Why One Way? (Part 4 of 4)
Serendipity Class — May 5, 2002

<u>Study Guide</u>: *"Why One Way?"* by John MacArthur (available at Christian Words & Works)

<u>Lesson Plan Outline</u>:

♦ April 7: Introduction and The Church vs. the World (Chapter 1)

♦ April 14: Objectivity (Chapter 2) and Rationality (Chapter 3)

♦ April 21: Veracity (Chapter 4) and Authority (Chapter 5)

♦ May 5: Incompatibility (Chapter 6) and Integrity (Chapter 7)

Lesson 4: Incompatibility and Integrity

<u>Key Points</u>

♦ In the first lesson we saw how the postmodern worldview leads us down the road to despair — we are forced to conclude that the universe materialized spontaneously from nothing, that no form of life on earth can claim a superior position over another, and that the end of all things is annihilation; there is no intrinsic value or meaning to any life experience

♦ In the second lesson we saw how the Bible provides an *objective* standard of truth, and that all truth relies on *rationality*; by contrast, postmodernism denies objective truth and exalts contradiction

♦ Last week we saw that *veracity* means the Bible corresponds to truth, and as the very Word of God, has supreme *authority* to rule our lives.

♦ *Incompatibility* means that anything which contradicts biblical truth is false by definition; truth and error cannot coexist

♦ Jesus affirmed the truthfulness of all Scripture and clearly proclaimed Himself as the only means of salvation (e.g., John 14:6).

♦ Intolerance for error is built into Scripture; tolerance for known error is not a virtue; all lies are the progeny of Satan, and God has nothing to do with falsehood (e.g., 2 Corinthians 6:14-16); we are not to negotiate truth for the sake of "peace"

♦ Postmodernism opposes Christianity for the very reason of its exclusive and dogmatic claim of truth

♦ *Integrity* can be defined as a love for truth and consistency in living it out (in other words, holding beliefs that are true and being true to your beliefs)

♦ The Bible names integrity as the *primary* qualification for leadership in the church (e.g., 1 Timothy 3:1-12); Christ reserved His most scathing criticism for the hypocritical Pharisees who refused to practice what they preached (Matthew 23)

♦ The principle of integrity is that a person's actions speak louder than words; actions reflect what someone *truly* believes

♦ We are all part of *Christ's* church; our responsibility is to uphold the truth of His teaching no matter the opposition by the world. The world has *always* stood in opposition to Christ; to

compromise His truth is to turn away from Him and embrace the world.

Discussion Questions

♦ A recent survey (www.barna.org) showed that even in the aftermath of the attack on 9/11, the vast majority of Americans (78%) — as well as the vast majority of professing Christians (68%) — do not believe in an unchanging standard for moral truth. How does this underscore the negative influence of postmodern thinking on the body of Christ?

♦ The survey showed that an even larger percentage of teens do not believe in absolute moral truth (94%). What does this tell us about the necessity of grounding our children in the truth of Scripture?

♦ The survey showed that about an equal number of professing Christians rely on the Bible (26%) as on their feelings (24%) when making moral decisions. What are some biblical examples of what happens when moral choices are made based on feelings rather than God's truth?

♦ The survey showed that 12% of Christian teenagers rely on the Bible for moral guidance while 34% rely on their feelings. What are some of the factors which influence how teens feel about particular choices they have to make?

Take Home

♦ Whether you realize it or not, postmodernism has affected the way you think and act, if only in subtle ways. We are constantly bombarded by the message of the world which screams, "Do your own thing! Live your own life!" This is Satan's age-old technique. As believers, we are commanded to demolish the pretenses of the world and to take every thought captive to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

♦ Do you believe in the absolute, unchanging Word of God as revealed in the Bible? If not, what then is your standard for truth? How can you honestly claim to embrace Christ, and yet reject the truth of His Word? Such double-mindedness has no place in the life of a believer. Take the time today to settle the matter and repent of the unbelief which has crept into your thinking. Make God's Word the solid rock beneath your feet, and then stand firm in His truth.

Supporting Scripture Verses

♦ Galatians 1:8-9 — Paul calls on God to curse anyone who does not teach the truth

♦ Matthew 7:15-20; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1-3 — warnings against false teachers