

PERSPECTIVES: A SUMMIT MINISTRIES SERIES



TRUTH

CHANGES EVERYTHING

How People of Faith Can
Transform the World in Times of Crisis

DR. JEFF MYERS



BakerBooks

a division of Baker Publishing Group
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Published by Baker Books
a division of Baker Publishing Group
PO Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287
www.bakerbooks.com

Printed in the United States of America

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Myers, Jeff (Writer on leadership development), author.

Title: Truth changes everything : how people of faith can transform the world in times of crisis / Dr. Jeff Myers.

Description: Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group, [2022] | Series: Perspectives : a summit ministries series

Identifiers: LCCN 2022007701 | ISBN 9781540900371 (paperback) | ISBN 9781540902603 (casebound)

Subjects: LCSH: Church and the world. | Christianity—Influence. | Change—Religious aspects—Christianity. | Truth—Religious aspects—Christianity.

Classification: LCC BR115.W6 M935 2022 | DDC 261—dc23/eng/20220224

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022007701>

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The Point of No Return

Every moment of every day we live in a world-defining conflict. Contrary to what many think, this is not a battle between the religious and the nonreligious, Democrats and Republicans, progressives and conservatives, or blue states and red states. Rather, it is a struggle between two competing views of truth. One says that Truth (capital T) can be known objectively through reason and revelation. It is “total truth” (Nancy Pearcey), “true truth” (Francis Schaeffer) or “real truth” (Dallas Willard).¹ Truth exists always, everywhere, even when we aren’t paying attention or are deceiving ourselves.² The other says that Truth *cannot* be so known; all we have are “truths” (lower case) that are stories we tell ourselves to make sense of our experiences. The first view says that Truth exists independently of our ability to perceive it. The second view says that truths are socially constructed. These two viewpoints, Truth versus truths, vie for first place in forming our answer to the question, “How do we find meaning in a fleeting life?”

From at least the time of the ancient Hebrews, people have believed that Truth exists and can be discovered. Now the balance has tipped in the other direction, with more than half of

Americans of all ages claiming that truths are up to an individual. This belief holds across all identifiable social and political groups. Even among churchgoing, self-identified Christians, the percentage who believe that Truth can be known has shrunk to around 50 percent.³

You and I live in a world where we cannot go a single day without hearing that truths are based on how we see things rather than on what exists to be seen. Truth is not “out there” to be found; it is “in here” to be narrated.

A biblical worldview, one based on the Bible and the writings of Christian thinkers throughout history, has rested firmly on the idea that Truth can be known. It says that Truth isn’t constructed by our experiences and feelings, even though our deepest encounters with reality may indeed fill our senses and change our hearts. Rather, a biblical worldview says that Truth exists and that it is not merely a set of logical propositions or mathematical formulas. It is a person. It is Jesus.

Truth Changes Everything revolves around two goals. The first is to explore the difference between the Truth viewpoint and the truths viewpoint. The second is to answer the “So what?” question. Why does Truth matter? This book will take a unique approach. Some defend Truth by presenting logical arguments. Others bemoan our current age and pine for a return to a time when Truth was given more respect. Yet others poke fun at the flaws in the truths viewpoint. Instead, *Truth Changes Everything* asks the question “What kind of world would unfold if smart, determined people lived as if Jesus really was the Truth?”

Truth Changes Everything shares the stories and breakthroughs of thinkers and doers who committed their lives to Truth as found in Jesus. It demonstrates how their faith formed a personal moral code but also a transformational worldview that changed the course of history. These world-changers

simply loved Jesus and emerged as history's best philosophers, scientists, artists, and educators. This was especially so in times of great crisis when history seemed at its end.

Some of the Jesus followers you'll meet in *Truth Changes Everything* were brilliant, whimsical, and creative. Others were everyday folks who simply displayed extreme levels of resilience. More than a few were flighty, prickly, and inconsistent. These earnest yet flawed people shaped our understanding of what it means to be human, how to care for one another, how to learn and grow, how to harness science to make life better, how to form political structures that secure rights and create stable societies, how to pursue justice, and how to live meaningful lives.

If we can understand how Truth really did change everything in the past, then we can more clearly see what we lose in abandoning it and what we could gain by reclaiming it.

It is time to tell the Truth. The Bible admonishes the faithful to "tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD . . . so that they should set their hope in God" (Ps. 78:4, 7, emphasis added). Sharing the hope that comes from Truth is my life's passion. At Summit Ministries, my team and I equip and support tens of thousands of young adults every year to embrace Truth and champion a biblical worldview. We do this through events and courses that are rich with teaching, dialogue, mentoring, and, yes, *reading*. We envision a rising generation filled with the kind of purpose that comes from basing every aspect of life on Truth.

It is a special privilege to lead Summit Ministries given its influence on my own spiritual and intellectual growth. As a young skeptic, I spent two weeks at a Summit Ministries event held at the antique Grandview Hotel, nestled in a little hippie town at the foot of Pikes Peak. There, I met Summit's first president, David Noebel, an erudite philosopher and captivating teacher.

“I hope you have a lot of answers because I have a lot of questions,” I bluntly announced in our first meeting.

Noebel didn’t flinch. “At Summit, we aren’t afraid of questions,” he replied.

Instantly, I felt at home. Life is complicated. I knew that. Satisfying answers are hard to come by. I knew that too. But finding a community filled with smart Christians willing to ponder Truth and apply it to their lives? For me, that was a game changer.

My passion for preparing young leaders with a biblical worldview took on great urgency during a recent battle with cancer. My diagnosis came as a complete shock. I’m a healthy, active person who maintains a pretty good diet and exercises regularly.

My medical team and I have acted aggressively to beat what was once a death sentence. As of this writing, we are moving in a very positive direction. I am in remission. But cancer is hard. The treatment is even harder. Pain, nausea, and fatigue make it feel like a twenty-four-hour flu for months on end. Many of my fellow patients had it worse. Some were on “salvage” chemo, fighting for a few more days of life, not for a cure. It was a horrible thing to watch.

Don’t get me wrong. I feel blessed to live in an age of advanced medical technology. I’m grateful for a good insurance plan, skilled doctors, and medicine that treated my cancer and ameliorated the treatment’s side effects. I cherish my loving spouse, who filled our home with hope. It meant the world to me to receive thoughts, prayers, and expressions of care from people all over the world.

But cancer was only one of the battles I fought. The other was hopelessness. Despair was a constant companion, tempting me to give up. God had given me such a rich, full life. Was it about to end?

During treatment, I could do little except read and write. The book you hold in your hands emerged out of that time of trial. What might a person write if they knew it might be the last thing they could say this side of eternity? *Truth Changes Everything* is my answer to that question.

Truth means more to me than ever before. I enter this season of life determined to fight for it. During my cancer journey, I studied the stories of many courageous heroes. Caleb from the Old Testament book of Numbers remains my favorite.

Caleb was forty years old when Moses tasked him, along with Joshua and ten other men, to spy on the land of God's promise. Numbers 13 lists all their names, but we remember only Caleb and Joshua. The ten forgotten spies surrendered to the enemy of despair without even drawing their swords.

These ten fearful spies announced that the Anakim, the people of the land, were giants living in fortified cities. This was a fact. Yet it shouldn't have mattered: God had promised that the children of Israel would inhabit the land. Even though the spies had seen God's miraculous acts many times, fear overruled their faith. God's chosen people consequently traipsed around the desert for another forty years.

Fast-forward. After forty years of wandering and five years of settling in the promised land, Caleb appeared before Joshua and said, "I am this day eighty-five years old. I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then" (Josh. 14:10–11).

Pause for a moment before I share the rest of the story. How many octogenarians can honestly make the claim that Caleb made? How many people of *any* age maintain readiness for the battles they face?

What Caleb said next is even more astounding: "So now give me this hill country of which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great

fortified cities. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the LORD said” (Josh. 14:12).

“Give me the land where the giants still are,” Caleb said, in essence. At age eighty-five. Every day for forty-five years Caleb honed his skills, telling himself, “God promised that the giants would fall, and fall they will. Even if I’m an old man when it happens.”

Caleb never lost sight of God’s promise. He stood in the land of giants.

The loss of Truth is a giant-sized problem in our day. Its real-life consequences are severe. Seventy-five percent of young adults say that they are unsure of their purpose in life. Nearly half are counted as having one or more types of mental illness (such as anxiety and depression). Fully half of young adults say that there is “no absolute value associated with human life.”⁴

We are tempted to say, “Truth has been lost. History is at an end.” Yet the testimony of Jesus followers who changed the world is one of hope. We *can* understand the times and know what course we ought to take (1 Chron. 12:32). Faith can triumph over fear.

In the past, Truth changed everything. It can do the same for us amid the unique challenges of our current age. We, too, can find Truth and share it without fear, whether around the water cooler, at the Thanksgiving table, in the laboratory, or in the halls of power.

Now is the time to take an unflinching look at what Truth is and why it is under attack. Now is the time to sit at the feet of Jesus followers who, in times of great crisis, stood for Truth. Now is the time of choosing for our own age. If ever we needed Truth, it is now.

Notes

Chapter 1 The Point of No Return

1. See Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008); Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There: 30th Anniversary Edition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008); and Dallas Willard, *Renewing the Christian Mind: Essays, Interviews, and Talks* (New York: HarperOne, 2016). See also Donald Williams, “True Truth: Francis Schaeffer’s Enduring Legacy,” *The Calvinist International*, September 24, 2014, <https://calvinistinternational.com/2014/09/24/true-truth-francis-schaeffers-enduring-legacy/>; Dallas A. Willard, “Truth in the Fire: C. S. Lewis and Pursuit of Truth Today,” *Independent Institute*, July 21, 1998, <https://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1669>.

2. Philosophers usually call this the “correspondence theory of truth.” The truths viewpoint, on the other hand, holds to “anti-realism” (we cannot know that reality exists) or “relativism” (what we call reality depends on its relationship to us personally or to our society).

3. George Barna, “American Worldview Inventory 2020—At a Glance,” Cultural Research Center, May 19, 2020, <https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AWVI-2020-Release-05-Perceptions-of-Truth.pdf>.

4. George Barna, “Millennials in America: New Insights into the Generation of Growing Influence,” Cultural Research Center, October 2021, <https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/George-Barna-Millennial-Report-2021-FINAL-Web.pdf>.

Dr. Jeff Myers is president of Summit Ministries, a Colorado-based nonprofit organization that equips and supports the rising generation to embrace God's truth and champion a biblical worldview. Summit reaches hundreds of thousands of Christians each year through worldview training, events, books, curriculum, and other online resources. One of America's most respected authorities on Christian worldview, apologetics, and youth leadership development, Myers lives in Colorado Springs with his family.