

youthESource Bible Study

Alones, but Never Alone

Part One: Scripture and Christ Alone - Leader's Guide

by Sara Borgstede

Overview:

Q: What are the "Alones" of the church?

A: *Sola* is the Latin word for Alone. Five phrases came from writings during the Protestant Reformation (the time during and after Martin Luther), based on teaching throughout Scripture, to explain their beliefs.

The Five Solas (or "Alones") are:

- *Sola Fide*, by faith alone.
- *Sola Scriptura*, by Scripture alone.
- *Solus Christus*, through Christ alone.
- *Sola Gratia*, by grace alone.
- *Soli Deo Gloria*, glory to God alone.

This three-part study (Part One: Scripture & Christ alone, Part Two: Faith & Grace Alone, Part Three: Glory to God alone) will explore each *Sola* and offer a modern-day application for teens.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Introduction Activity:

Pray for your students before they arrive! The Holy Spirit will direct your teaching.

Have students stand and line up along one wall of the room. Say: Imagine there is a rating scale across the room with a 1 being on one side and a 10 being on the other side. 1 is absolutely false and 10 is absolutely true. I'm going to say some sources where we get information. When I do, you stand where in the room you believe that source of information belongs for its amount of truth. For example, if you would rate "Twitter" as a 5 because half the information you read there is true and half is false, stand in the middle of the room.

Rate the following sources of information:

Newspapers	Magazines	Textbooks	Facebook
Websites	TV news programs	TV commercials	Videos Clips (You Tube, etc.)

Depending on the trust level of your group, continue to have students rank the following while standing, or have students sit down and think silently about the next list, or call on volunteers to answer:

My Parents	Other Adults (Teachers, Coaches, Youth Leaders, Pastors)
My Friends	The Bible

Ask: Where do you receive most of your information on a daily basis?

Answers will vary

How do you judge if what you are learning is true or untrue? What do you use as criteria?

Answers will vary. Discuss truth in sources as well as information used for marketing purposes such as in commercials, and how we can sort fact from opinion. Textbooks may include mostly facts but some incorrect information about evolution or outdated incorrect information. Parents and other adults are human and give wrong information at times.

Part One: What is Truth?

A popular teaching in our world today is Situational Ethics. Situational Ethics is the belief that decision making should be based upon the circumstances of a situation, not an absolute truth. (See <http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?t1=s&word=SITUATIONALETHICS>) According to this theory, pioneered by Joseph Fletcher (1901-1991), an Episcopal priest, moral decisions are made based on each situation according to what seems best at the time and what seems to be most loving.

At first it sounds great to base a moral groundwork on love as the standard. After all, we all want to be as loving as possible. Fletcher even used Bible verses (1 John 4:8) to support his ideas.

Do you have ideas for what difficulties could arise with this system of life philosophy?

Each person's idea of love can be different. What is loving in the moment might not be the best thing for someone long-term. Without an absolute truth, the goal is always shifting according to situation or opinion.

Perhaps you have seen this popular bumper sticker:



(<http://flickr.com/photos/pbyrne/165212878/>)

What do you think this Coexist slogan means? What are your thoughts about seeing the Christian cross along with the other religious symbols?

The Coexist Symbol was created by Polish designer Piotr Mlodozieniec using three symbols. The "c" stands for Islam, the "x" (the star of David) for Judaism, and the "t" for Christianity. Today there are several different versions with additions of the peace sign, pagan/Wiccan pentacle, the male/female symbol, and the Chinese ying/yang also included.

The concept is that all religions worship the same God and should exist in harmony together.

In addition to Situational Ethics (choose whatever is right for the current situation), another popular belief in our world today is Religious Tolerance, a belief that “all roads lead to God” or all religions have truth within them and should be equally accepted, such as is symbolized in the bumper sticker above.

What outcomes do you see with Religious Tolerance?

Various. We are to show love to all people. However we must not water down our beliefs or accept all beliefs as our own.

Let's learn about God's view of truth. Read the following passages with a partner and summarize what the verse says about the Bible.

2 Peter 1:20-21: No scripture is from the prophet's own interpretation. It's not from men but from the Holy Spirit

2 Timothy 3:16-17: All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, correcting, and training. We are equipped to do good works.

1 Corinthians 2:13: We speak in words not taught by human wisdom, but by the Spirit, using spiritual truth with spiritual words.

Colossians 2:8: Do not get caught up in human ideas or traditions of the world, rather than Christ.

John 14:26: (Jesus speaking) The Holy Spirit will teach you all things and remind you of everything Jesus said.

Isaiah 55:11: The word of the Lord will not return void, but will do what it set out to accomplish.

Sola Scriptura, by Scripture alone, means the Bible is our only source of ultimate truth. Reading these passages, what is your overall understanding of how the Holy Spirit works through the words of the Bible?

The Holy Spirit inspired men to write the Bible. The words are unique to each writer in their own voice, but it is God's inspired word, and the Holy Spirit fills us to understand as we read. God's Word accomplishes what it sets out to do in our lives.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. This passage can be somewhat tricky because Paul talks about becoming “all things to all people” in order to win people for Jesus. Some people have used this Bible verse over the years to justify shady or sinful behaviors in order to try to win people for Christ.

What do you think Paul meant by “being all things to all people”?

Paul taught that believers are to “abstain from any appearance of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22). Paul would not have taught anything against Christ and His ways. Paul meant we are to explain in ways that make sense to the people we are speaking to, and to be relatable.

Think of people in your life who are not Christians. How can you relate to them so they can understand your faith, yet not compromise your values and beliefs?

Various answers. Show love and kindness. Be relatable and friendly, not proud about faith, but not compromising what you believe.

The key theme through all of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, is that Christ is our Savior, or *Solus Christus*, through Christ alone.

Read Acts 4:10-13. What do Peter and John proclaim about Jesus as they stand before the rulers and elders?
By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, we were able to heal the man who stands before you. Salvation is found in no one else but Jesus.

Note vs. 13. What do the people notice about Peter and John and what impresses them? How can this encourage us?

The people were impressed by the courage of Peter and John and noticed that they were ordinary, unschooled men. We can be encouraged that we don't need special training to share Jesus with our friends and people around us. The Holy Spirit will give us the words to say.

Closing Activity:

The Word of the Lord will not return void! Find ways to make God's Word part of your everyday life and those moments spent will be invested forever.

*Choose 2 verses from those we read today to write on index cards. Put them on your bathroom or bedroom mirror, or somewhere you will see them every day.

*Program an alarm on your phone to remind you to read your Bible for 10 minutes every morning or at night before you go to bed.

*Check out the You Version Bible App for Bible Reading Plans to read part of the Bible every day.

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