

Lesson 2: Truth and Knowledge

A. Example Issues:

1. How can one person impose their religious convictions on someone else from a different tradition, and with a different set of life experiences, who doesn't see things the same way?
2. How can religions of thousands of years ago possible be relevant (for all men) today? ["It is a common reproach against Christianity that its dogmas are unchanging while human knowledge is in continual growth."—CS Lewis, God in the Dock, p 38, 1970, Eerdmans]
3. Isn't religious truth fundamentally of a different content and conveyance, and separate from empirically discovered truth, like every-day experiences and scientific discoveries?
4. Isn't religious truth is subjectively determined by each person, and is therefore private, unchallengeable, and likely to vary from person to person.
5. Hasn't science proven that nothing can be perfectly measured, and when something is measured (observed/sensed) it changes its value & state.
6. Does any real truth exists (especially in religious matters) ["What is Truth?"— Jn 18:38]

B. The Christian's World View.

1. What is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom? (Prov 1:7; 9:10)
2. In the context of the Old Testament wisdom literature, is this "wisdom" primarily theological, moral, or pragmatic in nature? (see for example Prov 2:2, 6, 9; 3:2-4; 7:1-5)
3. How is God's knowledge described?
 - a. Rom 11:33
 - b. Isaiah 40:12-17
4. Is God's Truth variable, adapting to each age and individual?
 - a. Ps 117:2; 146:6
 - b. I Pet 1:24,25
5. Is God's Truth accessible? (see for example Dt 30:11-14)
 - a. I Tim 2:4
 - b. Col 2:2,3
 - c. I Cor 2:6-10
6. Can it be rejected by man?
 - a. I Cor 1:20-25
 - b. I Cor 3:18-20
 - c. Rom 1:25
7. Does the revelation from God have the same character and consistent as natural history?
 - a. see for example Ps 106 and 136
 - b. note the rationale for moral commands in Matt 19:8 and Eph 5:31,32
8. Is the content of this knowledge, which is revealed from God, continuous (of the same character, and consistent) with everyday human experience?
 - a. see for example Matt 7:9; Rom 11:24;
 - b. note the rationale for moral commands in Eph 5:29
9. Are there other sources of knowledge and truth, besides direct revelation?
 - a. Eccl 12:9-12; 13-14
 - b. What is the source of our powers of observation? (Prov 20:12)
10. What are the sources of variation, evolution, and inconsistency in man's knowledge?
 - a. Prov 30:1-6
 - b. Job 38...
 - c. Job 28:12; 20-28
 - d. Rom 3:4

C. Applications

1. What precedence (which is to be believed first--as more authoritative and reliable) is implied in the scriptures for these sources of wisdom:
 - a. Revelation from God
 - b. Advice/teaching from wise men
 - c. Personal experience

Which is usually accepted today?

2. How should a Christian view 'discoveries' (archaeology, geology, biology, sociology, psychology...) which appear to "disprove" the Bible?
3. Should a Christian approve of, support, or participate in research & discovery into physical, biological, psychological, and social phenomena?
 - a. What should be the foundation (starting premises)
 - b. What other premises should be remembered? (see II Tim 3:7)
 - c. What should be constraints on the conclusions (and uses) of the results?
4. How does a Christian respond to rejection of the inerrancy and immutability of the scripture (and the truth it reveals) based on:
 - a. Apparent contradictions, inaccuracies, or absurdities in the text.
 - b. The rapid progress (changes) in culture that seems to require religion to adapt?
 - c. Its outdated moral teaching and constraints?
 - d. The age of the text (combined with the above)?
 - e. The difficulty of some texts, as demonstrated by the variety of interpretations?
5. Is there a better explanation of the above observations than the impossibility of an unchanging truth?

Lesson List **Lesson 2**

Truth and Knowledge

1. God is the Repository & Source of Absolute Truth.
2. Man can Know this Truth as God Reveals it.
3. Truth is Found in many ways.
 - Propositionally Revealed from God.
 - Personal Experience (Empirical).
 - Learning from Other (Trusted) Men
4. Man’s Experience & Knowledge Limited & Imperfect.
5. The Order of Precedence Is:

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Determination of Truth (Examples)

Roles in Marriage

God Made Man & Woman <small>Gen 1-3</small>	Permanence, Headship, & Love Required <small>Eph 5</small>	Older Women Teach Younger how to... <small>Titus 2</small>	Personal Experience: my family, my marriage
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Sexual Behavior

God Made Marriage <small>Gen 1-3</small>	Homosexuality & Fornication Are Wrong <small>Rom 1, I Cor 5,6</small>	Lust, License, Immodesty Condemned <small>Matt 5, Prov 7...</small>	Personal Experience: my "nature," my desires
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Treatment of Others

Man in God's Image <small>Gen 9:6</small>	Murder Is Wrong, (Punishable) <small>Ex 20:13</small>	Evil Intent, Cruelty, and Hatred Wrong <small>Titus 2</small>	Personal Experience: my enemies, my problems
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