

## Apologetic Method : Step 1

### 1 **Truth is absolute and knowable**

2 **God exists**

3 **Miracles are possible**

4 **The New Testament is historically reliable**

5 **The New Testament says Jesus claimed to be God**

6 **Jesus proved this claim by: 1. Living a sinless miraculous life 2. Fulfilling prophecies 3. Predicting and accomplishing His Resurrection**

7 **Therefore, Jesus is God**

8 **Whatever Jesus teaches is true, because He is God**

9 **Jesus taught the Bible was the Word of God**

10 **The Bible is the Word of God!**

# What is Truth?

Knowing how to answer the question "What is truth?" is one of the foundational pillars of apologetics.

The importance of the issue of truth cannot be stressed too highly, for if there is no absolute truth, Christianity is nothing more than one's **opinion** about God. To **evaluate** any worldview, one must be able to **consider** the truth claims for their **veracity** and **coherence**.

Two categories of questions you will encounter:



1

Can **truth** be known?

2

What is the nature of **truth**?

# To articulate what truth is, there are three major areas to consider:

1

Barriers to Truth: Can truth really be known?

2

Theories of Truth: How is truth defined?

3

Objections to truth: Real world objections to overcome

# I. Barriers to truth. (Can truth be known?)

Agnosticism

Skepticism

Relativism

# Agnosticism

## Hard Agnosticism

One cannot know **anything** about ultimate reality (truth). There are no absolute truth statements about reality. Knowledge of God is impossible.

## Hard Agnosticism

“No one can know if God exists.”

## Soft Agnosticism

The view that truth is unknown (or currently unknowable) about God or spiritual matters.

## Soft Agnosticism

“I don’t know if God exists.”

# Problem with HARD Agnosticism

⚠ To say one can **know** truth is **unknowable** is a **SELF-DEFEATING ARGUMENT**. How do you know that statement is true?

**Logically** - To say one cannot know *anything* (about God or reality), you must believe you know at least **that much** about God or reality!

**Biblically** - Scripture tells us over and over that God has revealed Himself/Truth to man. (John 17:17)

**Practically** - Our real world experiences assume knowledge and facts.

# Problem with SOFT Agnosticism

⚠ To say one can **know** "Spiritual" truth is **unknowable** is a **SELF-DEFEATING ARGUMENT**. Why create a separate category of things that cannot be known, when evaluated with the same logic?

This view "kicks the can" down the road, do not be fooled or satisfied with this LAZY approach.

# Skepticism

Connected to soft agnosticism, skepticism denies the **possibility** of knowledge.

A skeptic asserts that truth or knowledge **cannot** be attained, at least in some domains.

**Result** - One should doubt the possibility of knowledge, therefore one should not make (hard)/hold off (soft) on judgments about reality.

# Problems with Skepticism

⚠️ If people should be skeptical about **all** things, then they must also be skeptical about their own belief!  
**SELF-DEFEATING ARGUMENT**

**Logically-** To hold off on making a decision *IS* making a decision!

**Biblically** - Jesus fought skepticism in His own disciples after the resurrection. He showed them His hands and feet (Luke 24:38-39) and ate broiled fish with them (Luke 24:42)

**Biblically** - The Gospel's aim is to have people make a decision to accept the gift of salvation and follow Christ, or reject it. Consideration is not confession. Ruminating is not repentance.

**Practically** - No one lives their life this way, it is impractical. Suspending judgement only on "Spiritual" matters creates an indefensible and inconsistent life.

# Relativism

All truth is subjective or relative, not absolute. Truth is a matter of ones own perspective.

Things are relative to either time, people, or places.

With this view of truth/knowledge, there is no point considering God, morality, etc.

# Problems with Relativism

⊗ **SELF-DEFEATING ARGUMENT** once again! Saying that "all truth is relative" is making an absolute truth statement!

**Logically** - If truth is relative, what is it relative to? What is that thing relative to? This cannot go on forever, something must be absolute to base it on. (Tallest person in class)

**Logically** - Absolute statements cross religious, political, generational, ethnic lines.  $2 + 2 = 4$  for everyone!

**Biblically** - Scripture declares knowledge can be known, either through special or general revelation. More on this in the next section.

**Practically** - This does not work in the real world, try going to the bank.

## II. Theories of Truth (What is Truth?)

The Pragmatic theory

The Intentionalist theory

The Perspective/relative theory

The Correspondence theory

# The Pragmatic theory

According to the pragmatic theory, something is true if it **works**. Truth is that which is **fast** and brings the best results.

# Examples of Pragmatic Theory:

Telling a lie in order to get out of trouble. The lie may work and prevent punishment, but that does not make the lie true!

Abortion – it is a solution to the problem of an unplanned pregnancy, but that does not make it correct or the true solution.

Euthanasia – it deals with the problem of taking care of the sick but it is still murder!

## Problems with Pragmatic Theory:

⚠ This theory confuses what truth **DOES** and what truth **IS**.

Just because something works, it does not mean something is true! It is a good **negative test** for truth, but not a definition of truth.

# The Intentionalist theory

According to this theory, truth is found in **good intentions**, not in reality. Something is true if we intend it to be true, and false if intended to be false.

## Examples of Intentionalist Theory:

Giving someone the wrong medicine on accident – you **INTEND** on curing the sickness, but the patient dies.

Giving someone bad directions to your house – you say turn left but you **INTENDED** on saying turn right. The person shows up at the wrong house!

# Problems with Intentionalist Theory:

This view mistakenly focuses on what we **INTEND** to say, and not what we **ACTUALLY** say.

No one could ever be wrong if they had the right **intentions!**

A lie may have good **intentions**, but that does not make it true!

The Old Testament showed that even unintentional things were wrong and required a sacrifice. (Leviticus 4:2-10, 27)

# The Perspective/relative theory

According to this theory, truth is decided by the individual. Something can be true for one person, and not for another

## Examples of perspective/relative Theory:

One person says it is hot in the room, another person says it is cold.

The clock is to the right of some and to the left of others.

God is different depending on your own worldview/religion.

## Problems with perspective/relative Theory:

- ⊗ Those who believe that truth is relative, that it is a matter of their own perspective are missing one big fact: **THEY ARE SAYING TRUTH IS UP TO EACH INDIVIDUAL TO DECIDE, YET THAT STATEMENT IS TRUE FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS!!!**

This is called a "**SELF-DEFEATING ARGUMENT.**"

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When you turn the argument on itself, it collapses. Other examples of self defeating arguments are:

- Never say the word **never**
- I cannot speak **any** English
- Words do not have any **meaning**
- No truths apply to **every** person

**If something is true, it is true for all people, at  
people, at all times, in all places.**

2 + 2 = 4 for all people, at all times, in all places.

# The Correspondence theory

According to the correspondence theory, a statement is true if it ***corresponds to reality as it exists***. Truth is telling it like it is, and not telling it like it is is false. This is the biblical theory/nature of truth.

## Definition of Truth:

**Truth is telling it like it is**

## Truth is contained and shown in the following forms:

Statements whether written, thought, or spoken that correspond to reality

Jesus as a person (John 14:6)

The Word of God (John 17:17)

# Examples of the Correspondence theory of truth in the Bible

1

Joseph testing Brothers (Gen 42:16)

2

Ananias and Sapphira lying about their finances. (Acts 5:1-4)

3

The ninth commandment (Ex 20:16)

4

Garden of Eden (Gen 2:17, 3:4)

# Objection 1 - Absolute truth is too narrow

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## SELF-DEFEATING ARGUMENT

Is that statement true?

Does it allow room for other views?

Is that statement narrow?

## **Objection 2 - You're exclusive and intolerant**

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**Truth is exclusive and intolerant.**

**2 + 2 = 4 and that is just the way it is!**

## **Objection 3 - All religions have equal truths**

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### SELF-DEFEATING ARGUMENT

Religions have mutually exclusive truth statements

Some claim one God, some multiple Gods, atheism states there is no God. Not all are equal truths

## **Objection 4 - All truth is culturally relative**

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### SELF-DEFEATING ARGUMENT

Is that statement only true in your culture or in all cultures?

## **Objection 5 - What is true for one person is not true for all**

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## SELF-DEFEATING ARGUMENT

Is that statement true for just you or for all people?

**Objection 6 - If truth doesn't change there can be no new truth**

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**Truth can be discovered, but that does not make it new.**

**The Earth always rotated the sun, but not discovered until later.**

## **Objection 7 - There are no absolutes**

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## SELF-DEFEATING ARGUMENT

Is that absolutely true?

**Objection 8 - Truth cannot be known about God because finite human language can't talk about an infinite God**

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## SELF-DEFEATING ARGUMENT

Is that statement about God true?