

Worldview: Truth – Your truth, My truth, God’s Truth

Defining The Issue

How Truth is Challenged

Intolerance is a complaint often launched against followers of Jesus Christ.

This is not a new complaint as followers of “The Way” have been accused of holding a narrow view of the pathway to God throughout history. In times like this, Christ followers are often countered in their right to freedom of speech in claiming that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6) and that there are no other ways to God.

What is Truth?

There are many people today who argue that truth is relative; that is, flexible and can be interpreted in any way an individual decides. This assumption is self-refuting and demonstrates the importance of embracing an anchored definition of truth.

Those who insist that it is arrogant for Christians to believe their own worldview is correct, become guilty of their own accusation by being intolerant of another worldview and by thinking theirs to be exclusively correct. They are just as certain about the rightness of their conviction that no view of truth can be “the truth.”

The Christian definition of truth is an anchored definition in Jesus, who is the living embodiment of truth. Since Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, we are provided with constancy and stability as opposed to a life governed by the shifting opinions of relativity.



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Truth and Reality

Classic philosophers have said, “Truth is what corresponds with reality.” This definition however, comes up short because everyone believes their reality is reality.

Even people who insist, “There is no such thing as truth,” do so because they believe it to be true based on their experience. They fail to see that in speaking this way, they undermine the point they are trying to make. They believe they have a basis for truth, that is, their own experience. You can demonstrate their self-contradiction by asking, “Is your statement, there is no truth, true? How do you know?”

Scripture Speaks

Jesus is Truth

Guided by scripture, followers of Jesus confess that truth is what corresponds to reality as it is created by God and not by what human experience says is true. This is what Jesus was getting at when he told his disciples that he is the way, the truth, and the life.

By his life and teaching, Jesus constructs reality. Jesus taught his disciples that what he taught them was to be received as truth. “So, Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John

8:31-32) And, unless we think he left us to interpret his words in whatever fashion seems best, Jesus assured us we would never be left to define what is true on our own. “...the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and will guide you into all truth...” (John 14:26)

Two kinds of truth

Discussions about truth often bog down over the failure to recognize two kinds of truth. Objective truths are facts or ideas that are either true or false. These can include mathematical equations and laws of nature, like gravity.

In contrast, subjective truths are claims about reality from a personal perspective, opinion or emotional basis. Such truths are preferences and different for different people – there is no right or wrong answer. The question then arises, “Are Christian truth claims objective or subjective?”

Scripture Speaks

Christianity teaches that Jesus’ claims are objective truths; that is, Jesus’ teachings are actual descriptions of reality. The Biblical writers themselves told their audiences they could trust their accounts.

Luke, writer of the Gospel of Luke, tells his friend Theophilus that he had personally investigated the claims of Christ, “that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.” (Luke 1:1-4)

That we come to know the truth, anchored in the objective words of God in scripture and in Jesus as the way, the truth and the life, really matters. Knowing and living truth matters not only for our lives, but also that others might experience the life Jesus offers.

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Anchored in Truth: The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
On the third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Church,
the communion of the saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Engage with People

Christians might find themselves avoiding the mention of objective truth because it can make people feel uncomfortable.

Yet any relationship not governed by objective truth will eventually experience disappointment. A spouse who constantly forgets the date of their wedding anniversary, for example, will soon experience frustration! In the same way, if we want to experience the joy of a deepening relationship with God, we need to allow our lives to be governed by the objective knowledge of God, revealed in the Bible.

Relationships built on the Truth, based on principles of God’s Word, enjoy the fruit of relational harmony described in the passage on love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. God’s revealed truth, understood and followed, forms the foundation of growing and fruitful relationships.

Everyday Conversations on Truth

Christians can begin to explain the need for truth to those around us. If someone argues that Christians are arrogant for saying their views are true, remind them they think their view is just as true. We can respectfully insist that, in light of the revelation of God in Christ, we are not arrogant, just convinced. We ought to be kind and gentle, but we shouldn’t apologize for holding our views. By staying consistent, we can help others examine their own beliefs.

Resources

Books

Beyond Belief to Conviction, Josh McDowell & Bob Hostetler
Twelve Points That Show Christianity Is True, Norman L. Geisler
Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air, Greg Koukl and Francis Beckwith
The Case for Faith, Lee Strobel
Saving Truth: Finding Meaning & Clarity in a Post-Truth World, Abdu Murray

Videos

Greg Koukl, *Is Truth Relative?* (<https://youtu.be/Paude8ahLF0>)
Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth* (<https://youtu.be/pitStEi4eLo>)
Nancy Pearcey, *Finding Truth* (<https://youtu.be/MWfxJf9RQ0s>)
J. Warner Wallace, *When Do We Have Enough Evidence to Know Christianity Is True?* (<https://youtu.be/1aVWrZfcPAC>)
R. C. Sproul, *What Is Truth?* (<https://youtu.be/dCl66uRHmFI>)