



## GOD'S ANSWERS: Session One

*What does this mean? The role of God's truths and our culture's worldviews in shaping our thoughts.*

### Opening Prayer

Almighty God, Your Word is truth. Keep us steadfast in Your Word even as the evil one seeks to whisper his lies into our ears. Keep us with Your Son who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amen.

### Introduction

#### **Q: What is the Augsburg Confession?**

*A: The Augsburg Confession is a summary of what Lutheran Christians understand the Scriptures to teach about various topics of the faith. It was presented to Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, at the Diet of Augsburg on June 25, 1530 because he had asked all Christians to give their confession concerning their beliefs in the hope that unity could be achieved in his empire. It still serves today's Lutherans as a brief confession of the truths we believe.*

#### **Q: What is the purpose of a confession like the Augsburg Confession for us as Christians today?**

*A: A confession can serve to help others understand what we believe. However, this study is aimed at how this confession shapes one's worldview and interaction with the constant barrage of information that we all receive daily in our world. This study is aimed at helping Lutheran Christians understand the "What does this mean?" of this confession. To that end we now consider various articles of the Augsburg Confession, receiving God's answers.*

### Basic Considerations

#### **Q: What is the relationship between God and truth?**

*A: God is truth. Therefore, His Word in the Bible is entirely true. Read the following verses aloud to emphasize this point.*

- *Psalm 18:30: "This God—his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him."*
- *John 3:33: "Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true."*

**Q: What is the relationship between Satan and truth?**

*A: While Satan says things that often sound true, in reality his words are always deceptive. Read the following verses aloud to emphasize this point.*

- *John 8:43- 44 “Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies”*

**Q: What does it mean that the devil is “the father of lies?”**

*A: Satan is the source of lies and delights in multiplying lies among the people of God. You might speak briefly about his work in the Garden of Eden when he tempted Adam and Eve to distrust God’s truth and exchange it for his lies (Genesis 3).*

**Q: Why does clinging to the truths of God matter?**

*A: God warns that leaving behind the truths that He has revealed to us in His Word is dangerous and can lead to spiritual death. Read the following verses aloud to emphasize this point.*

- *Isaiah 5:20-21: “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!”*

**Q: How ultimately do the truths of God not only inform us, but form us as God’s children?**

*A: God reveals and so we confess. He talks and we echo His truth from our lips and in our lives. Our confession has consequences. These consequences are that we come to know the Truth, that we reject what is false, and that our interaction with the world around us is shaped by what we believe and who we are according to God’s Truth.*

**God’s revealed truth – Augsburg Confession Article One**

***Read aloud:***

**“Our churches teach with common consent that the decree of the Council of Nicaea about the unity of the divine essence and the three persons is true. It is to be believed without any doubt. God is one divine essence who is eternal, without a body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. He is the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible (Nehemiah 9:6) Yet there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). These three persons are of the same essence as the Fathers have used it. We use it to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself.”**

**Q: How is this truth (particularly the existence of God) undercut in our world?**

*A: After allowing some time for answers to be offered, use one or more of the examples on the next page labeled "Cultural attempts to undermine this truth" or other examples of which you are aware. It would be wise to preview these videos first in order to make sure they are appropriate for those you are teaching. These examples are meant to remind us that our beliefs are not being challenged most regularly through sophisticated arguments made by scholars. They are most often challenged by the things we consume on our phones, the internet, in books, through our televisions, and in other media. There the devil makes a concerted effort to whisper into our ears, "Did God really say?" or even "Is there a God to say anything?"*

*In most cases he does not seek to rob us away from Christ in one grand attempt, but is rather patient, letting all his lies add up within our hearts and minds until disbelief rules and casts out the last vestiges of belief. We must therefore be careful what we take in, be critical of its message, and constantly return to the Word and things shaped by the Word to keep our worldview steadfastly faithful to Jesus. Choose as many examples as seems profitable for your discussion. After that, return to finish the study below.*

**Q: Seeing as how Satan uses elements of culture to war against the truths of God, what approach must we take when it comes to what we put before our eyes and in our ears?**

*A: We must be careful and wise in regards to the things we consume from our culture. Instead, we must inwardly digest God's word so that it dwells richly within us and think on things that God reveals as true and pure. Read the following verses aloud to emphasize this point.*

- *Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."*
- *Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."*

**Closing Prayer:**

Ever-wise God, reveal to us your truth in your Word forever and give us ears to hear, minds to understand, hearts to believe, and lives formed by Your truths. We pray in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

## Cultural attempts to undermine this truth:

*One tactic used to argue against the existence of God is to simply suggest or imagine that He does not exist.*

Listen to John's Lennon's song "Imagine" performed by the acapella group Penatonix. Discuss how this song in beautiful music suggests one idea for what a perfect existence of humanity on earth might look like. Note how the song's lyrics suggest that the path to such perfection is rejection of belief in God or the practice of religion.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLiWFUDJ95I>

*Another tactic used to argue against the existence of God is to claim that are inconsistencies in the Bible or the fact that not all Christians interpret the Bible means there cannot be one true God.*

Watch the clip from the West Wing where the president tries to mock the Christian in the room by suggesting that the Bible says way too many things modern culture rejects to be considered authoritative on any issue. Note how this argument denies not only Scripture's truth but the existence of the One who reveals it. While this argument can be answered easily with a proper understanding of Old Testament Law, the point of this study is not to argue against specific arguments but to recognize how prevalent they are in our culture. Discuss the lies Satan tells in this speech.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSXJzybEeJM>

*Yet another tactic used to argue against the existence of God is to claim that there simply is no real evidence that God exists.*

Watch the clip from the movie "Contact." Note how the woman in the clip tries to argue that belief in God is ridiculous since there is no scientific proof of His existence in her mind. Discuss how many people fall into this lie in our day.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcqaHxI5-P8>

*Still another tactic used to argue against the existence of God is to claim that God is just a creation of the mind. It is claimed that any experience traditionally sought through religion can be easily experienced on earth apart from God.*

Listen to the song "Holy" by Florida Georgia Line. Note how language that is usually reserved for God is used instead for the singer's lover. Discuss how this song through its lyrics suggests that knowing God is no different than experiencing physical intimacy with another human. Discuss how many people leave behind God for pleasure seeking.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zB0ZdR5y0iM>

Another example is the song "Take me to Church."

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0imaSCnSuA>