



LIVE YOUR TRUTH

and Other Lies

Exposing Popular Deceptions That Make Us
Anxious, Exhausted, and Self-Obsessed

Alisa Childers

Bestselling author of *Another Gospel?*

In a social media world where memes are more influential than mentors, it's sometimes difficult to resist the lies of culture. Words matter and ideas have consequences. Let Alisa Childers help you differentiate between current thinking and correct theology. *Live Your Truth and Other Lies* will change the way you think about the claims of culture and their impact on your life.

J. WARNER WALLACE, *Dateline*-featured cold-case detective, senior fellow at the Colson Center for Christian Worldview, and author of *Cold-Case Christianity* and *Person of Interest*

This book is a kind but firm corrective to the nice-sounding lies so often peddled today. We are told to find our own truth, to put ourselves first, to trust ourselves. Alisa Childers charts a better way through her story, cultural examples, humor, and most importantly, biblical truth.

DOUGLAS GROOTHUIS, professor of philosophy at Denver Seminary and author of *Christian Apologetics*, second edition

Relatable, funny, and enlightening! Through personal stories, research, and practical application, Alisa offers insight into how lies have affected our day-to-day lives without our even knowing it. Best of all, she provides simple truth from the Bible to combat this self-obsessed stressful culture.

JOHN L. COOPER, lead singer of Skillet, author of *Awake and Alive to Truth*, and host of the *Cooper Stuff Podcast*

In her own relational style, Alisa gives us a window into the lies of our culture by showing how easily we are deceived when we follow our own opinions rather than the Bible's description of our need and its remedy. Through personal experience and the lens of Scripture, she helps us see how we need to return to the Owner's Manual, the God who created us and instructs us for our own good and for his own glory. This book is immensely readable but also immensely helpful in pointing us to the source of truth. Read this book and give it to someone who is being swayed by the believable but deceptive lies that we confront daily in this information age.

DR. ERWIN W. LUTZER, pastor emeritus of Moody Church, Chicago

Alisa Childers is a gift to this generation. She teaches the gospel with wisdom and clarity while confronting cultural lies with the unchanging truth of God's Word. *Live Your Truth and Other Lies* will compel you to know what you believe and why you believe it, challenging you to live counterculturally for Christ.

GRETCHEN SAFFLES, bestselling author of *The Well-Watered Woman* and founder of Well-Watered Women

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For my husband, Mike,
who has never wavered from Truth



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Trust Me . . . Even Though I've Never Done This Before

No caress is sweeter than your charity and no love is more rewarding than the love of your truth, which shines in beauty above all else.

Saint Augustine, *Confessions*

My finger was literally on the button. Everything in me wanted to click Like and Share. *Why am I not doing it?* I thought. The author of the meme was a Christian, the quote sounded positive and life-affirming, and it would surely encourage and uplift my social media friends. *I still can't do it. But why?* With my index finger lightly tapping the top of the computer mouse, I sat pondering my hesitation. Then, in a sudden burst of clarity, the Holy Spirit was all like, "Snap out of it!" *Oh yeah.* I was hesitating because although this quote sounded nice, *it was not biblical.* It was actually *a lie . . .* a happy little lie.

Have you ever found yourself in a similar spot? I can't tell you how many times I've checked social media only to see a

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message like “Follow your heart.” And I’m thinking, *Awww. That’s nice.* I hit Like before I have a chance to remember, *Oh, wait. The last time I followed my heart it got smashed to bits and took me years of counseling to recover.* “Trust your instincts. They never lie.” That one landed me in traffic court.

What if those little slogans that sound positive and life-affirming are really just lies that will unhinge us from truth, reality, and hope? Relying on popular wisdom can cause unnecessary pain and confusion. In other cases, it leads to absolute bondage to whatever virtue signal of the day is dominating the internet. Are you tired of feeling like you have to check social media to find out what you’re supposed to think? Are you weary of the latest self-help book that promises to set you free but only imprisons you with a laundry list of studies to consider, positive affirmations to recite, Facebook groups to join, causes to advocate for, and other books to read? (It seems as if it were really “self-help,” I shouldn’t need all this outside support!)

In that moment of hesitation over a meme, I realized that there are endless ways truth can be spun, manipulated, covered up, and even used to promote deception. Often, the lie is christened with religious language, so the temptation to share it without thinking is real. As A. W. Tozer said, “Too much of contemporary Christianity is borrowed from the philosophies of the world and even other religions—phrases and mottos that on the surface look great but are not rooted in Scripture or that mostly bolster one’s self-image.”¹

These happy little lies are pithy assertions that sound good, safe, optimistic, and constructive. They look great stitched

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on a pillow, digitized into a meme, or turned into a slogan. They are usually stated in a positive form, like “Believe in yourself” and “You are perfect just as you are.” You see, the best lies are the ones that sound the most beautiful. They are made up of at least 50 percent truth. Sometimes they are almost totally true. But that small bit that spins the entire outcome? That is the important part.

Our culture is brimming with slogans that promise peace, fulfillment, freedom, empowerment, and hope. These messages have become such an integral component of our American consciousness that many people don’t even think to question them. They sound nice and carry an illusion of truth. Often these messages are popularized by social media celebrities who claim to be Christians, promote their materials as being in agreement with Christian principles, and publish on Christian platforms and venues.

The problem? They are lies.

NEWBIE

More than ever before, people are looking to their own hearts, opinions, preferences, biases, and predispositions to guide them through life. In other words, we have learned to trust our feelings. But how is that working out for us? It is leading to all sorts of problems. And in so many cases . . . didn’t we get *ourselves* into this mess in the first place?

Today we have authors, influencers, and life-coach gurus peddling their personal transformation stories as models for others to follow. Their advice is frequently based on very

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recent life-altering decisions that seem to make them happy in the moment but have not stood the test of time. In some cases, their books come out within a few months of a major life change, divorce, paradigm shift in identity, or spiritual deconstruction, which they think helped them discover their true selves. Often their instructions include throwing out thousands of years of wisdom (ahem . . . the Bible) and hundreds of faithful and godly Bible teachers (*Elisabeth Elliot? What a prude. Charles Spurgeon? Ugh . . . what a drag*) and replacing them with something (or someone) they decided to try literally five minutes ago. And we are supposed to follow these people? Reader. Listen. Please do not take life advice from someone who is in the middle of a major crisis. Unless they are gleaned from time-tested, biblical wisdom and pointing you to Christ (not yourself), it would be wise to hit the pause button on that hot mess and just wait and see how it all pans out over the next ten years or so.

Taking advice from someone because they're funny, self-confident, or Instagram savvy makes me think of a hypothetical scenario in the air. First, you should know that I've been on more airplanes than I can count. In fact, on early-morning flights, I can fall asleep on any plane, in any seat, in any row. I've practically got it down to a science. Before take-off, I unpack my neck pillow, insert my earplugs, and cover my eyes with the top of my hoodie, lacing it up tight. With my head tilted back and just my nose and mouth peeking out of the hoodie hole, I'm usually in snooze-ville by the time the plane takes off. If I don't wake up until landing, I consider it a personal victory. If none of my traveling buddies throws a

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Cheez-It into my unconsciously wide-open mouth—double victory.

Obviously, I don't tend to get nervous about flying. I sleep like a baby. Maybe this is because I have flown so frequently, or maybe it's because I've got other things on my mind. Mainly I think it's because I know that the training pilots go through is rigorous . . . especially when it comes to commercial flying, where the lives of so many citizens are at stake. At the end of the day, I trust the airline industry to keep me safe.

But imagine I step on a plane and just after takeoff the pilot announces, "Good morning, everyone. I'd like to thank you for joining me on my very first flight ever. Not to worry, I've spent quite a few hours in classroom education and flight simulators. Oh, and our copilot couldn't make it this morning, but I feel confident I'll do a great job and get you all to your destination safely and on time." Can you imagine the level of anxiety that would strike the heart of every passenger in that moment? That's because *trust* is a huge part of feeling safe and secure.

But what and whom can we trust when it comes to knowledge about life, death, goodness, and purpose? I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that our culture has never been more divided, polarized, or suspicious. No one knows where they can find reliable information about anything from brownie recipes to personal health to morality to politics. Depression and anxiety are skyrocketing, especially among young people.²

I don't know about you, but I find that relying on whatever the loudest and most attractive voices say is true on a

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given day is absolutely exhausting. In many cases, these voices are like that brand-new airline pilot announcing to the passengers that he's never really done this before, but they should definitely trust him with their lives. It's like, "Hi, I'm a self-help guru who keeps making really bad decisions and many of my relationships are in shambles. But I'm super authentic about it, so you should for sure let me be your life coach."

HOW TO BUILD A FIRM FOUNDATION

Reader, I'm going to make a bold claim. I think that ditching the jargon and clinging to the timeless truths of the Bible is the most freeing and stabilizing thing we can do. It will ease anxiety, quell depression, and calm a restless heart. Recognizing who we are in Christ is the ultimate self-care because the Word of God doesn't reinvent itself along with a constantly changing culture. In fact, you should know at the outset that I wrote this book with the assumption that the Bible is authoritative for our lives. My first book, *Another Gospel?*, explains the evidence I discovered for staking my life on Scripture after my own faith was severely shaken. The short version is this: Scripture has stood the test of thousands of years, been endorsed by millions who have been transformed by its truth, and given countless believers a solid foundation for knowing God and living out their faith. We have good evidence from history, archaeology, and biblical scholarship to trust that we have an accurate copy and that what it records is true. Jesus told us in Matthew 24:35 that his words will never pass away. We know from Hebrews 13:8

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that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He doesn't change, and his words will remain forever. To put it another way, I believe the Bible is the Word of God because that was Jesus' view. I am a Jesus follower, and my beliefs reflect what he taught.

In Matthew 7:24, he says, "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock." He goes on to explain that rain and floods can't wash that house away, and winds can't blow it down no matter how hard it gets bombarded. On the other hand, Jesus says that whoever hears his words and doesn't do them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. Where are Jesus' words recorded? In the New Testament. And what does Jesus say in the New Testament about the rest of the Bible? He continually refers to the Old Testament Scriptures as the "Word of God." He also claims to *actually be* the God of the Old Testament, so in that sense, there really is no such thing as "red letters" in the Bible. They are all red letters. Jesus is God, and God inspired Scripture "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). As followers of Jesus, shouldn't we take him at his word?³

In many ways, this is a book about the Bible. It's also a book about logic and common sense and the ridiculous ways we talk ourselves out of those things. Mostly, though, it's a book about planting our feet on the bedrock of God's truth . . . truth that doesn't evolve with cultural trends. As a wise friend once said to me, "I'd rather have a shack on solid ground than a mansion on the sand."

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In the next chapter, we'll consider some critical reasons it's so easy to become confused today—the changing nature of language and the tendency to focus on ourselves. In each chapter after that, we will examine a popular deception and compare that lie with what the Bible says. Then, reader, you will have a choice to make. Will you choose to stand on the unchanging truth of the God-breathed Scriptures, or will you choose whatever trendy catchphrase people are currently obsessed with? The choice is yours.

As for me and my house? We choose to build on the rock. We choose peace. We choose hope. We choose to live *the* truth.