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SERMON TITLE

Timeless Truth Over Trendy Taglines

SERIES

Truth or Trend

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KEY SCRIPTURE

Various scriptures

SYNOPSIS

There are many popular ideas that sound good, but are often short-sighted, while God's truth stands for all eternity.

HIGHLIGHTS





☞ Sermon Series: Truth or Trend

Have you ever bought into something that looked really good at first, but ended up being totally hollow? Over the years, there have been several notable items that sounded great, but didn't deliver and ended up being a flop.

In the late 90s there were Minidisc Players. I had one. They were hyped as the future of music storage—more compact than CDs, with reusable media. I actually happened to agree with all of that and liked the format a lot. But the flop was they never caught on due to poor marketing, and the rise of MP3s.

In 2001 the Segway was introduced. It was marketed as a revolutionary transportation device that would change cities forever. But ultimately, it was too expensive, awkward to use, and banned in many areas due to safety concerns. Now it's a novelty item used by touring companies as a fun way to "see the city."

Then, in 2015 Hoverboards were all the rage. They were considered to be a "Back to the Future"-style personal transport. But many caught fire due to battery issues, got banned in public spaces, and injuries were common.

Like those hyped up flops, there are some cultural catchphrases that make some good sounding promises but don't deliver. They sound empowering and feel progressive. But when you dig deeper, they're empty. Today, we will look at five more in our "Truth or Trend" series and see what God says instead.

☞ First, let's sharpen our discernment with our "Bible or Not?" quiz.

☞ "Do to others as you would have them do to you." Answer: Biblical. Matthew 7:12, commonly known as the Golden Rule.

☞ "This too shall pass." Answer: Not Biblical. Likely from Persian poetry. Ecclesiastes 3:1 is similar.

☞ "Hate the sin, love the sinner." Answer: Not Biblical. Popularized by Gandhi. The concept is in the bible, but it never directly says it.

☞ "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight." Answer: Biblical. Hebrews 4:13.

☞ "When in doubt, leave it out." Answer: Not in the Bible. James 1:5-6 is similar but not exact.

☞ Sermon 4: Timeless Truth Over Trendy Taglines

1. "Morality Is Just a Social Construct"



You've heard this one, right? Morality is just a human idea that changes with the times, like skinny jeans, man-buns, or TikTok trends. In this view, morality varies from place to place and is always changing. What one culture calls "evil," another may call "honor." Who's to say what's truly right? This idea is everywhere. It says, "What's right or wrong today might not be tomorrow. It's all subjective." Kind of like fashion trends. Bell bottoms were out, then back in. So, is morality the same?

Logically, if morality is only a construct, then: We can't condemn things like racism, genocide, or abuse because those are just moral preferences, not absolute wrongs. And, we can't extol heroes like Martin Luther King Jr. or Dietrich Bonhoeffer because they went against their cultures. Plus, we lose any foundation for justice since everything becomes subjective, which means morality turns into majority opinion or is dictated by whoever has power.

☞ God's Word says otherwise. Scripture teaches that **morality** is not a human invention; it **flows from God's eternal character**. Malachi 3:6 declares, *"I the Lord do not change."* And Jesus said in Matthew 5:18, *"Not the smallest letter... will disappear from the Law."* In other words, God's standards aren't up for debate. Because God is eternal and holy, His moral law is fixed, objective, and good for all people in all cultures at all times.

From a philosophical viewpoint, why are some standards of morality universal? For example, murder, theft, and lying are condemned in almost every culture. Why? If morals were entirely man-made, they should look completely different everywhere. But the consistency across time and culture implies a higher source. The short answer to the question is that some moral standards are universal across cultures because they reflect God's image and character.

Romans 2:14–15 says, *"Even Gentiles, who do not have the law, show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts."* Paul is saying that even people who've never read Scripture often act in ways ☞ that align with **God's moral law** because it's **written on our hearts**. Moral truth is not a fluctuating concept; it's woven into the very fabric of the world because God created it. It's not restrictive; it's protective. God's ways don't shift with culture. They stand. Morality is more than a social construct.

☞ 2. "Live Your Truth"

This one's everywhere. *"Live your truth."* It sounds so empowering, doesn't it? "You do you." "Be your authentic self." "Follow your heart." But this one's dangerous because feelings change and emotions lie.

☞ If truth depends on our perspective, **what happens if your truth conflicts with my truth?** This leads to chaos, not clarity. Who decides what's right?



☞ Jesus answers that in John 14:6: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life."* Truth isn't subjective, it's a person. Jesus didn't say, "Find your truth." He said, *"I am the truth."* Truth isn't found inside of us, it's found in Him. At its core, "Live your truth" confuses genuine truth with personal experience or feelings. Truth is *objective*; feelings are *subjective*; and truth is unchanging while feelings are constantly changing.

If "your truth" is always right for you, who can ever challenge you? Who can help you grow, or correct you when you're wrong? Scripture says we grow through truth spoken in love (Ephesians 4:15) and through accountability (Proverbs 27:17). If no one can question your "truth," you become isolated, and most likely, self-deceived.

"Live your truth" says: "You're fine as you are. You don't need to repent. Just embrace your identity." That's the opposite of the gospel. The gospel says we're broken by sin and called to follow Christ, not ourselves. In Luke 9:23 Jesus said, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."* That's not "live your truth." That's **die to self and live in His truth.**

Tim Keller once said, *"Truth isn't yours to shape; it's God's to reveal."* Your feelings are real, but they don't always lead you to real truth. Jesus does. So, don't just *feel* your way through life. Anchor your life in God's truth because it's the only thing that will set you free and lead to life. Trust Him more than your mood swings. Don't live your truth. Live God's truth.

☞ 3. "No One Can Judge Me"

This phrase sounds bold, independent, unbothered. But it's actually dangerous because what it really says is: *"I don't want to be accountable to anyone."* Hear what Hebrews 4:13 says... *"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight."* And in **John 7:24**, Jesus actually tells us to **judge... correctly.** Not harshly. Not pridefully. But truthfully, and in love.

In fact, we all make judgment calls every day:

You decide who you trust based on their character, values, and behavior. You might think, "They gossip a lot so I probably shouldn't share this with them." That's a judgment call based on wisdom.

You evaluate the Media. Whether it's choosing what shows to watch, podcasts to listen to, or news to believe, you're constantly filtering content: *"Is this helpful? Is this truthful?"*

Parents judge whether something is appropriate for their children... what apps they use, what friends they hang out with, what boundaries they need. That's loving, not judgmental.

At work, you judge whether to speak up when you see something unethical. *"Should I report this behavior?"* That takes discernment and moral courage.



In the Church you assess how someone is doing spiritually, maybe to encourage them or gently confront a concern. This is the kind of **loving correction** Jesus talks about in Matthew 18. The bible actually says we *should* judge those within the church when it comes to morality. Cf. 1 Corinthians 5.

We all judge. The issue isn't *whether* we make judgments; the issue is *how*. Are we judging with pride and condemnation? Or with humility, love, and a desire for truth? Jesus didn't say "Don't ever judge;" he said, "Judge correctly." That's the standard: **Not condemnation, but clarity**. J.C. Ryle said, "*The judgment we need most is from those who love us.*" Don't take the attitude that "nobody can judge you." Be open to input from others.

4. "YOLO (You Only Live Once)"

YOLO sounds fun, right? Go big, take the risk, chase the thrill. You've heard it shouted just before someone jumps off a cliff or maxes out their credit card. YOLO! And yes, life is short. But that doesn't mean we should live recklessly.

Scripture doesn't ignore the shortness of life; it takes it even more seriously than YOLO does. But it gives a very different conclusion: James 4:14 reminds us, "*You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.*" That's not meant to discourage us; it's meant to sober us. Life *is* short, but that's not a reason to waste it on thrills. Instead we should invest it in what matters eternally. **Life is short, but eternity is forever.**

Hebrews 9:27 says, "*It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.*" YOLO ends with death, but the Bible says death isn't the end; it's the doorway to eternity. What we do now echoes forever. According to the Bible, there is one earthly life, followed by eternal life; and **what happens in eternity depends on your choices in this life.**

The "YOLO" mindset equates meaning with momentary thrill... partying, spending recklessly, dating impulsively, or chasing experiences to avoid boredom. But that kind of living often leads to regret, not joy. In "YOLO," the self is king. It's about *your* happiness, *your* bucket list, *your* timeline. That leaves no room for God's purpose, His will, or the needs of others.

D.L. Moody said, "*Our greatest fear should not be of failure, but of succeeding at something that doesn't really matter; Succeed at what matters eternally.*" Don't waste your life. **Build something eternal.** Here's the biblical version of YOLO from Matthew 16:25: "*Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.*" YOLO is short-sighted. Your eternal life depends on the choices you make in this short, mortal life – so live for Jesus.



☞5. "Good People Go to Heaven"

This one might be the most widespread lie of them all. The idea that if "you're nice, you're in," is one of the more comforting lies that culture offers. It sounds fair: "Be kind, be decent, and you'll go to heaven." And, it seems right: good behavior should be rewarded. Most people think of themselves as "basically good" so, at first glance, this idea makes sense to a lot of people. It also relieves guilt: "I'm not perfect, but I try hard." And, it's inclusive: it doesn't require any specific religion, just general decency. And it feels like a loving, nonjudgmental way to view the afterlife. But it's not what Scripture teaches.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith... *not by works*." So, heaven ☞cannot be earned. And Jesus says clearly in John 14:6... "No one comes to the Father *except through Me*." That's a very narrow path.

Now, God does value goodness, but no one's goodness is good enough when measured against a holy ☞God. Isaiah 64:6 says, "*All our righteous acts are like filthy rags*." *Even our best efforts fall short of God's perfect standard*. It's not that we're all equally evil, but we're all equally unable to save ourselves. People often think God grades on a curve, like a teacher who gives partial credit. But God doesn't use a curve. His standard is perfection. Matthew 5:48 says, "*Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect*." That's not just hard, it's impossible. And that's the point.

Galatians 2:21 says, "*If righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!*" If being a good person were enough, why would God send His only Son to die? Jesus didn't come to improve your goodness; He came to exchange your sin for His righteousness. We aren't saved by being good. We're saved by trusting in the only One who was good enough... Jesus Christ.

What about good works, then? Well, good works don't save you, but they follow real faith. James 2:17: "*Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead*." Genuine faith produces a changed life. So good works are not the *cause* of salvation... they're the *evidence* of it. Good works are the fruit, not the ☞root, of salvation. *Jesus didn't come to make bad people good. He came to make dead people alive*. (cf. Ephesians 2:1–5).

"Morality's just a social construct; Live your truth; No one can judge me; YOLO; Good people go to heaven" ... These slogans are loud. They trend. But they won't last. Don't settle for cultural fads. Choose ☞God's truth... it never goes out of style. Isaiah 40:8 says, "*The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever*." While human opinions change with culture, time, and emotion, God's Word remains eternally true, trustworthy, and unshakable.

☞Choose Truth Over Trends.