

Thank you for your interest in the “*Folks Like Us*” Bible studies by Fran Sciacca. Whether you’re using them for your own spiritual growth and journey, or as a resource for your small group, Sunday school, or homeschool program, you’ll soon discover why these studies originally sold over 600,000 copies in their print editions. The recent decision by the publisher to discontinue print editions and to return the publishing rights back to Fran has given him the freedom to make the nearly 70 individual character studies available to you...at no cost.

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Now that you’ve begun to explore the Bible study resources developed by Fran Sciacca, you will almost certainly benefit from the other things that he has made available:

- **“*The Road to Shalom*” podcast** – thought-provoking and thoroughly biblical, Fran explores what the Bible calls “shalom,”—the way things are *supposed* to be in God’s Kingdom, why they’re not, and how to restore them. All three seasons are available on the website.
- ***Biblical literacy courses*** – Three, 13-week Bible courses covering the entire Bible. Includes individual course books, audio, and optional animated slide supplements. Course books and animated slide supplements may be purchased on the web store.
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FOLKS  
Like Us

PONTIUS PILATE

“What Is Truth...Does It Matter?”

Timeless truths from our ancient past,  
for a journey with God in the modern era.

**Fran Sciacca**

## “Folks Like Us” — an introduction

Over the years I’ve written and published a number of Bible studies that collectively have sold well over a half-million copies. They were forged, most of them, in the furnaces of pain, doubt, and loneliness. Maybe that’s why they were well-used, they touched people where they hurt most.

Recently, my publisher decided that they no longer wanted to handle the books that contained these 60 or so individual studies. So, I’ve decided to make them available to any who might benefit from them. At no cost.

I have always believed that because God thought it best to become human in the Incarnation, that perhaps “incarnational truth” was His preferred method of revealing Himself and His purposes to us. I suppose that’s where the basic genre of these studies originated. I wanted to provide believers with Bible studies rooted in our ancestral past. The lives of men and women, who it turns out, are “folks just like us” in so many ways.

So, please take your time and work slowly through as many of these studies as you care to do... there’s a lot of them! And may God use the combination of the struggles and insights of your *ancient* brothers and sisters, combined with those of mine, your modern brother, to help you in your spiritual journey. That is the goal of this project.

Warmly in The Lamb,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Sciacca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran Sciacca  
Birmingham, AL

# PONTIUS PILATE

## “What Is Truth...Does It Matter?”

**A**BIDING PRINCIPLE – My sanctification is dependent upon the truth contained in the Scriptures. God's Word is His primary tool in teaching me truth. If I am not a *student* of the Scriptures, I am not growing in Christlikeness.

*“News may come that Truth is sick, hut never that it is dead.” —William Gurnall*

**O**ne of the buzzwords of early twenty-first-century journalists, educators, and sociologists was postmodernism, which has become a five-syllable summary of Western civilization's goodbye party for the notion of truth. Objective truths, universal truths, and even patriotic self-evident truths are no longer welcome in the world of higher education, ethics, politics, and least of all in the world of entertainment. Supposedly we have moved beyond the “modern” era, in which truth was tolerated, to a new stage in which we can construct truth as it is needed.

But the Bible tells quite a different tale, one that goes back before modern or even premodern days. Seven hundred years before Christ, there was a problem with truth. The prophet Isaiah proclaimed:

*So justice is driven hack, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice.*

(Isaiah 59:14-15, emphasis added)

While this is an appalling statement, the greatest tragedy of all is that Isaiah's shocking accusation was made about God's people, not the pagan nation that was about to invade Israel!

The present lack of affection for truth in our time has nothing to do with progress and modernity. It has everything to do with depravity. When Adam and Eve wondered whether God could be trusted, and then listened to Satan's accusation, “*Did God really say...*,” truth became an unwelcome intruder into the lives of those created to delight in it. Yet another travesty is that this notion of negotiating about what truth is and isn't has crept into the faith community. Many Christians, consciously or unconsciously, have adopted a compromising commitment to biblical truth. How about you? What is *your own* commitment to truth? Do you know?

**KEY SCRIPTURE:** John 1:1-18; 18:28-38

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### STUDY QUESTIONS...

1. Read John 18:38. Do you think Pilate was seriously seeking an answer to his question concerning truth? Why or why not?
2. How important do you think it is to have an answer to this question? Why?

3. What do the following passages have to say about the importance of having an answer to Pilate's question?
  - a. Jeremiah 5:1-2 –
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. 2 Thessalonians 2:10 –
  
4. How might Jesus have answered Pilate's question if given the chance to respond (see John 14:6; 17:17)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Read Matthew 4:1-10. What would you say was Jesus' view of Scripture as He faced temptation in the desert?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Look at what Jesus said to the Sadducees in Matthew 22:23- 29. Considering that they were educated students of the Old Testament, *and* the intellectual elite of their day, why is Jesus' statement in verse 29 so significant!'
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. How does John 17:17 relate to the process of sanctification in your life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What do the following verses have to say about truth and Scripture?
  - a. Psalm 51:6 –
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Psalm 119:9,24 –
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. John 4:23-24 –
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - d. John 8:31-32 –

e. .John 8:44 –

f. John 15:26 –

g. John 17:17 –

## LOOKING BACK...

**T**he Bible tells us that God's Word is truth, and that those who ignore or neglect it do so at great peril to themselves. It is the agent of our sanctification—the very thing that God wishes to use to conform us to the likeness of His Son.

The Word of God was the standard for the Son of God while He was on earth. He used it to combat Satan, the father of lies. He promised His followers that when He left, the Holy Spirit (of truth) would remind them of the things that He had told them, instructing them in truth. In a world where one man's lie is another man's truth, followers of Christ must know the truth, cling to it, and submit to its authority. To do anything less is not only dangerous, it's disobedience.

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

9. a. Ezekiel 33:31-32 contains an ancient chilling description of the condition of God's people, a condition that was responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jews' captivity in Babylon. In your own words, describe the approach to truth that was popular among the believers referred to here.

b. If God were to describe *your* personal commitment to truth and Scripture, would it sound similar to or different from the description of His people in this passage? Be honest!

10. Read Acts 17:1-11. Both groups of people that Paul reasoned with were Jews. They heard the same message from the same messenger. However, their responses couldn't have been more different. What do you think was at the heart of each of the two responses?

- Thessalonians –

• Bereans –

11. What was the Bereans' commitment to truth, and how did they go about testing truth-related claims?
12. a. In what ways were the Bereans "open-minded"?
- b. In what ways were they "closed-minded"?
13. The verb translated *examined* in Acts 17:11 connotes an interrogation by sifting, looking for error. It implies that this was a characteristic pattern for the Bereans. How were these Jews different from the Sadducees Jesus rebuked in question 6 on page 5? (Use your imagination.)
14. Below is a partial list of important issues in which a basis for truth is crucial. Consider each of them prayerfully, and honestly indicate whether you are currently more like a Sadducee (don't really know what the Scriptures teach) or a Berean (can turn to specific scriptures that deal with this area).

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Sadducee</b>	<b>Berean</b>
Salvation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sanctification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The gospel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suffering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Missions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parenting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Integrity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Holy Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prayer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Authority of the Bible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Satan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. What did you discover about yourself and your own familiarity with the truth from this chapter?

16. Review your list on page 7 and think about the areas that you checked under the "Sadducee" column where you have been guided by "Christian common sense" instead of firsthand familiarity with the Bible. Select one area that you believe needs to move over to the "Berean" column, and commit to do two of the following:

- Pray daily that your spiritual growth in this area will increase.
- Locate eight to twelve verses that speak to this area, and memorize one per week for the next few months.
- Ask someone you know for help in locating Bible study materials that deal with this area.
- Attend a Sunday school class that covers this area or a related one.
- Find a friend, mentor, or family member and ask if he or she would like to study this subject with you for several months.

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY** (optional)

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- God's passion for truth in us – Psalm 51:6
- Truth and sanctification – John 17:17