to whom [God] is a Father, the church must also be a mother." —John Calvin, *The Institutes of Christian Religion* 

# 25 SEX OUTSIDE OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE IS A SIN.





GOD TAKES SEXUAL IMMORALITY very seriously. Over and over, in both the Old and New Testaments, sexual immorality of all kinds is strongly condemned (e.g., Lev. 18; 1 Cor. 6:12–20) and judged (e.g., Gen. 19). Christians are commanded to abstain from sexual immorality (1 Thess. 4:3). In fact, we are to flee from it (1 Cor. 6:18). Why? Because sexual sin is a sin against our bodies, which are united to Christ (1 Cor. 6:15) and are a temple of the Holy Spirit (v. 19).

Marriage is a creation ordinance designed to establish a covenantal bond of faithfulness and unity between a man and a woman and to provide a place for the procreation and raising of children. The marriage bond is an earthly image of the covenantal relationship between God and His people (Isa. 54:5; Jer. 2:2). This is why Israel's apostasy is often compared to adultery (e.g., Jer. 3:1; Ezek. 16:14–63; Hos. 1:2). The same analogy is carried over into the New Testament when

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marriage is used as an image of the relationship between Christ and the church (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:21–24).

Sexual intercourse is reserved for marriage because of the unity it creates between a man and a woman. As Jesus explained, the man and the woman "become one flesh" (Matt. 19:5). That unity in the flesh is built on the covenantal bond of unity established by the covenant of marriage. Sex without the marriage bond creates a union of the flesh without the corresponding covenantal union. This is why fornication is contrasted with marriage in Scripture (e.g., 1 Cor. 7; Heb. 13:4). Those who are unable to control their sexual desires are to get married and not commit fornication (1 Cor. 7:2); we are warned that fornicators will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9–10). Those who have committed this sin are not to attempt to justify it. They are called to repent and confess their sin (1 John 1:9). •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why are we to flee from sexual immorality? What are some practical ways to avoid sexual temptation?
- 2. How are adultery and fornication particularly grievous among Christians?
- 3. In what ways have you seen extramarital sexual relations wreak havoc in families and society?
- 4. How is God's wisdom displayed in His providing marriage as a place for sexual intimacy?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

A Field Guide on Gender and Sexuality by Ligonier Ministries

The Christian Sexual Ethic, Tabletalk (November 2015)

"Marriage and Family" by Ligonier Ministries

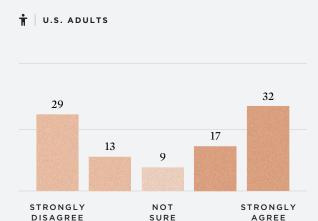
Sex Within a Context with R.C. Sproul

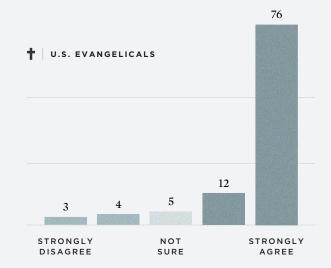
"What Does the Bible Say about Sex Outside of Marriage?" by Aaron L. Garriott

### QUOTE

"Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous." —Hebrews 13:4

## 26 ABORTION IS A SIN.





ABORTION IS SIN BECAUSE murder is sin (Ex. 20:13; Rev. 21:8). Murder is the unjust killing of a human being. Abortion is murder because abortion is the unjust killing of a human being. Every embryology text on every college and university campus states that the fetus is a genetically distinct individual human being from the moment the sperm cell fertilizes the ovum. In other words, conception is the point in the reproductive process when a new individual human being exists. The fetus, therefore, is not a "potential" human being or a "potential" life. It is an actual genetically distinct human being in its earliest and most defenseless stages of development.

This means that abortion is not merely an abstract debate over a woman's right to choose. That choice involves the life or death of another individual human being. Abortion is not merely a private medical decision involving a woman and her doctor. It always involves a third distinct human being as well. Abortion is not merely the ending of a pregnancy. Abortion is the murder of a human being. Abortion is not a "right" because no one has the right to kill these human beings any more than they have the right to kill any other human beings. No one has the "right" to commit murder.

Many of those who used to defend abortion by claiming that the fetus is not a human being have been forced by science to abandon that argument. Many of them now grant that the fetus is a human being but deny that it is truly a person. In this way, they follow in the footsteps of racists and genocidal mass murderers of the past who have justified their sins and crimes by denying the personhood of those they hurt or killed.

Like those Europeans and Americans who denied that Africans are truly persons and like the Nazis who denied that Jews are truly persons, the pro-abortionists of today deny that children in the womb are truly persons. Because their definition of personhood is arbitrary and not grounded in anything objective, its boundaries depend solely on the whims of those in power. In some places, the mentally handicapped and those suffering from a variety of illnesses and injuries involving the brain are also in danger of being removed from the category of "persons."

Abortion is quite simply evil. It is a wickedness that stems from our culture's lust, narcissism, and pride. ◆

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How should Christians respond to the view that abortion is a matter of choice? How does an emphasis on choice miss the true issue behind abortion?
- 2. Why is it important how we define what it means to be a person when dealing with questions about abortion? At what point do you believe that someone becomes a person?
- 3. What moral and legal implications flow from recognizing a child in the womb as a human being?
- 4. How can the church speak the truth about abortion with both conviction and compassion?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"Abort Abortion: Ethical Schizophrenia" and "Abort Abortion: The Bottom of the Slippery Slope" by Keith A. Mathison

**Abortion** with R.C. Sproul

"Can I Be Forgiven If I Had an Abortion?" by R.C. Sproul

"Protect Human Life" from God's Law and the Christian with R.C. Sproul

"What Does 'Pro-Choice' Mean?" by R.C. Sproul

"What Do We Mean When We Speak of the 'Sanctity of Human Life'?" by R.C. Sproul

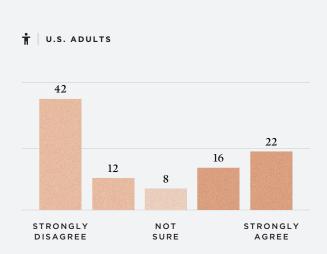
"Why Abortion Is Wrong" by Randy Acorn

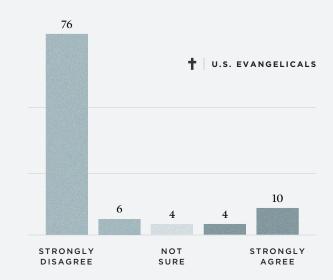
### QUOTE

"Speaking out against abortion is a clear implication of 'Thou shalt not kill."

-Derek W.H. Thomas

### PEOPLE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CHOOSE THEIR GENDER REGARDLESS OF THEIR BIOLOGICAL SEX.





TO UNDERSTAND THE MEANING of this statement, we have to have some grasp of the claims of the transgender movement. Over the last several decades, this movement has become very prominent and very vocal. Transgenderism separates the concepts of sex and gender. According to transgender ideology, sex has to do with biological and physical aspects of a human being (including DNA and sexual anatomy). Gender, on the other hand, has to do with a person's subjective feelings of being masculine or feminine. The transgender person, generally speaking, is one who identifies with a gender that does not correspond to his or her biological sex. Transgenderism thus rejects what it refers to as the "gender binary," the idea that there are only two genders. Instead, gender exists as a spectrum with an almost limitless number of possibilities.

Transgender ideology stands in direct contrast with Scripture, which teaches that human beings are created in the image of God and are created male and female (Gen. 1:27). There are no other options. We cannot choose our biological sex any more than we can choose to be a bird rather than a human. If our subjective experience does not correspond

to the real world for whatever reason, our feelings have to be conformed to reality because reality will never change to match our feelings. If someone claims to be a bird trapped in a human body, he can put on a bird mask, say he's a bird, and even pass laws making everyone else say he's a bird, but if he leaps off the top of a high-rise in an attempt to fly, he is going to die regardless of his feelings.

If the cause of the dissonance between one's feelings and the real world is a disorder in the brain like those that cause delusions, hallucinations, and psychoses, then the disorder should be treated appropriately. If the cause of the dissonance is willful rebellion against God's created order and law, then what is called for is repentance.

Those psychiatrists, psychologists, doctors, legislators, and others who are pushing everyone to affirm that the dissonance is resolved only by denying the real world may be doing so out of fear of the mob, but whatever the reason may be, they are exacerbating the problem exactly as they would be if they told the man who thinks he is a bird that he really can fly. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How are the concepts of sex and gender treated in the transgender movement?
- 2. How is transgender ideology out of accord with Scripture? How might this ideology reflect the reality of the fall?
- 3. How might one's perspective on the nature of truth inform discussions around gender?
- 4. Why is repentance necessary when it comes to transgender ideology and practice? What would repentance look like for those who approve of or practice this sin?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

A Field Guide on Gender and Sexuality by Ligonier Ministries

"The Christian Sexual Ethic" with Rosaria Butterfield and Christopher Yuan from the 2024 National Conference, *The Way, the Truth, and the Life* 

The New Reformation Catechism on Human Sexuality by Christopher J. Gordon

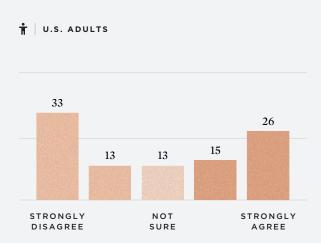
**The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self** by Carl R. Trueman

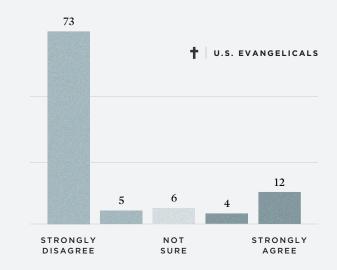
"What Is Transgenderism?" by Rosaria Butterfield

### QUOTE

"Genesis 1:26–28 teaches us, man—male and female—was made as the image and likeness of God. If we get rid of God, then however gradually it happens, man's basic identity also begins to fragment and to crumble." —Sinclair B. Ferguson

## THE BIBLE'S CONDEMNATION OF HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR DOESN'T APPLY TODAY.





SCRIPTURE REPEATEDLY AND clearly condemns homosexual behavior as an abomination. In Leviticus 18:22, for example, homosexual behavior is addressed between child sacrifice and bestiality. In Leviticus 20:13, it is listed alongside incest and bestiality as sins worthy of the death penalty. This indicates that it is among the permanent moral laws of the Old Testament rather than the temporary ceremonial laws found elsewhere in the Pentateuch.

The permanent binding validity of the law against homosexual behavior is confirmed when we discover that it is repeated in the New Testament after the death and resurrection of Christ. In Romans 1:26–27, Scripture speaks of homosexual behavior as a dishonorable passion, an unnatural relation, and a shameless act. All this behavior is a result of God's giving them up to their impure lusts as punishment (1:24–26). Elsewhere Paul says that those who

practice homosexuality will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9–10). He urges his readers not to be deceived about this. Sadly, many contemporary professing Christians are deceiving themselves and others.

Every human faculty has been perverted in one way or another by the fall, and as a result some people are sexually attracted to those of the same sex. Both the desire for sexual and romantic intimacy with a person of the same sex and giving in to the desire are sin. However, there is hope in Christ for those who experience those desires. Redemption includes the restoration of our distorted faculties—our reason and our will and our passions—and it involves putting to death all the works of the flesh. While that restoration may not be fully experienced in this life, those who continue to trust in Christ and turn from sin will one day be freed from all remaining corruption and will stand blameless before Him. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How does the Bible affirm the permanence of God's law against homosexuality?
- 2. How would relativizing the Bible's condemnation of homosexuality make it difficult to rightly interpret the Bible's condemnation of other sins?
- 3. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9–11. Is there hope in Christ for those who struggle with homosexual sin? Why or why not? Should someone who has become a Christian continue to identify with such sin? Why or why not?
- 4. How should believers react to a culture that increasingly redefines sexual morality?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

A Field Guide on Gender and Sexuality by Ligonier Ministries

*Homosexuality* with R.C. Sproul

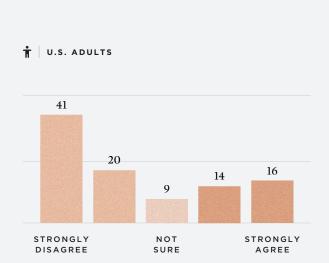
The New Reformation Catechism on Human Sexuality by Christopher J. Gordon

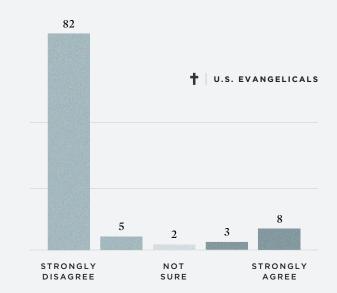
What Does the Bible Teach about Homosexuality? by Kevin DeYoung

### QUOTE

"Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." —1 Corinthians 6:9–11

# GOD IS UNCONCERNED WITH MY DAY-TO-DAY DECISIONS.





GOD HAS GIVEN US instruction in His Word regarding how we are to walk and please Him (1 Thess. 4:1). Walking involves putting numerous small steps together. Likewise, our spiritual walk involves putting numerous small decisions together. God is concerned with our day-to-day decisions because God's will for us is our sanctification (1 Thess. 4:3). He calls us to take up our cross daily and follow Christ (Luke 9:23). To do this daily requires many good daily decisions.

All our decisions are acts of our will. Since our goal is to be more and more conformed to Christ, our goal involves having our wills, by grace, more and more aligned with His will (2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 1:3–5; Phil. 2:12–13; Col. 3:3–10). Our day-to-day decisions, therefore, either contribute to our sanctification or detract from it. For our wills to be aligned with God's will and for our decisions to please Him, we have to know His revealed will, His law. We find His revealed will, His instruction for us, in Scripture (Ps. 119:105; 2 Tim. 3:15–16).

Regarding God's will and our decisions, there are several things we have to understand. For instance, we have to understand that God's law does not tell us what our decision should be in every conceivable circumstance. Scripture doesn't tell you whether you should go to this college or that college, take this job or that job. Generally speaking, God's moral law provides broad principles. Wisdom is required to apply those principles in the innumerable different circumstances that Christians will face. Christians should study both the law and the Wisdom Literature of Scripture to develop the wisdom necessary to make good day-to-day decisions.

A second important point to note is that although God is concerned with our day-to-day decisions, not every decision is a decision between good and bad. Not every decision is of the same kind. "Should I rob this bank or not?" and "Should I have the soup or the salad?" are not the same kind of decisions. One involves a choice between good and evil. The other involves a choice between one good and another good. Eating soup or salad only becomes a sinful choice if you eat without thankfulness to God for that food or you become a glutton. God has numbered the very hairs on our heads (Matt. 10:30). He is certainly concerned with our everyday decisions. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. We might not know God's will for our every decision, but what do we know about God's overarching will for our lives?
- 2. What resources does a Christian have to make good daily decisions?
- 3. In what ways do your minor daily decisions either promote holiness or steer you away from it?
- 4. How should we respond to the reality that God cares about even the small things of our lives?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"5 Things You Should Know about Sanctification" by Nick Batzig

"Discovering God's Will" from *The Basics of the Christian Life* with Sinclair B. Ferguson

Discovering God's Will by Sinclair B. Ferguson

**God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life** by Gene Edward Veith

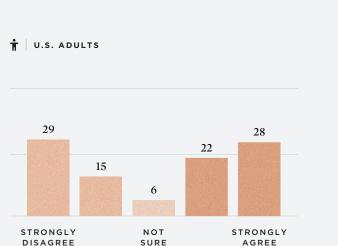
"God's Will and Your Job" by R.C. Sproul

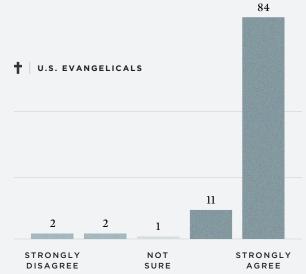
**Knowing God's Will** with R.C. Sproul

### QUOTE

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification." —1 Thessalonians 4:3

### THE BIBLE HAS THE AUTHORITY TO TELL US WHAT WE MUST DO.





TO UNDERSTAND WHY this statement must be affirmed by all faithful Christians, one must understand what the Bible is. Paul explains this in his second letter to Timothy: "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (3:16). The word translated "breathed out by God" is theopneustos. It literally means "God-breathed." In other words, the Bible is the very Word of God. The Bible has the authority to tell us what to do because God has the authority to tell us what to do.

It should go without saying that God has the authority to tell us what to do. He is the Creator of heaven and earth

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(Gen. 1:1; Ps. 146:6). He upholds our very existence (Heb. 1:3). He is King and Lord (Ps. 47:6–7). We are, therefore, His creatures and subjects and owe Him obedience. The living God is also infinitely good (34:8). Because the psalmist recognized the perfect goodness of God, he asked God to teach him His statutes (119:68). The psalmist knew that his Creator had the authority to tell him what to do, and he knew that what God told him to do was good. Jesus also made it abundantly clear that man is to live by every word that comes from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). ◆

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What might someone be wrestling with if he or she questions the truthfulness of this statement?
- 2. Would it be possible to live a life pleasing to God without His Word? Why or why not?
- 3. Read Psalm 19. How does it communicate the authority of God's Word? How does it extol the wisdom of obeying it?
- 4. How would you make an argument for the inspiration and authority of Scripture to convince someone who was skeptical about it?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"The Authority of Scripture, Part 1: The Doctrine of Inspiration" from Why We Trust the Bible with Stephen J. Nichols

"The Authority of Scripture" from Reformation Truths with Michael Reeves

How Does God's Law Apply to Me? by R.C. Sproul

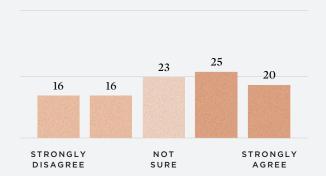
"Scripture for Life: The Sufficiency of Scripture" from Why We Trust the Bible with Stephen J. Nichols

### QUOTE

"The Bible is the Word of God in such a sense that its words, though written by men and bearing indelibly impressed upon them the marks of their human origin, were written nevertheless, under such an influence of the Holy Ghost as to be also the words of God, the adequate expression of His mind and will." —B.B. Warfield, *Revelation and Inspiration* 

### RELIGIOUS BELIEF IS NOT ABOUT OBJECTIVE TRUTH.

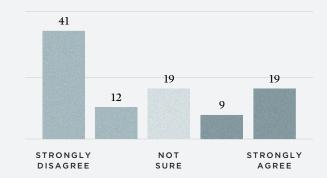
### TU.S. ADULTS



**THE USE OF THE WORDS** *belief* and *truth* can be confusing to Christians today because these words have different connotations to different people. Belief is often seen as something one does that is opposed to reason. Truth, if it is admitted to exist at all, is often relativized and considered to be someone's mere opinion.

In classic theological works, opinion, doubt, knowledge, and belief were all ways of responding to a proposition. Opinion meant that you assented to the truth of the proposition while holding out the possibility that it might be false. Doubt meant denying the truth of the proposition while holding out the possibility that it might be true. Knowledge meant assenting to the truth of the proposition on the basis of direct experience. Natural belief meant assenting to the truth of the proposition on the basis of another person's testimony. In this way of thinking, belief, by definition, is not the same

### + U.S. EVANGELICALS



as opinion, but both are addressing objective truth. Faith is similar to natural belief, but it is not something that fallen man can do. It is the gift of God.

Jesus Christ claimed to be God incarnate and the only way of salvation (John 14:6). That proposition is either objectively true or it isn't. Every religion in the world either affirms the truth of Christ's claims or else denies it. This means that ultimately every religion is about objective truth. Every religious claim is either objectively true or objectively false based on where it stands in relation to the claims of Jesus Christ. Individuals may think that Christ's claims are true while holding out the possibility that they are false. They may think His claims are false while holding out the possibility that they are true. Neither opinion nor doubt, however, changes the fact that His claims are objectively true.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How does truth relate to reality? Is reality subjective? Why or why not?
- 2. How might the very existence of God, the world, and other people be an argument for the objective nature of truth?
- 3. Why can't every religion be true? What are some examples that you can think of to support this principle?
- 4. How have you experienced people misunderstanding the relationship between belief and reason?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

**Defending Your Faith:** An Overview of Classic Apologetics with R.C. Sproul

"God and Truth" from Questions about God with R.C. Sproul

*Truth and Consequence* with R. Albert Mohler

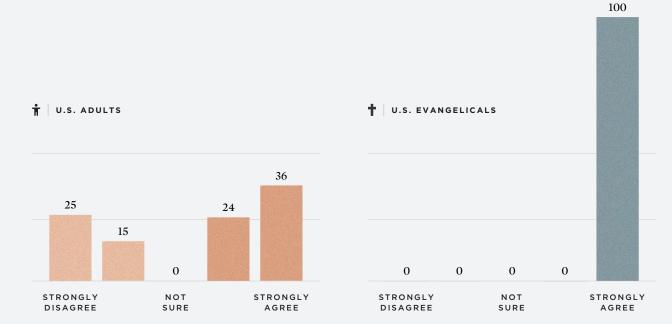
**Truth: Does It Matter?** with R.C. Sproul

"What Is Truth?" from Classic Collection with R.C. Sproul

### QUOTE

"Truth is that which corresponds to reality . . . Truth is therefore objective." -R.C. Sproul

### THE BIBLE IS THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY FOR WHAT I BELIEVE.



**THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY** God-breathed special revelation that we possess (2 Tim. 3:16–17), so it has unique and final authority. Jesus, the Son of God, appealed to the Bible as the highest authority, so we dare not appeal to anything else other than the Bible as the highest authority for our faith and practice (Matt. 5:17–18; 15:1–9; Mark 14:43–49; John 10:35).

The Reformers described this principle as *sola Scriptura*, which means "Scripture alone." It doesn't mean the Bible is the only place we learn truth, but that everything we believe must be tested by Scripture. Our experiences, emotions, and even church practices must be judged by God's Word, not the other way around.

Peter tells us that Scripture is more sure than even seeing Jesus transfigured on the mountain (2 Peter 1:16–21). Jesus Himself treated the Scriptures as the final word in every matter, repeatedly saying "It is written" when facing temptation (Matt. 4:4–10). He also said that Scripture "cannot be broken" (John 10:35). That is how much authority it has.

God speaks clearly in His Word. He tells us who He is, what He has done for us in Christ, and how we are to live. If we ignore or place something else above Scripture, we are not just making a mistake; we are putting another voice in place of God's. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Does *sola Scriptura* mean that there are no other authorities about anything except Scripture? Why or why not?
- 2. How can *sola Scriptura* help us as Christians to be humble and convictional?
- 3. Do you consider it a good thing to have a final authority by which to discern how to feel, what to do, or what to believe? Why or why not?
- 4. Why is it dangerous to have a higher authority than God's Word? What are some examples of things that people look to as authoritative instead of God's Word?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

Scripture Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine by R.C. Sproul

"Scripture Alone" from What Is Reformed Theology? with R.C. Sproul

**The Shape of Sola Scriptura** by Keith A. Mathison

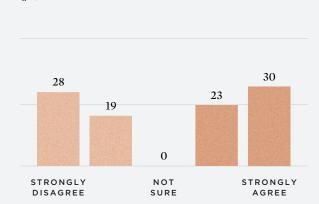
**Sola Scriptura: The Protestant Position on the Bible** by Various Authors

"Sola Scriptura: Martin Luther & The Rediscovery of the Authority of Scripture" from Reformation Profiles with Stephen J. Nichols

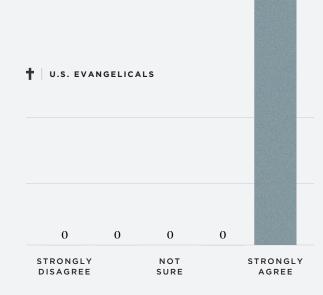
### QUOTE

"We believe that this Holy Scripture contains the will of God completely and that everything one must believe to be saved is sufficiently taught in it. For since the entire manner of service which God requires of us is described in it at great length, no one . . . ought to teach other than what the Holy Scriptures have already taught us." —The Belgic Confession 7

### IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR ME PERSONALLY TO ENCOURAGE NON-CHRISTIANS TO TRUST JESUS CHRIST AS THEIR SAVIOR.



**★** U.S. ADULTS



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**FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST ALONE** is the only way to be reconciled to God (John 14:6; Rom. 5:1). The Apostle Peter declared, "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Since this is true, it follows that sharing the good news of Jesus is one of the most loving and important things a Christian can do.

Before He ascended into heaven, Jesus gave His followers the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). This Great Commission was not just for the Apostles—it is for every Christian. We are all called to be witnesses, just as Jesus named those who were direct eyewitnesses of His resurrection (Luke 24:48;

Acts 1:8). When the Apostles Peter and John were told not to speak any longer about Jesus, they said, "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). Understood this way, evangelism is about being faithful and simply telling the truth.

Evangelism is not about winning arguments or forcing our beliefs on others. Instead, knowing that only God can change hearts, in evangelism we sincerely and humbly offer the truth of the gospel to others and call for them to trust in Jesus. This is a privilege, for God makes us participants in His work of redemption, using the words and lives of His people to bring others to faith. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Is evangelism the duty of every Christian? Why or why not?
- 2. How does evangelism relate to the gospel?
- 3. Is there any one way or style to evangelize someone? What does faithful evangelism look like? (See, for example, 1 Peter 3:15.)
- 4. What have been your greatest challenges when it comes to evangelism?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

**Defending Your Faith:** An Overview of Classic Apologetics with R.C. Sproul

"Evangelism and Missions" by Ligonier Ministries

**Soul Winning**, *Tabletalk* (September 2017)

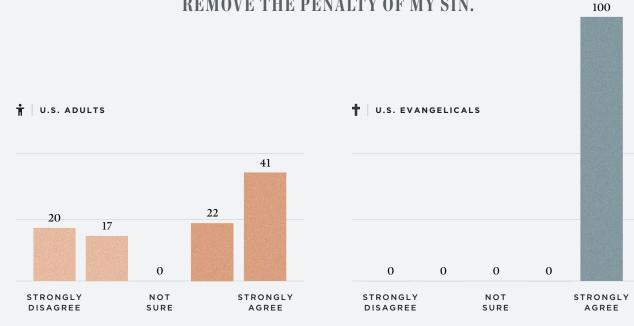
The Theology of Evangelism, Tabletalk (June 2012)

What Is the Great Commission? by R.C. Sproul

### QUOTE

"The whole task of evangelism is merely to repeat to the world what God Himself has first declared." -R.C. Sproul

### JESUS CHRIST'S DEATH ON THE CROSS IS THE ONLY SACRIFICE THAT COULD REMOVE THE PENALTY OF MY SIN.



SINCE THE FALL OF ADAM, all people (except Jesus Christ) have been born in sin and are under the wrath of God. Only Jesus can save us from this wrath, and He does so by His death on the cross, which is a propitiation that turns away God's wrath (Isa. 53; Rom. 1:18–3:26; Heb. 2:17). Nothing but the atoning death of Jesus can take away our sin (Heb. 10:1–18).

We must recognize that sin is not just a mistake or a bad habit—it is rebellion against a holy God. Because God is perfectly just, every sin must be judged. The Bible tells us, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), and because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:23), we cannot save ourselves. We cannot look to another sinner to save us either. Only someone who is perfectly righteous can satisfy God's justice.

This is why Jesus came into the world. He is the sinless Son of God who lived a perfect life and willingly went to the

cross to bear the penalty for the sins of His people. On the cross, Jesus took the wrath of God that we deserved. Isaiah 53:5 says, "He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities."

No other sacrifice can remove sin. The animal sacrifices in the Old Testament were only shadows pointing forward to His true sacrifice (Heb. 10:1–4). Other religions may speak of making peace with God through effort or rituals, but none offer a Savior who took the full penalty of our sin.

Jesus' final words on the cross were, "It is finished" (John 19:30), meaning the work of atonement was complete. Hebrews 10:14 tells us, "By a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." His one sacrifice is enough—and it is the only one that can truly save. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why is sin and guilt a problem?
- 2. What ways do people try to atone for their sins or relieve their guilt apart from Christ?
- 3. Read Hebrews 9:11–10:18. How does Jesus make sense of and surpass the priesthood and sacrifices of the Old Testament?
- 4. Why is Jesus' sacrifice sufficient? How do we know it is sufficient?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

"Crucifixion" from What Did Jesus Do? Understanding the Work of Christ with R.C. Sproul

The Great Rescue: Understanding the Saving Work of Christ by R.C. Sproul

"<u>Old Testament Sacrificial System</u>" from *Dust to Glory: An Overview of the Bible* with R.C. Sproul

"Our Great High Priest" from Themes from Hebrews with R.C. Sproul

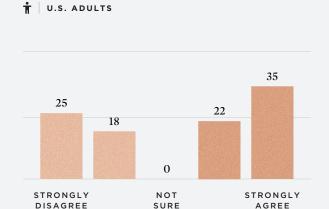
"The Propitiation for Our Sins" on Things Unseen with Sinclair B. Ferguson

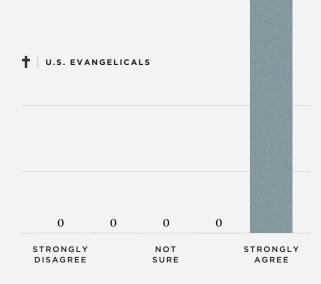
**The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses** by Vern Poythress

### QUOTE

"He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." —Hebrews 9:26

### ONLY THOSE WHO TRUST IN JESUS CHRIST ALONE AS THEIR SAVIOR RECEIVE GOD'S FREE GIFT OF ETERNAL SALVATION.





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a Redeemer (Gen. 3:15). This promised Redeemer is Jesus Christ. He is the eternal Son who took on flesh to live, die, and rise again so that God's people would be counted as righteous. Scripture makes it clear that we are not righteous (Rom. 3:23), and our dilemma is that we cannot stand in the presence of a holy God unless we are righteous. If we are not righteous, then the only righteousness available to us must be the righteousness of another. That righteousness is found in Jesus Christ alone. The good news is that it is freely given to all those who trust in Him for salvation.

We must be careful not to think of our trust in Christ itself as something that merits our salvation. Salvation is a gift

from God and not something we earn. Ephesians 2:8–9 tells us, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." The trust that we have in Christ is itself a gift.

Scripture is clear: "There is salvation in no one else" (Acts 4:12). In order to be saved, we must believe in Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:24–25; Acts 16:25–34). Any attempt to come before a holy God trusting in anything else will lead only to condemnation. The Son of God did not come to be one option among many—He came because He is the *only way*. •

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why might people think that the exclusivity of Christ is offensive?
- 2. What is the difference between knowing about Jesus and truly believing in Him?
- 3. How does approaching God through our moral effort, another religion, or belief in some form of universalism minimize Christ's person and work or challenge His authority?
- 4. How does the fact that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone inform the tone of our evangelism?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

A Field Guide on False Teaching by Ligonier Ministries

"Christ: The Only Way" from Objections Answered with R.C. Sproul

"Is Christ Really the Only Way?" with Stephen J. Nichols, Always Ready: Answers to Tough Questions

"<u>The Truth of the Exclusivity of Christ</u>" with Miguel Núñez at the 2024 National Conference, *The Way, the Truth, and the Life* 

"Universalism and the Exclusivity of Christ" by Paul Levy in *Tabletalk* 

### QUOTE

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." —John 14:6

#### THE STATE OF THE OLOGY. COM

What do you believe about God, His Word, and the world He has made? Your answers will shape every aspect of who you are, what you value, and how you live your life. That's why Ligonier Ministries conducts the State of Theology survey every few years: to discover what Americans believe in order to gain insight into the soul of the nation. In thirty-one questions, the survey probes what people in the United States think about the authority of the Bible, the identity of Jesus, the way of salvation, and more.

In this study guide, discover how the beliefs of Americans measure up to what God has revealed in Scripture. The full results of the 2025 State of Theology are included in a visual format, allowing you to see how U.S. adults and evangelicals responded to every question. In addition, there is clear, succinct commentary on the theology behind the questions, emphasizing what is at stake in each statement and revealing the danger of getting them wrong. There are also questions for reflection and group discussion as well as resources for futher study. The question is, What is the state of your theology?

Ligonier Ministries is an international Christian discipleship organization founded by Dr. R.C. Sproul in 1971 to proclaim, teach, and defend the holiness of God in all its fullness to as many people as possible. Dr. Sproul dedicated his life to helping people grow in their knowledge of God and His holiness, and our desire is to support the church of Jesus Christ by helping Christians know what they believe, why they believe it, how to live it, and how to share it. If you would like to learn more about Ligonier or discover more resources like this one, please visit <u>Ligonier.org</u>.

