

# Tough Questions

## *Week Two*



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# Section 1: John 18:36-38a

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- Hours before His crucifixion and death, Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate.
- Pilate had been appointed the governor of Judea, and he represented the most powerful figure in the world, Tiberius (14 BC–AD 37).
- Pilate could have seen Jesus as a rival, someone trying to usurp his authority, but Jesus made it clear: “My kingdom is not of this world” (verse 36).



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# Section 1: John 18:36-38a

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- As the true king, Jesus said He had come into the world to testify to the truth (verse 37).
- Pay close attention to the subtleties in this passage.
- No more weighty or consequential definite articles may appear in the whole of Scripture than the definite article “the” in these verses
- Jesus might have said the purpose of His life was to testify to my truth. Or a truth. Or some truth.
- Instead, Jesus referred to the truth.



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# Section 1: John 18:36-38a

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- With a skeptical tone Pilate asked, “What is truth?” (verse 38a).
- This Judean governor may have been the world’s first post-modern relativist, and he lived some two thousand years ago.
- Some commentators have attempted to impose an interpretation that Pilate was sincerely seeking truth. This is not the case.
- Pilate had neither time nor interest for truth.
- Jesus testifying to “the truth” was merely frivolous to Pilate.



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# Section 1: John 18:36-38a

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- How can we know what truth is?
- Truth is what corresponds with reality; it corresponds to what we know to be accurately represented in the world around us.
- Truth exists whether we recognize it or not.
- Pilate didn't recognize the truth in front of him, yet the truth was there.



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# Section 1: John 18:36-38a

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- Truth is absolute—true for all people at all times and in all places—or it is not truth at all.
- Absolute truth is from God. Jesus came “from the Father, full of grace and truth” (1:14).
- Jesus said, “Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice” (18:37). The Source of truth is God and when we connect to the Source—God—we hear the voice of Jesus (truth).
- Therefore, we cannot know truth without God.



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## Section 2: John 1:14-18

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- The first eighteen verses of the Gospel of John are a powerful prologue to the life and teaching of Jesus.
- Jesus' life did not "begin" at His human conception or birth; He is God Himself, who has always existed and is the agent of creation.
- But in the wondrous and amazing power of God, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (verse 14).



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## Section 2: John 1:14-18

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- Because Jesus came from God full of grace and truth, “we have all received grace upon grace from His fullness” (verse 16).
- Because of Jesus we have received one blessing after another.
- By knowing the absolute truth in Christ and dwelling with Him, we go from strength to strength and receive grace upon grace.
- When we follow Christ we live in victory regardless of our outward circumstances.



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## Section 2: John 1:14-18

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- Knowing Jesus Christ is the only way to know truth.
- Earlier, John wrote that Jesus, “the true light,” came into the world, but “the world did not recognize him” and even “his own people did not receive him” (John 1:9-11).
- Our world is in trouble because it has not recognized or received Jesus Christ—the light and the truth.



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## Section 2: John 1:14-18

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- In a society held together by the Judeo-Christian ethic, the principle of absolute truth holds sway.
- Even those who are not ardent followers of Christ have an understanding that absolute truth exists.
- But as society has pushed further away from the tenets of Scripture and has driven Christ ever further out of the people's midst, moral relativism has crept in and is now taking over.



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## Section 2: John 1:14-18

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- Without the light of Christ and the truth of Scripture He gave us, culture has joined Pilate in questioning what truth is.
- Truth—absolute truth—exists. The laws of science and math teach us that.
- Moral and ethical truth also exists—and we know that when we encounter Jesus who is the truth.



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## Section 3: John 8:30-32

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- Truth is not merely something we can know intellectually; we also can experience truth in Christ.
- “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (verse 32).
- But Jesus included a condition with that knowledge. We cannot exaggerate the importance of the word “if” in verse 31.
- We will only find freedom and be saved if we continue walking with Christ. It is not enough to know the truth in our mind. Truth is holistic; we must live it out.



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## Section 3: John 8:30-32

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- Moral relativism falsely claims it is possible to live outside of defined truth and still be free.
- Actually, living outside of Jesus' truth and teaching confines us to a prison of our own making.
- We will know the truth and be set free only by consistently obeying God's Word and continually walking with Jesus.
- "You will know" means that as we pursue truth by following Christ, truth will be obvious.



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## Section 3: John 8:30-32

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- The truth of Christ imparts great freedom.
- But from what exactly are we set free?
- Earlier, Jesus referred to sin and said twice that the religious leaders would die in their sins (John 8:21,24).
- We might also see this freedom in other ways in the Gospel of John: freedom from condemnation (5:24-29), freedom from darkness (12:46), freedom from the power of the evil one (17:15), and freedom from death (5:24).



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## Section 3: John 8:30-32

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- Jeremiah Johnston: I have found the freedom and joy that comes from living in the truth.
- A few years ago, when my wife was expecting triplets, our maternal-fetal physician specialist told us, “I recommend a fetal reduction.”
- Two of our triplets were sharing a placenta, a serious condition called Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome.
- But fetal reduction was nothing more than a euphemism for aborting one of our babies.



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## Section 3: John 8:30-32

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- Years earlier we both had made the decision to follow Jesus and live by His truth.
- But what happens when that truth we've committed to live by is on a collision course with the truth of a dangerous situation?
- In our case, truth was a matter of life or death. It didn't matter. God's truth is absolute.
- My wife told the specialist, "We will trust God. There will not be a 'fetal reduction.'"



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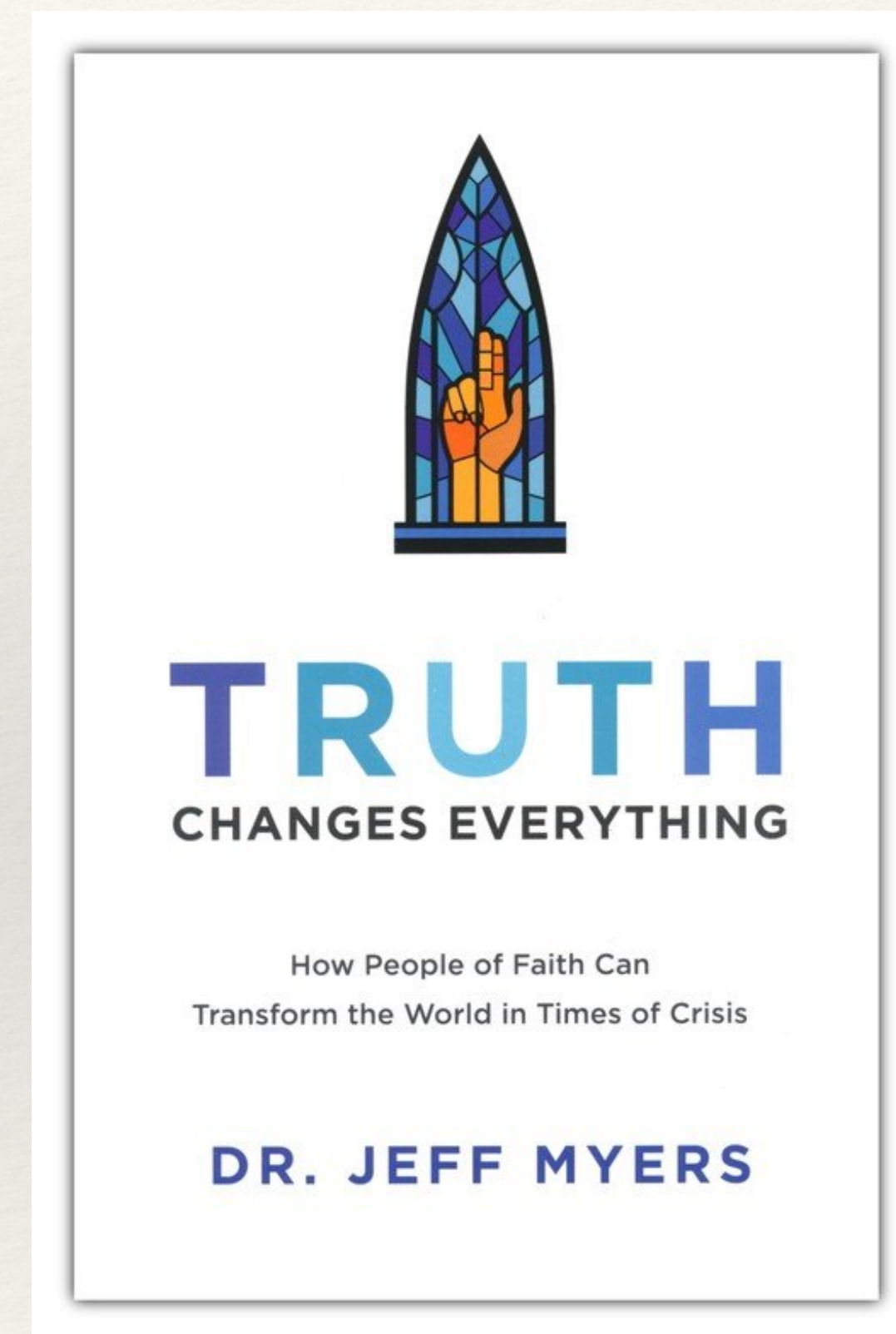
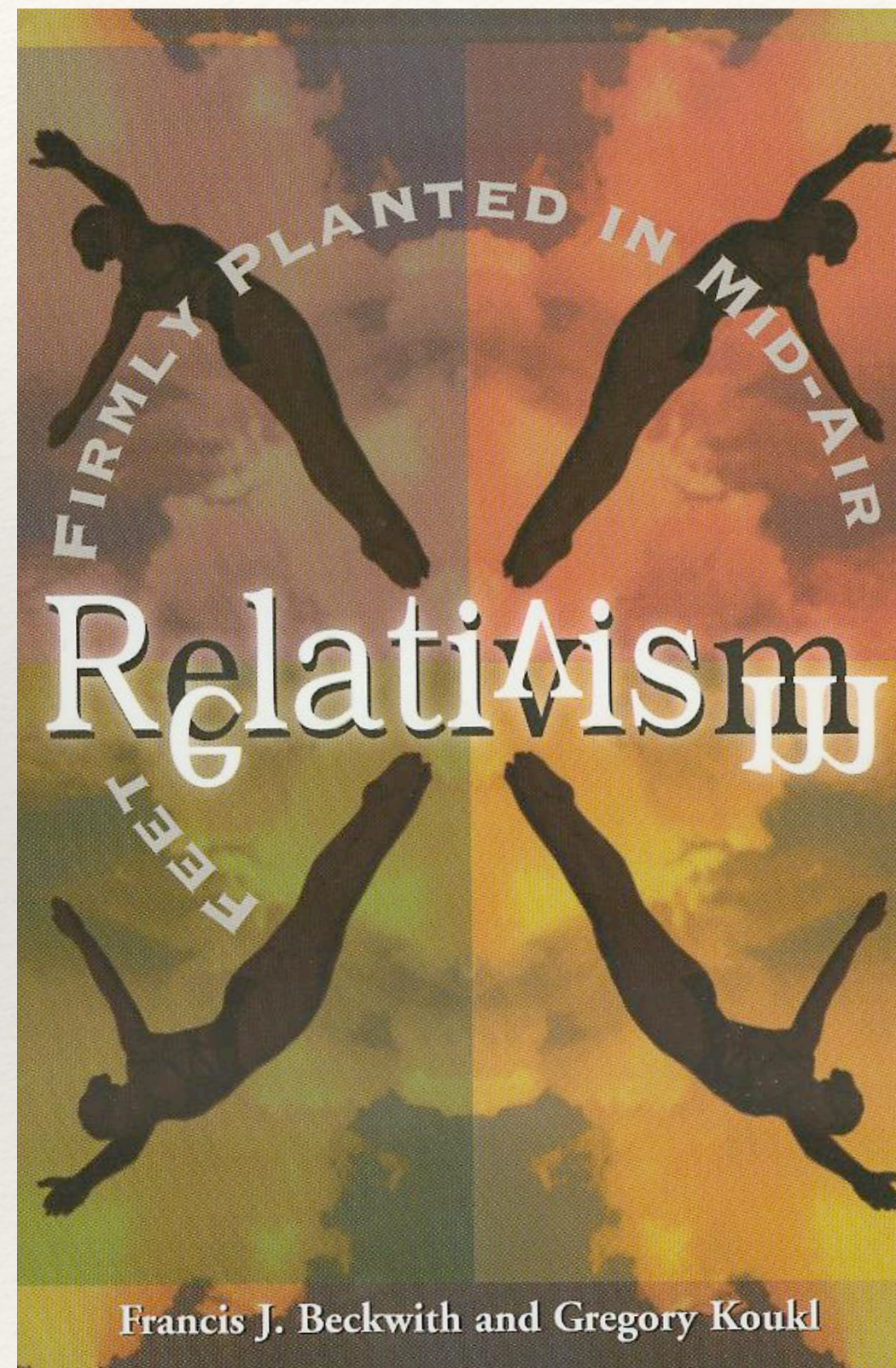
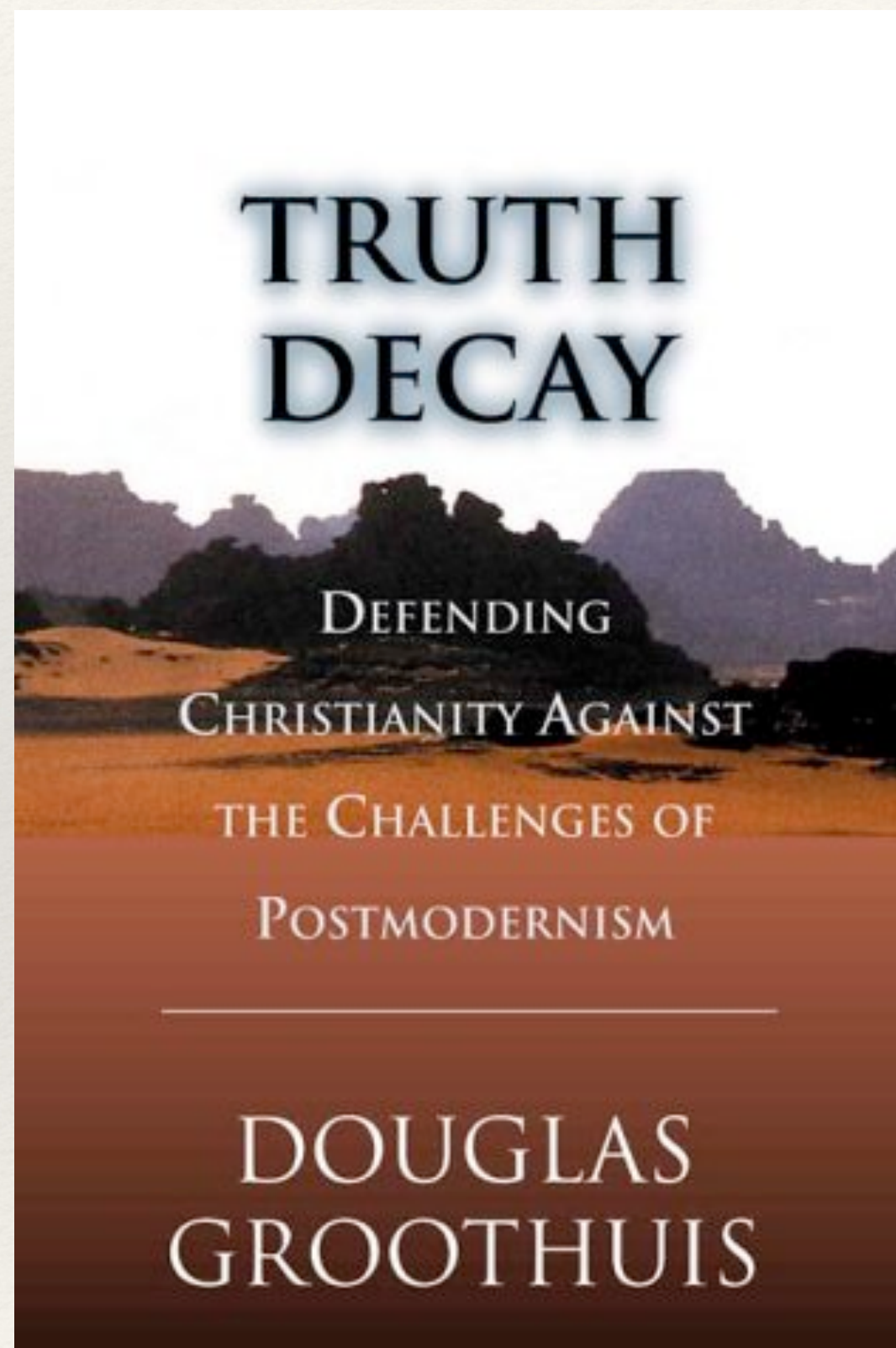
## Section 3: John 8:30-32

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- God lavished us with “grace upon grace.”
- Three years later, our sons are in complete health.
- And Ryder James, the most high-risk of the triplets, has the most amazing ear-to-ear smile.
- What if Audrey and I had followed a different standard of truth and had ended his life?
- Instead, we chose to follow Jesus. The truth of Jesus set us free.



# Resources





# Resources

