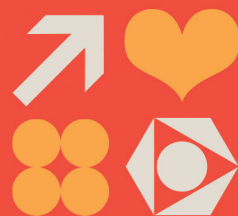


12 TRUTHS & A LIE

Answers to
Life's
Biggest
Questions

J.D.
GREEAR



FAMILY DISCUSSION GUIDE

CONTENTS

Introduction: Letter from J.D. Greear

1. How Can I Know for Sure I'll Go to Heaven?
2. What Are the Most Important Practices in a Christian's Life?
3. How Can I Discover My Purpose on Earth?
4. If God Is Really in Control, Why Is There So Much Evil and Suffering?
5. Isn't the Bible's Morality Outdated?
6. Why Isn't God Answering My Prayers?
7. How Can I Know God's Will for My Life?
8. I Believe in God... Why Do I Still Struggle with Anxiety?
9. How Could a Loving God Send People to Hell?
10. How Should Christians Handle Political Differences?
11. Why Does God Care So Much About My Sex Life?
12. If I'm Really a Christian, Why Do I Keep on Sinning?

Conclusion: The Lie Revisited

INTRODUCTION

You've probably asked yourself this question in the past, or maybe you are asking this question now:

Why do I go to school?

You don't go to gym class to learn how to play dodgeball and get plastered in the face by an incoming projectile, though you do learn perseverance and teamwork on the court.

You don't go to school to enjoy the cafeteria food, although if you were like me, you may have gotten pretty good at bartering and negotiating food trades at the lunch table—"A bag of Fritos for your Ding Dong cupcake and a pack of Twizzlers to be named later."

No, school is where you learn about life, and I always felt the best way to learn was to ask as many questions as possible. My college professors and Sunday school teachers can affirm that."

And the good news is, it's okay to ask questions.

It doesn't mean you're dumb; it means you want to know the truth.

I wrote *12 Truths and a Lie* because as a pastor, people ask me a lot of questions. I compiled my answers to some of life's most important questions into one place.

This guide will give you some questions to inspire some discussion. Along the way, remember that on our own, none of us has all the answers to the questions we all face—but my hope is to point you to the God who does know all the answers, and who has revealed the truth in the Bible.

I wish I could be there with you enjoying the discussion, and I pray God uses these conversations to bring you closer to him.

-J.D. Greear

CHAPTER 1

HOW CAN I KNOW FOR SURE I'LL GO TO HEAVEN?

In the first chapter, Pastor J.D. looked at a believer's assurance of salvation which leads to a relationship with God and the promise of heaven.

1. J.D. talked about faith and compared it to our faith when we sit in a chair. What, if anything, goes through your mind when you sit in a chair?
2. Can you remember a time that you prayed to start a relationship with Jesus?
3. If you were to die and stand before God and he asked, "Why should I let you into heaven?"...what would you say?
4. Why do you think people always try to DO more to make sure they are saved?
5. Is faith based on words, thoughts or action?

CHAPTER 2

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PRACTICES IN A CHRISTIAN'S LIFE?

In chapter 2, Pastor J.D. talked about the qualities of a Christian and what he or she should be doing with their lives.

1. If a zombie apocalypse broke out, who among you would survive the longest?
2. If you wear a cross—maybe on a shirt or a piece of jewelry—does it hold any significance to you? Do you know what it means?
3. If you were baptized, what did it mean for you that day?
4. Is surrender a weakness or a strength?
5. What part of being a disciple do you enjoy the most—worshiper, family member, witness, servant, or steward?

CHAPTER 3

HOW CAN I DISCOVER MY PURPOSE ON EARTH?

Chapter 3 examined a popular question people ask: how do you discover your individual purpose for being on this earth? Pastor J.D. offered practical guidance with his answer, making sure we discovered God's will for us.

1. Can you explain what your mom or dad did/do for a living?
2. When did you know what career path you wanted to follow?
3. If you work, do you love it?
4. You were created to do good works. What good works do you do?
5. Do you find fulfillment in what you do and if not, what can you do to find it?

CHAPTER 4

IF GOD'S REALLY IN CONTROL, WHY IS THERE SO MUCH EVIL AND SUFFERING?

In chapter 2, Pastor J.D. talked about the qualities of a Christian and what he or she should be doing with their lives.

1. What are some reasons that people like a "small god?"
2. Many people love the book of Job. What are your thoughts on Job's story?
Do you know it?
3. Is there someone you know that has a Job-like life of suffering?
How do they handle it?
4. How would you respond if God spoke to you from the heavens?

CHAPTER 5

ISN'T THE BIBLE'S MORALITY OUTDATED?

The Bible was written between 2,000 and 4,000 years ago. That culture didn't have the insight and information we have today. So is the morality the Bible encouraged outdated or still relevant today?

1. What do you know (or think you know) about the 1970s or 1980s?
2. While culture changes quickly, what have you noticed never changes?
3. Have you seen Christians or the church make a difference around you?
If not, where could the church focus its attention today?
4. What moral issues are impacting your school, work or community?
5. Why is the gospel always relevant?

CHAPTER 6

WHY ISN'T GOD ANSWERING MY PRAYERS?

Many of us pray and then wonder if God is listening, if he cares, and if he can do anything about it. As a result, our faith in God is weakened. Pastor J.D. helps us to understand how prayer works and what God is doing when we pray.

1. How do you feel when someone doesn't acknowledge your text?
2. Have you ever prayed and gotten the opposite of what you prayed for?
3. What lessons have you learned about prayer while struggling through a difficult time?
4. How is persistence a valuable lesson to learn through prayer?
5. Why is having a "Good Shepherd" all you need?

CHAPTER 7

HOW CAN I KNOW GOD'S WILL FOR MY LIFE?

Knowing God's will is important, because if you want to be his disciples, you want to make sure you are doing what he wants you to do. In this chapter, Pastor J.D. looks at the right questions to ask about God's will.

1. What fun way do you use to choose what to do next—Magic 8 Ball, rock-paper-scissors, flip a coin, or something else?
2. Who do you know so well that you know exactly what they will say, what they will do, and how they will react?
3. Have you ever had an experience where you desperately wanted to know God's will?
4. How did that experience work out once you moved forward?
5. How can you “become” the will of God in order to know the will of God?

CHAPTER 8

I BELIEVE IN GOD, WHY DO I STILL STRUGGLE WITH ANXIETY?

Many today struggle with deep emotional and psychological issues such as panic, stress and anxiety. Jesus promised a cure for those things, yet many aren't experiencing that cure. Pastor J.D. drilled down to answer that fully.

1. What are you most anxious about?
2. List as many reasons as you can think of as to why anxiety is a growing problem in our world today.
3. How will the “size of your God” help to eliminate your anxiety about tomorrow?
4. Why is it that we dwell on the problem and not the solution?
5. Why is “casting” our worries to Jesus the best solution and why is that so hard?

CHAPTER 9

HOW COULD A LOVING GOD SEND PEOPLE TO HELL?

Pastor J.D. addressed the serious subject of hell—God’s permanent place of punishment for those who refuse a relationship with him. It scares people to God and away from God, but it’s an important topic to address because of its seriousness.

1. Why is a timeout such an effective punishment with children?
2. What pictures or ideas come to mind when you think of hell?
3. If there were no police, jails, juries or prisons, how would people react?
4. If people don’t like hell, what do they want hell to be?
5. If hell is a real place, why aren’t Christians talking more about it?

CHAPTER 10

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS HANDLE POLITICAL DIFFERENCES?

Pastor J.D. tackled an emotionally charged question in this chapter—politics. He said we are not the party of the donkey or the elephant, but the lamb. This chapter certainly helps to put politics in its place, making sure it’s never more important than Jesus.

1. Can you name a few political leaders? Do you know what they do?
2. Should a Christian pay attention to politics and what’s happening in the political world?
3. How do you find a balance between politics being the most important and politics being not important (since both viewpoints are wrong)?
4. Why does Satan love chaos?
5. How can God use your nation?

CHAPTER 11

WHY DOES GOD CARE SO MUCH ABOUT MY SEX LIFE?

It's a very hot topic these days and a little awkward to discuss, but Pastor J.D. took on the whole issue of sex since so many people wonder why God cares so much about it. The reality is that the world cares so much about it and the Bible addresses the boundaries and purpose of sex in relationships.

1. What have you heard or learned about sex in school or from your friends or anywhere else?
2. Why is the world so preoccupied with sex?
3. Does it surprise you how much the Bible talks about sex?
4. Why is sexual sin (for example porn) more detrimental to one's life than something like gluttony (over-eating)?
5. Why did God create our bodies with the capacity to enjoy sex?

CHAPTER 12

IF I'M A CHRISTIAN, WHY DO I KEEP ON SINNING?

In the final chapter of the book, Pastor J.D. answers a question that has plagued so many believers who thought that surrendering their lives with God would take care of their sinful impulses. J.D. helps us understand how sin will always be a problem but it isn't a problem any longer.

1. How would you describe an evil person?
2. If the battle inside us between good and evil (old self and new self) must continue, what can we learn from it?
3. What are temptations a sign of?
4. What tools has God given you to help with your sin problem?
5. How will it feel when you get to heaven and you realize that you don't have to deal with sin, temptation and the old self again?

CONCLUSION

THE LIE REVISITED

Pastor J.D. ends the book by readdressing the “lie” that he mentioned in the beginning of the book—the lie that having questions or doubts means you're a bad Christian. That's not true. He states that Christianity should be a college of constant learning.

1. Do you have other questions that the book didn't address?
2. How can you find the answers?
3. Do you feel comfortable wrestling with your questions and doubts, and bringing them before the Lord? If not, why do you think that is?

KLOVE BOOKS