

WEEK 8: FOUR KINDS OF TRUTH
PART ONE: THREE WEAK SOURCES
DAY 1: FOUR KINDS OF TRUTH

Read Colossians 2:1-4,8,20-23.

"I want to see somebody with **authority** around here!"

How many times have you heard or said words like that? Sometimes every person likes to work with the boss. Sometimes every person needs to talk to a person who has **authority**.

All religions have one of **four kinds of authority**. Only one kind is right. There are many people around the world trying to find important things in life. They are following a **weak kind of authority**.

This week you will study three dangerous kinds of authority. Your friends may try to use one kind of authority when you try to talk with them about your faith. You will concentrate next week on the one true kind of authority you can trust.

Study this chart that discusses the **four kinds of authority**.

You will notice that there are four words above the chart. Write

the word in the blank that fits the best meaning.

**EXPERIENCES
KNOWLEDGE**

Sources inside man himself

Man decides what is true by thinking about what is good or bad, right or wrong.

Man decides what is true by his feelings and what he sees, hears, and touches.

You should have written the words like this:

KNOWLEDGE

EXPERIENCES

Paul, the apostle, knew a lot about weak kinds of authority. He traveled as a missionary. He met many people who depended on the wrong kinds of authority. They did not depend on the right kind of authority. Some books Paul wrote in the New Testament are for helping people know the right kind of authority.

**SCRIPTURE
TRADITION**

Sources from other place

Man follows things that were important to other people who lived before.

God shows what is true in writing; full and finished information to people.

TRADITION

SCRIPTURE

Read Colossians 2:1-4. Paul said in verse 2 that he wanted them to be rich. What kind of riches did he mean?

R_____ IN U_____.

Paul told the Colossian Christians he wanted them to understand. Paul told them

that in **Christ Himself** they would have _____ and _____.

Why did Paul want them to have the riches of **wisdom and understanding**? Verse 4 tells you.

You need to know what Paul wrote in Colossians 2:8 to help be sure nobody **deceives** you with wrong kinds of authority. Here it is from the **New Life Version**: "Be careful that no one changes your mind and faith by much learning and big-sounding ideas. Those things are what men dream up. They are always trying to make new religions. These leave out Christ" (Col. 2:8, NLV).

How many **wrong kinds of authority** did Paul talk about in Colossians 2:8? Write here words that match each one.

KNOWLEDGE: _____

TRADITION: _____

EXPERIENCES: _____

Did you understand that these three kinds of authority are mentioned in verse 8 in the **same order** that they are listed above? "Much learning and big-sounding ideas" are

knowledge. "When men dream up" is experience. The idea of "new religions" is beginning of **traditions**. What did Paul mean when he said that your mind could be changed by these wrong kinds of authority?

Have you met a person whose mind was changed by some false idea so strongly that he or she would not pay attention to what you were trying to say? Your Bible memory verse for this week explains how a person can be changed by false ideas. Look at 1 Corinthians 2:14. You will study tomorrow this verse more deeply. Begin to memorize it now.

Now read Colossians 2:20-23. What did Paul say to convince us to not live following only man-made rules? Look at the beginning of verse 20.

"You have died with Christ," Paul said. That is the reason you should not live following man-made rules. "It looks as if they are done without pride, but they are **worth nothing**" (Col. 2:23, NLV).

God gave you your **mind** (your knowledge). He expects you to use it. God gave you **experiences**. They may be important. Some things never change. Some **traditions** are worth keeping. But knowledge, experience, or tradition should not become your **authority** for faith.

WEEK 8: FOUR KINDS OF TRUTH
PART ONE: THREE WEAK SOURCES
DAY 2: INTELLECT! REASON! LOGIC!

Read Mark 12:18-25; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 2:7-14.

Many people let their **intellect** (what they know) make final decisions. If it seems **logical** to me, I will do it! Doing this makes you become your own God. People are bigheaded to think their intelligence can make decisions about truth and false things, good and bad, right and wrong.

All of history reminds us that people make **bad decisions**. Kingdoms appear and disappear because of bad decisions. There are still people who say, "I can't **understand** how a **good** God could . . ." or "It doesn't **make sense** to believe God would . . ."

Jesus Himself had to talk with people who thought this way. Read Mark 12:18-25. The Sadducees were an important group in the Jewish religion when Jesus was alive. Verse 18 says the Sadducees did not believe . . . The Sadducees told Jesus a long story to support not believing in **resurrection** after death. What was their story from?

_____ The Bible _____ Their own ideas

What did Jesus say about the Sadducees' **thinking**? (See Mark 12:24.)

Jesus said they were _____, because they did not know the _____ or the _____.

The Sadducees were **wrong**. They did not understand the Holy **Scriptures** or the **power of God**. Do you think the Sadducees were really trying to learn when they came to talk with Jesus? **Yes No** What **kind of authority** did the Sadducees have for their religious beliefs?

The apostle Paul had to help people who made **intellect** (what they know) the authority for their religious ideas. (Read 1 Cor. 1:18-25.) There is a word in verse 20 that also describes the Sadducees who were talking to Jesus. They were not trying to learn because they thought they had all . Thinking you have all the answers does not help anyone learn. Paul said in the same verse (20) that God has made **foolish** all of the wisdom of this world.

Paul analyzed the way two large groups of people in his lifetime used the wisdom of the world: "The Jews are looking for something special to see. The Greek people are looking for the answer in wisdom. But we preach that Christ died on a cross to save them from their sins. These words are hard for the Jews to listen to. The Greek people think it is foolish. Christ is the power and wisdom of God to those who are chosen to be saved from

the punishment of sin for both Jews and the Greeks. God's plan looked foolish to men, but it is wiser than the best plans of men. God's plan which may look weak is stronger than the strongest plans of men" (1 Cor. 1:22-25, NLV).

Christian faith is not against being intelligent. The apostle Paul was one of the best-educated and most-intelligent men alive at that time. Read 1 Corinthians 2:7-8 to learn **what kind** of wisdom Paul taught. He said that if people on earth had understood God's wisdom, then they would not have done what terrible thing?

No, Paul did not say that people have too much wisdom; but, not enough. They would not have **put Christ on a cross to die** if they had God's wisdom. Now read 1 Corinthians 2:9-11 to learn **why** people of the world did not understand who Jesus was and why He came. Verse 11 tells us that the only person who

understands God's thoughts is the _____.

The **Holy Spirit** is the only one who understands God's thoughts. How can people understand them? Verses 12-13 tell us how. Write these verses in your own words.

Did you write something like this? **God gave us the Holy Spirit to teach us about God's ways?** Read 1 Corinthians 2:14. Why

is it impossible for a person to find God through his own ideas?

The person who is not saved does not have the Holy Spirit and cannot understand God. Does this mean you cannot **convince** a lost person to become saved through intellect?

Yes _____ **No** _____.

Yes, a person who depends on what he knows for **authority** cannot be convinced to become saved. You must ask God to use His Holy Spirit to convict and prepare the person to become saved.

You should feel comfortable with 1 Corinthians 2:14 when you read it today. Can you write it from memory?

**WEEK 8: FOUR KINDS OF TRUTH—
PART ONE: THREE WEAK SOURCES
DAY 3: EXPERIENCES!
VISIONS! FEELINGS!**

Read Deuteronomy 13:1-4; Colossians 2:18-19.

People have started religions since the beginning of the world based on the **experiences** they have had. They have called other people to share these experiences after letting experience be the authority for their religion. A person who has not had the same experiences must begin them. Or, the other people will think he is not good in that religion.

The problem of finding the truth in an experience is a serious problem. How do you know what a person is saying is true or not if he tells you that he has had a vision from God? Authority that depends on experience is a dangerous thing. That is the reason God shows himself to people in a better way. He has given us a written record of what is true. You can compare all experience to the Bible to know if they are really from God.

You can find a good example of this in Deuteronomy (the fifth book in the Bible). Read Deuteronomy 13:1-4. It is a better test of truth in a person who is a prophet or a dreamer?

_____A. If the prophecy or dream happens.

_____B. If the prophet or dreamer tries to convince you to leave the one true God.

The teaching is clear. It doesn't matter if someone can show you signs and miracles. You must, even if his prophecies are right, not pay attention to him **if he causes you to focus less on God**. Deuteronomy 13:3 explains why people who make experience their religious authority seem to be convincing. What reason does that verse give?

God might use a prophet, a dreamer, or a miracle-worker to test your love for Him. But He will not let the testing become too hard for you. Last week you learned a verse that promises God will give you a way to escape. Can you write 1 Corinthians 10:13 from memory?

Experience is only **one** of _____ different kinds of authority in religious things. Do you remember seeing "**4 Kinds of Authority**" on your hand picture? How much do you remember about other things you have studied in your

SURVIVAL KIT? Try to finish this outline.

1 _____, which is _____

2 _____, which are _____

3 _____, which are _____

4 _____, which are _____

You should have written something like this:

- 1 **Body**, which is the **church**, the body of Christ.
- 2 **Natures**, which are the **old nature** (sin) and the **new nature** (Christ).
- 3 **Things about salvation**, which are **salvation past, present, and future**.
- 4 **Kinds of authority**, which are **intellect, experiences, tradition, and Scripture**.

Your second memory verse for this week talks about one of the three weak kinds of authority. Tomorrow you will study **1 Peter 1:18-19**. Start learning it now. (Notice that the memory part ends in verse 19 with the word **Christ**.)

Now think again about the problems that people who depend on

experience cause. Read Colossians 2:18-19. What specific problem was the apostle Paul writing about?

It seems that some of the people in the Colossian church had experienced **visions**. They were as a result trying to make all the Christians join them in **worship of angels** and in other false religious activities. Verse 19 says that these people are not a part of the _____.

Verse 19 also says our **growth** in the church comes from ____.

The apostle Paul made a strong statement about people who depend on experience as their authority. He said **they are not a part of Christ**. Christ is **the Head**. We Christians make up His body, the church. Experiences often do not help people become strong together in the church. Experience often causes divisions. People who have experience sometimes think that people who do not have experience are not as good. But Christ did not stress experience. He gives you **His own life**. This is what causes **growth from God**.

Be sensitive to people who encourage you to look for experiences. It can be a blessing to all of the people when God gives you a special time of fellowship. But be careful when you begin to look for the **experience** more than the time of **fellowship with God**. You might be following a false kind of authority.

**WEEK 8: FOUR KINDS OF
AUTHORITY—
PART ONE: THREE
WEAK SOURCES**

DAY 4: TRADITION!

Read Matthew 15:1-9; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

"It's a **tradition!** We've **always** done it this way! We must not **change!**"

How do traditions happen? Someone in the past decided that an event, a special service, or a special teaching should happen again and again. The event was important and special for that person. It had to be continued. It must not be forgotten.

Often, however, the meaning of the special event becomes lost. It becomes a regular event that nobody knows what it means. It does not help people. It does not cause people to make deep **commitments**. **Tradition** becomes a heavy burden that prevents people from understanding the real meaning of the event if it was done in a new and different way.

Read Matthew 15:1-9. Why were the religious leaders of Jesus' time criticizing His disciples?

Jesus' disciples did not **follow tradition**. They **didn't wash their hands** the exact right way **before eating bread**. Jesus said the religious leaders were breaking more important laws. Which one of the Ten Commandments did Jesus say the religious leaders were breaking?

The religious leaders were breaking the Commandment, "**Honor your father and mother.**" Jesus said in Matthew 15:6 that **two** kinds of religious authority are conflicting with each other. Which two?

_____ AGAINST _____

You must make a clear choice when **Scripture is against tradition**. Write in your own words what Jesus told the leaders in Matthew 15:8-9.

Some people **say good things but do not do them with their hearts**. They follow **people's ideas and opinions and not God's Word**. The verses you began to memorize yesterday has an important point for this kind of person. Try to write it here.

_____ (1 Pet. 1:18-19)

Can **tradition** help people become saved? The verses in Matthew that you study today tell us **why** tradition cannot help people become saved. What is that reason?

Did you write that tradition is often only empty words and actions. It is often not from the **heart**. Sometimes **people's traditions** can **conflict with God's Word**? First Peter 1:18-19 says that people can be saved **by** what? What were you saved **from**?

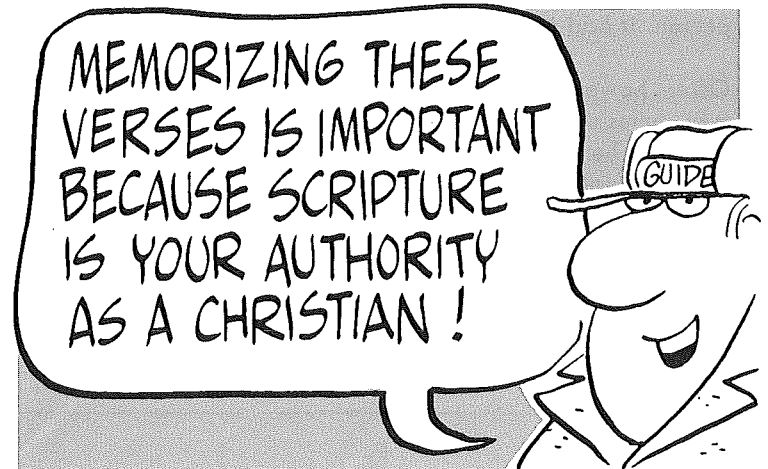
Can you think of people you know who are stuck in religious tradition or habit? People who are missing the true blessing in life? People who can be **saved by Christ's blood from the punishment of sin and worthless tradition**? Carefully write the names of a few people you know who are stuck in tradition. Then pray for them by name in your Quiet Time.

Have you found one of the great benefits of memorizing Bible verses? You don't have to limit your Quiet Time to sitting down to read your Bible. You can meditate on the Bible verses any time when you have them in your hand.

Check your progress in memorizing the verses you have been

given. Mark only the verses you can say without looking now.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| _____ Psalm 119:11 | _____ Romans 6:12-13 |
| _____ 2 Corinthians 5:17 | _____ Colossians 3:8-10 |
| _____ Romans 12:4-5 | _____ Philippians 1:6 |
| _____ 1 Corinthians 12:18 | _____ Ephesians 2:8-10 |
| _____ 1 Peter 4:10 | _____ Romans 5:10 |
| _____ 2 Corinthians 9:7 | _____ 1 Corinthians 10:13 |
| _____ Galatians 5:16 | _____ 1 Corinthians 2:14 |
| _____ Galatians 5:22-23 | _____ 1 Peter 1:18-19 |



**WEEK 8: FOUR KINDS OF
AUTHORITY—
PART ONE: THREE
WEAK SOURCES**

**DAY 5: INTELLECT!
EXPERIENCES!
TRADITION!**

Read 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:15-19

Intellect, experiences, tradition. . . . Separately or together, these three kinds of religious authority can never become better than human ideas without God. All are based on human ideas. All of these give no eternal benefits.

It is **not true** to say that all religions lead to the same God. A person who says this has never studied all religions. Some religions do not admit that there **is** a mighty God.

You will as a new Christian see many different kinds of religious teaching. Many serious and kind people will share their opinions with you about religion. Analyze each opinion carefully. Are they based on **intellect** (what people know)? A PERSON'S MIND CANNOT BE THE FINAL JUDGE OF TRUTH. Are they based on someone's **experience**? PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES CANNOT BECOME THE FINAL KIND OF AUTHORITY. Are they based on **tradition**? PEOPLE'S PAST KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE CANNOT BE TRUSTED MORE THAN WHAT HE

HAS NOW.

Read 1 Timothy 1:3-7. Verse 4 tells us what man-made teaching does to people. What does man-made ideas do to people?

Stories that are not true do nothing to help you as a Christian. What does teaching from God do? (See v. 5.)

First Timothy 1:5 (in the **New Life Version**) talks about a **true love that comes from a pure heart**. What reason (in v. 7) did the false teachers have?

To become a **teacher of the law** in the New Testament time meant you had great honor. Do you still see people today who want to get honor and glory for themselves by teaching from weak kinds of authority? Read 1 Timothy 6:20-21. What did Paul tell Timothy to do with the true things God had given him?

How should Timothy act to false teachers if he kept safe the true teaching.

Paul warned Timothy to turn away from foolish talk and not to argue with false teachers. Second Timothy 2:15-19 has more instructions from Paul to Timothy. Which **kind of authority** is

talked about in verse 15?

Hymenaeus and Philetus turned away from the words of truth, **the Scriptures**, to another kind of authority. Read verses 16-18. Write which kind of authority you think they followed.

It seems that **intellect** was the kind of authority these two men followed. (See vv. 18-19.) Do you think they were successful in their teaching? Think about the answer both ways. Explain why.

YES. _____

NO. _____

Yes, these false teachers had **made the faith of some people become weak**. **No**, the truth of God cannot be changed.

This is the only week you have used your SURVIVAL KIT to study the **four kinds of authority**. But you have been learning since the beginning of the SURVIVAL KIT that **Scripture** is your authority as a Christian. What Bible verse tells you what Christ has done for you by His **life** and **death**? Write here Romans 5:10.

Now it is time to look back at what we have learned. What are the things you have learned since the eight weeks began?

Remember: Look at your hand. You should be able to write for these:

The **hand itself** _____

The **thumb** _____

The **forefinger** _____

The **middle finger** _____

And the **ring finger** _____

How did you do?