

*"...people around the world have sought for truth; they want a true explanation of reality, both of nature and humanity" - **Lauren Ames***

(I) HISTORY

Back in the 6th century B.C. philosophers emerged and accelerated the quest for truth. Later on _____(1) questioned the philosopher's truth claims and whether any truth existed. Today _____ (2) continue this debunking of truth. They doubt the existence of truth, if you doubt the existence of truth you walk in the skeptical tradition. If you doubt anyone can know truth, you walk in that tradition.

During the 17th and 18th centuries _____(3) science developed by doubting any truth claims that cannot be verified by observation. Take for example the claim that the sun _____(4) around the earth this scientific approach to truth uses our five senses to gather knowledge, a kind of seeing is believing approach.

(II) EMPIRICISM

This whole method is empiricism. Ironically this empirical _____(5) to truth also led to skepticism. In 1781 the philosopher Immanuel Kant famously argued that there is no way to know that our perception of the world corresponds to the way things actually are. We can only know what we perceive. He also argued there is no way to scientifically _____(6) the deepest issues that concern ordinary people.

(A) Deep Issues like:

- (1) whether we have a _____(7)
- (2) whether we have free will
- (3) whether there is _____(8) after death
- (4) whether or not God _____(9)
- (5) or what he is like

Since Kant an uneasy skepticism has plagued the West many today embrace the view that all truth claims are relative to one's _____ (10), prejudices, or assumptions

thus relativist do not hold truth or knowing truth with certainty in high regard, yet they themselves tend to hold the findings of science in high regard. Science _____ (11) truth claims about the natural world that are not relative to one's culture so people are confused about the existence of truth on the one hand scientific explanations seem to give absolute answers to all _____ (12) then on the other hand people tend to reject all truth claims holding tenaciously to their skepticism.

(III) POINT OF FACT

To say I don't know is at best a temporary answer that can't stand long. To say can't know is more serious, but it fails its own _____ (13). If we can't know truth then that is a truth claim about _____ (14). This leaves one with two _____ (15), yes or no. If you say no "there is no truth" you make an enormous truth claim and face the same problems as "we can't know". Each of these _____ (16) suffers further because nobody can practically live out these views. Survival alone demands that one must know enough truth about a reality to live. If one thinks there is truth how can we go about _____ (17) for it, is it _____ (18) to hold there is truth?

(IV) THE TRUTH TEST

The only _____ (19) answer is yes there is truth yet how can we know truth? Well there are three basic tests for any kind of claim about truth.

(A) The three truth test

- (1) Correspondence test
- (2) Coherence test
- (3) Practicality test

Correspondence Test

The correspondence test means that a claim is the truth if it _____ (19) up with reality. In other words it lines up or _____ (20) to the facts that exist. If you claim the Empire State building is 1472 feet tall your claim is true if it corresponds to the facts or fails if it doesn't. That means that the standard for truth is not you or your culture but the real world that exist.

Likewise if someone claimed an _____ (21) spaceship just landed in Atlanta, well the truth of that claim could be investigated. Whether it's a hoax or not depends on the evidence. We grasp many truths about ourselves that cannot be _____ (22) or

disproven. I can't marshal evidence to prove that I chose to eat fajitas last Friday but I know I did. Nothing not nobody not no how can _____ (23) me otherwise. Some truth claims cannot be tested by correspondence.

Coherence Test

The coherence test helps us by _____ (24) any claims or assumptions that contradict known facts. This test applies _____ (25) to a dizzying array of truth claims but is necessary because our senses can _____ (26) us but factual claims about reality should not contradict they should be coherent. One time I tested my five year old daughter on this.

I put a _____ (27) rod into an aquarium and she saw that it looked bent in the water, I took the rod out and she saw that it was straight. I did this numerous times confused but determined to know the truth she put the rod in the water and ran her and up and down the rod and felt that it was straight both in and out of the water. Then she _____ (28) "it is straight but it looks bent in the water".

Now she didn't know the coherence test but she _____ (29) that the rod could not be both bent and not bent at the same time. Reality doesn't contradict _____ (30). Consider this _____ (31) of the coherence test as well. If I claim that humans are biological robots but also claim that everybody is fully _____ (32) for their free actions I'm contradiction myself. Both claims cannot be true.

Practicality Test

The last test, is the _____ (33) test of practicality, which examines claims that we cannot examine with correspondence and coherence, with the practicality test you ask if anyone could actually live out and practice that truth claim. Can you practically as if there is no truth whatsoever or v(34) as if nobody knows truth. We cannot actually practice these views because we will have to act to _____ (35) in a real world that doesn't permit one to practice extreme skepticism.

A skeptical life _____ (36) or not passionately believed or not can't be consistently put into practice. Can anyone truly practice the claim that there are no _____ (37) truths? If there were no moral truths, then practically speaking, nobody would ever be _____ (38) or unjust no matter what they did. Nobody anywhere has been able to practice this anarchy without falling into destruction. We cannot live out the _____ (39) claim that there is no moral truth. We must also remember there are truths we don't know and may never know but truth doesn't _____ (40) on our knowing it in order for it being the truth. Truth is

independent of us in a sense for example now we know the circumference of the earth but for a long time no one did. Still what was true about that has _____ (41) been the truth. The truth exists even if we don't know it.

(V) CONCLUSIONS

So what can we _____ (42) from the question is there truth. We can conclude there is a real world that is _____ (43) and that we can test it truth claims about that reality. We can test truth claims by finding _____ (44) to see if those claims correspond to reality. We can test claims to see if they contradict each other or with known facts. We can test truth claims to see if they are practical and livable. By testing these claims we find that truth does exist. Therefore it is our responsibility to find it.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- (A) Why must there be absolute and not subjective truth? *Hint: The book of Judges describes what happens when people do what is right in their own eyes.*
- (B) For the Christian where is this absolute truth found? *Hint: John 1:14-17*
- (C) If God's word is the ultimate standard of truth how should we respond to Him?
Hint: Deuteronomy 8:3

ADDITIONAL READINGS

True Truth: Defending Absolute Truth in a Relativistic World by *Art Lindsley*.

Making Sense of Bible Difficulties: Clear and Concise Answers from Genesis to Revelation by *Geisler & Howe*.

Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview by *William Lane Craig & J.P. Moreland*.

Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics, Third Edition by *William Lane Craig*.



1. Skeptics
2. Postmodernist
3. Modern
4. Revolved
5. Approach
6. Investigate
7. Soul
8. Life
9. Exist
10. Culture
11. Affirms
12. Questions
13. Assertion
14. Everything
15. Options
16. Answers .
17. Searching
18. Reasonable
19. Viable
20. Matches
21. Alien
22. Proven
23. Convince
24. eliminating
25. Logic
26. Deceive
27. Straight
28. Pronounced
29. Understood
30. Reason
31. Aspect
32. Responsible
33. Common sense
34. Live
35. Survive
36. Desirable
37. Moral
38. Wrong
39. Impractical
40. Depend
41. Always
42. Conclude
43. Knowable
44. Evidence