

Twisting The Truth – Session 3: Says Who?

Series Background

The CTU (Changing Truth Unit) gains a new member and works to train Agent Bender to become a valuable member of the group.

Each session in this series begins with Agent Bender learning new ways to succeed in giving the world new ways to think about what has always been God's will.

Andy Stanley follows that with a 30-minute teaching about what the truth has always been and what it always will be.

Session 1 – The Source of Deception
Session 2 – All is Not as it Seems
Session 3 – Says Who?
Session 4 – Facing Forward
Session 5 – It's Only Physical
Session 6 – It's No Mistake

You know how amazingly weird it is — moments of clarity followed suddenly by moments of insanity. We may know the right thing to do, yet we go out and do the exact opposite. Why is that? Is something wrong with us?

Or could it be there is an invisible world impacting our visible world? Is there something we cannot see influencing everything we can see?

The Bible's answer is that, yes, there is an unseen world affecting our lives. It is all around us. It impacts every single thing we do, everything about us. It affects all our relationships. It influences our thinking, our attitudes, and our decision-making. It colors our perspectives on finances, on morality, and on how we do business. And it can actually be life-threatening — physically, emotionally, and relationally.

Background

Authority. Teenagers love to rebel against authority. In their minds, rebellion equals freedom. That is the basic premise we have operated from since we were about twelve. It made sense: *The best path to freedom is to forget the rules.*

As we grew up, it changed into something more sophisticated. After all, we came to realize that prisons are full of people who lost their freedom because they rebelled. And we are smarter than that.

So our revised adult version of rebellion goes like this: *I will just ignore any particular rule I disagree with.* Instead of a blanket dismissal of all authority, we take it one rule at a time. If we do not like it — if we think it is irrelevant or stupid or antiquated or extreme — we disregard it.

We do it all the time. A 45-mph speed limit on this road? *That is ridiculous.* We drive 60.

Is this really *rebellion*? And if so ... against whom?

Discussion Starter

Remember back to a time when you rebelled against some rule or authority. How did you express or carry out this rebellion? How did you arrive at the decision to disregard the rule or authority? What were your most important assumptions about authority in general? And how have those assumptions changed over time?

Video Overview

The issue of authority is really where it all began — going all the way back to the Garden of Eden.

Here is the twist: When it comes to authority, our first response is to evaluate the *what*. If someone — parents, teachers, bosses, government — is telling us what to do, our first reaction is to make a judgment about what is being asked or required of us. And if it does not meet our approval, we disregard it without any guilt.

That is a huge twist that impacts us deeply and at multiple levels.

The Scriptures unmask this twist. When it comes to authority, God tells us, “No, it is not about *what*; it is about *who*.”

Paul speaks to this issue in Romans 13. This letter to Christians in Rome was written when the tyrant Nero was emperor. His rule was oppressive, and Christians were persecuted. Yet Paul told them, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for *there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God*” (Romans 13:1).

Paul emphasized a principle that we find throughout the Scriptures: *God works through human authority*. Through all human authority — good and bad, righteous and unrighteous, believing and unbelieving — God is at work to exercise his will on the earth.

Paul then writes, “Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves” (Romans 13:2). To rebel against authorities is ultimately to rebel against God. Each human authority in your life “is God's servant to do you good” (Romans 13:4).

Our attitudes and responses toward human authorities is therefore a reflection of our

attitudes and response to our Father in Heaven. When we resist, we are also resisting Gld.

Discussion Questions

1. With what rules or regulations do you disagree? Do you follow them or ignore them?
2. What determines whether or not you submit to authority and follow the rules?
3. Does it surprise you that, according to Romans 13:1, *all* authorities have been set up by God? How about the authorities who do not follow God?
4. What is at stake when you choose to rebel?
5. What is the purpose of authority? Why not live in a world with no rules or hierarchy?
6. What are some ways that you could experience more freedom by submitting to authority?

Mileposts

- Our natural response to authority is to evaluate everything we are asked to do, then do only that with which we agree.
- The Bible teaches us that God has established human authorities as agents of his own will.
- To rebel against the human authorities God has established is ultimately to rebel against God himself.

Moving Forward

God's design for following authority actually gives you the opportunity to experience more freedom, not less. Have you thought of ways in which you have not been fully submitting to an authority God has placed over you? If so, what changes do you need to make immediately? Write out the steps of action you will take to correct this.

Changing Your Mind

Our responses toward human authority tend to be so different from what God intends. That is why it is good to meditate on this session's verses. Consider writing out these words and keeping them with you to look over often as you let their truth saturate your mind.

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Preparation for Session 4

- Another of Satan's deceptions has to do with suffering. Read Romans 8:18 – 21. In these words to Christians in Rome, how does Paul urge us to view our present sufferings in light of our *past*, our *present*, and our *future*? What are the negatives that are talked about here? And what are the positives?
- Read Romans 8:22 – 23. What does Paul say is true about our present and about our *future*? What are believers in Christ waiting for? Paul mentions something that is going to be redeemed. What is it? If it is not yet redeemed, what is its condition now?
- Read Romans 8:24 – 25. What exactly is *hope*? What is your understanding of Hope? What seems to be Paul's understanding of hope? What attitudes and responses does true hope produce in our lives?
- Read Romans 8:26 – 27. What specific help can you count on from God's Spirit? Why does Paul say we need this help? With what words in this passage do you personally most identify?
- Read Romans 8:28. What does Paul want us to understand about ourselves? What does Paul want us to understand about God? What does Paul want us to understand about our circumstances?