

STUDY GUIDE

How Modern Culture Is Robbing
Billions of People of Happiness

THE BIGGEST LIE IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY

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Billions of People of Happiness

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INTRODUCTION

“The Biggest Lie in the History of Christianity” makes for an enticing title, doesn’t it? But the point of the book isn’t to just get you to pick it up out of curiosity (although that is a good starting point). The point of the book is to obliterate the lie once and for all—the lie which has so cunningly snuck its way into our culture, our lives, and our faith.

As a community, it is important that Christians encourage and challenge each other in our journeys. This companion guide is meant to facilitate the important undertaking of building and nourishing fruitful camaraderie.

As a group, you can dismantle the lie which has no place in our lives and begin to rebuild any damage it has done. The accountability and encouragement will help you take concrete steps in rebelling against this lie and begin to act instead from a place of truth, goodness, and beauty.

This book—regardless of its enticing title—will do very little on its own. Its existence doesn’t do much without your active participation. This lie needs to be done away with and it will take every Christian putting their foot down in revolt and beginning a new era of holy men and women who live differently and love differently.

Please know we are praying for you. We are here for support and we’re incredibly hopeful about the future of Christianity.

Here’s to undoing the biggest lie that has ever been told. Something wonderful is about to happen!

The Dynamic Catholic Team

BEST PRACTICES

People are busy and we want to be respectful of that. This companion breaks up the book into five sessions in order to make the reading assignments completely manageable for participants.

Ideally, individuals will read the three chapters that will be discussed in the next meeting beforehand on their own and come prepared to study with their thoughts or questions about the material. We recommend you meet once a week. In preparation for the first meeting, we recommend participants read chapters 1-3 of *The Biggest Lie in the History of Christianity*.

The discussion questions are geared toward stimulating meaningful conversations within the group as well as helping individuals come away each week with action steps aimed at undoing the lie in their own lives.

Practical tips:

Keep your meeting time and place consistent. Once a week at a time after working hours in a location that has accessible parking is great.

Get to know each other. Even if you have already been meeting for some time, it can be beneficial to begin your time together as a group with a fun, lighthearted question. Some of my favorites are:

- Which fictional character would you want to be your best friend?
- What is your dream vacation?
- If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life what would it be?
- What is one of your favorite (or funniest or most awkward) childhood memories?

Starting sessions this way helps individuals get to know each other a little and feel more comfortable together.

Allow room for silence. It's okay if there are moments of quiet in the group. It may feel uncomfortable or awkward, but people need time to process or to summon the courage to speak up.

Follow up with participants. Toward the beginning of the sessions, ask participants how it went with their action step (under "Act") in the last week. When did they succeed? Where do they need extra help?

Pray. Start every session with the opening prayer (found on the next page) and close each session with the closing prayer (found at the end of each session); you can also give an opportunity for individuals to offer personal prayer intentions.

OPENING PRAYER

To be prayed at the beginning of each session

Father, thank you for the gift of truth.
Thank you for wanting to share this truth
with each and every one of us.

Father, please help us to come to know truth
more fully together and to live it out
as bravely as we can.

Holy Spirit, inspire us
with the wisdom to understand
what we are meant to take away from this session
and to share what is helpful
to ourselves and others.

Jesus, thank you for dying on our behalf
for the sake of truth.
Please guide us closer to you
and your heart today.

Amen.

SESSION ONE: IT'S PERSONAL

God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.

— Augustine of Hippo

Read: Chapters 1-3

Reflect: Jesus—the Son of God—would have come down to Earth and died on the cross if you were the only person to die for. The salvation of the world starts with you. Our God wants a deep and personal relationship with *you*—will you let him love you?

Discuss:

1. Do you feel that you have personally experienced the love of God? If so, give an example.
2. What does your Happiness Progress Report look like? Take a moment to rate your happiness level on a scale of one to ten (ten being completely happy). Share with the group what is holding you back from achieving a ten if you are not there. Can you recall a particularly joyful moment you have experienced? What made it so?
3. Do you believe that God wants you to be happy? Why or why not?
4. Can you think of some ways you have been affected by modern secular culture—specifically the view of relativism and happiness?
5. Have you ever been disappointed by the culture's view of happiness (i.e., happiness is getting what you want)?

6. Have you answered the four big questions mentioned in chapter 3? If not, take some time to do so now:
- Who am I?
 - What am I here for?
 - What matters most?
 - What matters least?

Takeaway: Allowing God to love you is the first step toward transformation—both your transformation and the world’s.

Act: Make an effort to be present to the times when you feel that God may be showing his love for you this week. Maybe it’s in a beautiful sunrise or sunset, kind words from a friend, the affection from your spouse . . . practice being receptive to that love.

Pray:

**“I Thirst”
Mother Teresa**

It is true. I stand at the door of your heart, day and night.

Even when you are not listening, even when you doubt it could be me, I am there:
waiting for even the smallest signal of your response,
even the smallest suggestion of an invitation
that will permit me to enter.

I want you to know that each time you invite me, I do come always, without fail.
Silent and invisible I come, yet with a power and a love most infinite, bringing the
many gifts of my Spirit.

I come with my mercy, with my desire to forgive and heal you, with a love for you
that goes beyond your comprehension.

A love in each detail, so grand like the love I have received from my Father:
“I have loved all of you as the Father has loved me . . .” —John 15:10

Announcements:

- The reading for our next gathering is chapters 4-6.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, time and place).

SESSION TWO: THE LIES WE LIVE

The pursuit of truth and beauty is a sphere of activity in which we are permitted to remain children all our lives.

— Albert Einstein

Read: Chapters 4–6

Discuss:

1. How does your desire to be liked affect your decisions?
2. What is your relationship with social media? Do you feel that it helps or hurts your efforts to become the-best-version-of-yourself?
3. Which of the top five lies about Christianity (found in chapter 5) have you found it easiest to buy into? Why?
4. Did you ever consider holiness for yourself before?
5. What do you think it means to be a saint?
6. What do you think it would look like for *you* to be a saint? Do you believe it is attainable?

Takeaway: Holiness is possible for you.

Act: Write down one way you can be a-better-version-of-yourself this week (e.g., checking in with a friend going through a hard time, reading at night instead of watching television, going to an exercise class, etc.). Keep this note somewhere you can see it every day.

Pray:

**Holy Spirit, inspire hope in us this week
that we can become holy.
Please help us see how our wounds and brokenness
help us become the-best-version-of-ourselves
and show us the opportunities given to us daily
to choose what is good.
Thank you for loving us so relentlessly,
thank you for our loved ones,
and thank you for choosing us
to be saints.**

Amen.

Announcements:

- The reading for our next gathering is chapters 7-9.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, time and place).

SESSION THREE: THE SOLUTION

*As to the past, let us entrust it to God's mercy, the future to divine Providence.
Our task is to live holy the present moment.*

— St. Gianna Molla

Read: Chapters 7-9

Discuss:

1. After reading the definition, can you think of a Holy Moment that has had a significant impact on your life? If so, share one with the group.
2. Do you feel that you know what God is calling you to do at this point in your life?
3. What are some ways you can become more in tune to the whispers of the Holy Spirit daily?
4. What are some of the ways you believe the world needs changing today (large or small scale)?
5. How do you feel called to change the world in your life?
6. What do you think gets in the way of Christians coming together to rally behind a 100 percent issue?

Pray:

Dear God,
I spend so much time reliving yesterday or anticipating tomorrow
that I lose sight of the only time that is really mine, the present moment.
You give today one moment at a time.
That's all I have, all I ever will have.
Give the faith which knows that each moment
contains exactly what is best for me.
Give the hope which trusts you enough
to forget past failings and future trials.
Give the love which makes each moment
an anticipation of eternity with you.
We ask this in the name of Jesus
who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Amen.¹

Announcements:

- The reading for our next gathering is chapters 10-12.
- There's a way for you to experience Mass on a whole new level. Try using a Mass journal—you can visit [DynamicCatholic.com/FreeMassJournal](https://www.DynamicCatholic.com/FreeMassJournal) to request a free copy (just pay shipping).
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, time and place).

¹ "Prayer for the Present Moment," Catholic Doors Ministry, accessed December 3, 2018, <https://www.catholicdoors.com/prayers/english3/p02460.htm>.

SESSION FOUR: NOT THE SAME

When we allow ourselves to exist truly and fully, we sting the world with our vision and challenge it with our own ways of being.

— St. Thomas More

Read: Chapters 10-12

Discuss:

1. The power of contrast was an essential evangelization tool for the early Christians. Can you think of someone who lives this strategy out well today?
2. How can you harness the power of contrast in your own life right now?
3. Which of the ten things found in chapter 11 (relationships, family, health . . .) is most on your mind right now? If you're comfortable, share why.
4. In which of the ten things are you thriving and in which are you merely surviving?
5. What are some everyday miracles you have experienced lately?
6. When was the last time you got a wake-up call? How did it impact your life?

Takeaway: It's time for us to embrace the power of contrast and start living differently. This is your wake-up call—how will you answer it?

Act: Pick one of the areas in your life that needs to go from “surviving” to “thriving”—how can you begin to improve it starting tomorrow? Remember, seeking guidance is always a good first step.

Pray:

**Holy Spirit, please descend upon me
as you did with the first Christians
and inspire me to live differently.
Help me to have clarity on what needs to change
and how to do so.
Send the people that will help me.
Holy Spirit, please open my eyes
to see the miracles that happen daily
and how God is at work in every moment of my life.**

Amen.

Announcements:

- The reading for our next gathering is chapters 13-15.
- No matter how long it's been, we encourage you to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation this week.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, time and place).

SESSION FIVE: TRANSFORMED

If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world on fire.

— Catherine of Siena

Read: Chapters 13-15

Discuss:

1. Can you name a person that has changed the world? What qualities did they have that allowed them to do so?
2. Who are some individuals who have played a significant role in your spiritual life? Is there someone you feel called to minister to in your life?
3. “Our dirty little secret is: we don’t want our lives transformed.” Do you believe this is true for you? Why or why not?
4. What percentage are you available to God right now? What is hindering you from getting to 100 percent?
5. When have you felt God speaking to you in some way?
6. Do you believe God has an incredible dream for you? What do you think that could look like?

Takeaway: God has an incredible transformation in store for you.

Act: Take five minutes tomorrow morning to sit in the classroom of silence.

Pray:

The Prayer of Transformation

Lord,
Here I am.
I trust that you have an incredible plan for me.
Transform me. Transform my life.
Everything is on the table.
Take what you want to take
and give what you want to give.
I make myself 100 percent available to you today.
Transform me into the person you created me to be,
so I can live the life you envisioned for me
at the beginning of time.
I hold nothing back.
I am 100 percent available.
Lead me, challenge me, encourage me,
and open my eyes to all your possibilities.
Show me what it is you want me to do
and I will do it.

Amen.

Announcements:

— If you enjoyed *The Biggest Lie in the History of Christianity*, we recommend Matthew Kelly's *Resisting Happiness*. It is a deeply personal, disarmingly transparent look at why we sabotage our own happiness and what to do about it. Get your free copy at DynamicCatholic.com/Happy

A LETTER TO THE READER

Dear Reader,

Thank you. Thank you for taking time out of your hectic life to read this book. Thank you for sharing your thoughts, hopes, and dreams with those on this journey with you. Thank you for listening as your fellow readers revealed some of their own hearts with you. Thank you.

You may be asking, “What now?” Well, you know what the biggest lie is. You know the damage it has done. You know, but not everyone does. In fact, most people are largely unaware. So now it’s your turn to live a life of truth by boldly embracing the holiness set apart for you. You can change the course of Christianity one Holy Moment at a time. Souls are at stake and your role is irreplaceable. You have a God-given mission, and no one else can do it for you.

Thank you for accepting your call to holiness.

God bless,

The Dynamic Catholic Team



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