

How To T.R.U.S.T. God
Next Steps Personal & Connect Group Devotional Guide
Sermon Series: Are You A Good Neighbor?
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These talking points, questions and scriptures are designed to help you take the next step. Take time with each section. Spread this devotional guide out over days, even the next week so that you can really reflect, meditate, contemplate, and pray. Use your sermon outline's points, Scriptures and Bible to supplement this personal devotional guide:

1. Read Jesus' words in Matthew 22:37-40 in your sermon outline. God says the degree to which we love our "neighbor" — anyone — reflects how much we love Him. What do you think of this and why?
2. For any relationship to have depth, it has to be built on the two pillars of truth and trust. You cannot have trust without truth. But life teaches us and we learn from experience that it takes time to develop trust with anyone as we observed and experience the truth in their life. Probably the number one reason people — even Christians — do not trust God is because they are not in God's Word each day. We don't trust God with our money, with our moods, with our possessions, with our career, with our language, with our attitudes, with our family, with our marriage and etc. How could being in God's Word each day make a difference in this and why?
3. Many people, including Christians do the right thing for the wrong reason. When this happens resentment replaces respect. When have you experienced this in your own life and what happened?
4. When we read or hear certain passages from the Bible, we often do not believe them or trust them:
 - a. Read Philippians 4:19 in your sermon notes. Has there ever been a time in your life that you questioned the truthfulness of this passage? Why?
 - b. Read James 5:14-15 in your sermon notes. When we have a loved one who is sick or who has been diagnosed with a fatal disease, we typically rely on modern medicine. How willing are you to trust this passage even while you are utilizing modern medicine? Do you think it is wise to ignore James 5:14-15? Why or why not?
5. In the movie, A Few Good Men, Col. Nathan R. Jessup, played by Jack Nicholson says to Lt. Daniel Kaffee, played by Tom Cruise, in a military court marital trial, "*You can't handle the truth.*" Do you think this is accurate and this explains why people exaggerate, stretch the truth or flat out lie? Why?
 - a. Read Mark 14:55-56 in your sermon notes in point #1. The religious leaders did everything they could to find something against Jesus at His trial — even getting false witnesses, whose testimonies were in contradiction to each other. Some times we can resent or have problems with someone so much we simply lie about them. Have you ever lied about someone? Why and what happened?
 - b. Read Matthew 28:11-15 in point #1 in your sermon notes. After the Resurrection, the religious leaders bribed the Roman soldiers to lie about it.
 - i. Take your Bible and read 1 Corinthians 15:6. How do you think with so many seeing the Resurrected Jesus, the bribed lies of the religious leaders played out for them?
 - ii. Take your Bible and read Matthew 27:52-53. People were at the funeral and burial of these dead saints who were resurrected along with Jesus. How do you think the religious leaders handled this in terms of their lies and bribery?
6. Read John 8:12 and 1 John 1:5 in your sermon notes under point #1. The world has less a problem with Jesus and more with the Christians who claim to be His followers when we do not live it. How can you be more of the light instead of the darkness that leads to life for people who distrust the Christian faith?
7. Do you think people have given up on the truth because they don't believe anyone can be trusted? Why or why not? Have you?
8. People know that everyone — including Christians — are not perfect. They are just looking for people — especially Christians — to be truthful about their own mistakes, sins, failures, misunderstandings, and etc. When they see Christians covering up or not accepting responsibility or not be truthful, they see hypocrisy. How do you think we overcome this so we can build a bridge to the loss and share Jesus with them?
9. Read John 14:6a and John 16:13a in point #1 in your sermon notes. In John 14:6a, the original Greek New Testament text, what is emphasized is the article — "the." Meaning there is no other way to God or heaven. Yet today, so many people believe so many different things about heaven, the afterlife and etc. Why do you think this has happened and what can you do to impact people differently?
10. In John 16:13a, the Greek New Testament word Jesus uses for "truth" as more than a reference to Christian beliefs and doctrine. It is an emphasis to apply those beliefs and doctrines to your life. Which of these do you need to apply and how can this help you to trust God more? How could it help others?
11. Read Jesus' words in John 17:17 in point #1. These words were prayed by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane just hours before His' arrest, trial, scourging, crucifixion and death. How can Jesus' prayer impact you to trust God more?
12. Read Genesis 2:16-17 and Genesis 4:4-6a in point #1 in your sermon notes. All the serpent (devil) did was twist God's Word. God did not say they could not eat from any tree in the Garden. He told them they could not eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.
 - a. God's prohibition on Adam and Eve was not to create an entrapment, but get them to entrust who they are to God Himself. Do you ever feel that some of God's prohibitions are traps set to get you? If so, why? If not, why?
 - b. What the serpent did was what all good liars do. Good liars mix partial truth with lies and partial truth is far more dangerous than an outright lie. This is why when we live inconsistent lives with God's truth, people see right through it — especially lost people. What we believe is important but what is more important is this: do we apply the truth of God's Word to our lives consistently in ALL areas of our lives? The question is do you? If not, why? What areas of your life do you need to apply God's truth fully to your life?

- c. Read Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23 in point #1 in your sermon notes. Since Adam and Eve sinned, everyone since has been a sinner. Even today, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, counselors and even some pastors throw out the word “sinner” for more politically correct terms. Does this in any way change one’s trust in God and how?
13. Read Numbers 23:19 and Luke 1:37 in point #2. These verses make it clear that God and His Word never, ever change. God does not see how the cultural winds are shifting and changing and then adjusts His truth accordingly. How does this help you trust in God?
14. Read Philippians 4:13 and Philippians 4:19 in point #2. God has made some pretty big promises in His Word, the Bible. These verses emphasize how dependable and reliable God is. Have you ever had a time in your life where you doubted God’s dependency and reliability? What was it and why?
15. The world is more willing to accept the truth of Scripture and us when we stop making excuses and expose our weaknesses, mistakes, failures, vulnerabilities, sins and etc.
 - a. Take your Bible and read James 5:16. When was the last time you did this? If you do not do this, it is because you do not believe God’s Word here. You question the reliability of God’s Word. What would it take for you to do this?
 - b. Read Matthew 5:37 in point #2. One of the reasons people do not trust us is because we promise more than we can deliver. We love God and we want to serve Him, but we over estimate all that is involved. When have you done this?
 - c. Read Proverbs 27:23 and Luke 14:27-32 in point #2. Trust has nothing to do with big or little things. Trust has to do with be reliable in ALL things. What do you need to do to evaluate an opportunity before you commit to it?
 - d. Read 1 Corinthians 15:46 in point #2. Before we can convince people to trust God, before people will believe our spiritual words, they will always first look to see how reliable we are in all our dealings and relationships. How reliable are you in ALL your dealings and relationships?
16. Read Hebrews 13:8 and James 1:17 in point #3. One reason the world does not trust God and does not trust us is because as God’s representatives, our beliefs, words, and action often deviate to being ungodly, unholy, sinful, and hurtful. Where have you seen this happen in you and by others?
17. Read James 2:17 in point #3. When we do not have consistent integrity, the Bible says our faith is dead. Faith that deviates from the truth of Scripture, faith that shows doubt in God, is not real faith and is dead. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
18. Read Ephesians 4:29 and James 3:9-12 in point #3. It has become trendy and culturally acceptable for Christians to use profanity and foul language while at the same time those same “Christians” will show up at church and praise God. Is this an issue for you? How does this impact non-Christians trusting God? Take your Bible and read Colossians 3:8, Ephesians 5:4, Colossians 4:6 and James 3:1-12. What do these verses say about our use of words, language and how that impacts how people trust in God? What do they say about your trust in God?
19. Read Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:1-5 in point #3. God is not saying that all judging is wrong. Everyday we have to size up a moment or a situation or a person. The issue is when we go simply from evaluating a person to devaluing that person. We condemn due to our own sense of false (untrue) self-righteousness. Who are you prone to do this with in situations and why?
20. Read 1 Chronicles 29:17a in point #3. Someone has said that integrity is “*who you are when no one is watching.*” Are you willing to do some self-evaluation here? Look at your personal life, your social life, your on-line life, your work like, your recreational life, your financial life, your family life, your church life, your media life, your spiritual life and etc. Do you have integrity in all of these areas? Explain.
21. James Hudson Taylor, who was a British missionary to China for 51 years and died in 1905, puts it this way: “*If Christ is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all.*” What do you make of his statement and why?
22. Read Leviticus 19:2, 1 Peter 1:16, Hebrews 12:14b, and 1 Peter 1:15 in point #4 as well as the explanation for the Hebrew word translated as “holy.” We are to be a “cut above” everyone else in terms of standards, holiness and godliness. Holiness is not something we do, but a standard we live by for all that we do. This means we cannot obtain holiness on our own. We can only get by spending more time with God each day. Where in your life do you need to grow in your relationship with God so that He helps you to become more holy?
23. Read Isaiah 1:18 and James 4:8a in point #5. There are moments we all wish we could put time in a bottle. When it comes to trusting God and helping others trust God, it is not just the quantity of time that is required, but also the quality of the time. Do you spend quality time with God each day or do you just see it as another thing on the “To Do List” you check off? Explain.
24. Read Revelation 2:3-5 in point #5. God told the church at Ephesus to “repent.” Read the explanation for what this Greek New Testament word means. What is the difference in changing one’s mind verses taking another mind? How would this look for you and how would it help you trust God more?
25. Small groups, whether they are a Sunday School Class or a group that meets either in a home or somewhere else, are one of the best means that helps people trust God more as well as each other. When and where have you experienced this in your own life? If you have not, would you consider joining a small group? Why or why not?