

TRUTH IS NOT ICE CREAM

WHY TRUTH MATTERS (VIDEO 6:39)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the biggest questions you have sought answers to?
 - Did you find adequate answers? If yes, how did you go about finding answers to your questions?
 - If you haven't found answers to your big questions, how are you coping with the unknown?
2. Have you ever discovered something you thought was true, but it was actually false?
 - If yes, how did this discovery affect you mentally, emotionally, and spiritually?
 - What consequences have you experienced by believing something was true, but it was actually false?
 - How do you make sure you aren't deceived by a false belief again?
3. How would you respond to this argument: "I believe there are many paths to heaven because there are so many people around the world who believe just as sincerely in their religion as you believe in Christianity"?
4. Read John 14:6. Why do people in our culture believe that Jesus' claims in this verse are arrogant, exclusive, or even closed-minded?
 - Have you experienced someone claiming that Christianity was bigoted or closed-minded because it teaches that Jesus is the only way to heaven?
5. Read Genesis 3:1-7. How many lies did the serpent tell Eve?
 - Read John 8:42-47.
 - What does Jesus mean when he says, "He was a murderer from the beginning"?
 - What are some common lies that our culture believes are true? How are these lies keeping people from the truth?
6. Read John 18:33-40.
 - Jesus states his mission was to testify to the truth. How did Pilate miss this? How is Pilate like many in our culture today when it comes to truth?
 - Have you encountered someone who dismissed, ignored, or suppressed the truth in order to believe in a lie? Why do people do this?

ACTION POINTS:

1. Read "Why We Care about Truth" by Amy Hall: <https://www.str.org/w/why-we-care-about-truth>
2. Read "There Is No Truth" by Greg Koukl: <https://www.str.org/w/there-is-no-truth>

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RELATIVISM IN THE CULTURE (VIDEO 11:19)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is appealing about relativism, and why do so many in our culture believe it?
2. What were you most surprised by in the university campus interview? Why?
3. Why do you think it was so difficult for the interviewees to say that the man interviewing them was wrong?
4. During the university interviews, the interviewer asked if he should be allowed to enroll in a first-grade class. One man responded, "So long as you're not hindering society, and you're not causing harm to other people I feel like that should be an okay thing."
 - Remember, *relativism* is the belief that there is no universal objective truth. With this in mind, what is wrong with the man's response quoted above?

Digging Deeper: Self-Refuting Statements

- A *self-refuting claim* is one that defeats itself. The way that these statements/views defeat themselves is by not living up to their own criteria.
- **Example:** "You can't know anything for sure." This statement fails to live up to its own criteria. If you can't know anything for sure, how do you know that statement is true? If it is true that I can't know anything for sure, then I can't even know for sure that I can't know anything for sure. If this statement is true, then it is false. A person would have to at least know one thing for sure to know that you can't know anything for sure.
- To point out a self-refuting claim, we at STR like to use the *Suicide Tactic*.
 - The *Suicide Tactic*: Ask yourself if the claim being made applies to itself. If it does, then ask yourself if the claim satisfies its own criteria or if there is an internal contradiction. If there is a contradiction, ask the person making the claim a question that exposes the contradiction.
 - **Example:** "There is no truth." Obviously, this statement does not meet its own criteria because it is claiming to be true that there is no truth. To expose this contradiction, ask, "Is that true that there is no truth?"
- Let's practice. Take turns role playing these statements and try to work through the *Suicide Tactic* and expose the contradictions by asking a question.
 - "You shouldn't force your morality on me."
 - "You shouldn't judge other people."
 - "All religions are equally true."
 - "No one can know any truth about religion."
 - "Science is the only sure method of finding truth."
 - "The Bible is a book written by men. It's filled with human ideas and all human ideas are flawed; therefore, the Bible is flawed."
- If you could talk with Rachel Dolezal (the woman who identifies as Black) or Emile Ratelband (the man who identifies as a 49-year-old), what questions would you ask them? Why?

ACTION POINTS:

1. This week read "Arguments that Commit Suicide" by Greg Koukl: <https://www.str.org/w/arguments-that-commit-suicide>
2. This week, try to spot four self-refuting claims from the culture.

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THE NATURE OF TRUTH (VIDEO 7:55)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Let's recap:
 - Coherence Theory of Truth: A belief or statement is true if it is consistent with other beliefs. The problem is something can be consistent, yet false.
 - Pragmatic Theory of Truth: Something is true if it produces a desirable effect. Truth is what works.
 - Correspondence Theory of Truth: A statement or belief is true if it corresponds with reality.
- Identify which statements below belong to the Coherence Theory of Truth, the Pragmatic Theory of Truth, or the Correspondence Theory of Truth.
 - I have never encountered a ghost, demon, or angel; therefore, the supernatural must not exist.
 - My horoscope is always very informative and helpful to me, so it must be true.
 - Italy is a peninsula in the Mediterranean Sea.
 - Murdering people for fun is wrong.
 - I feel so at peace and good when I am in a Latter-Day Saints Temple. This religion must be true because of how it makes me feel.
 - Sam is a liar and has never been trustworthy. Since Sam said that caffeine is addicting, it must not be.
 - The sky is blue.
 - My grandmother has always loved me and told me the truth. I believe that Hinduism is true because my grandmother said it was.
 - Marijuana helps me to relax, focus, and let go of my stressful life. It can't be bad for my health when it is so helpful to me.
- Discuss why the Correspondence Theory of Truth is so important.
- Why do people abandon the Correspondence Theory of Truth when it comes to the subjects of morality or religion?
- Discuss the difference between objective truth and subjective truth. What are some popular examples of subjective truth about religion or morality in our culture?

ACTION POINTS:

- Read/Watch "Is Your Worldview Logical? Literal? Livable?" by Robby Lashua:
<https://www.str.org/w/is-your-worldview-logical-literal-livable->
- This week, try to spot four examples of subjective truth claims about morality in popular culture.

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TAKING THE TRUTH TEST (VIDEO 11:40)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Let's look at how Scripture uses *objective truth*. Read the following passages and discuss how objective truth claims (insulin) are presented in the Bible.
 - 1 Kings 18:20-40 (pay special attention to verses 21 and 39)
 - John 4:19-24
 - Acts 14:8-18
 - Isaiah 45:5-6
 - John 8:14-18
 - 1 Corinthians 15:12-19
 - John 3:17-21
2. Have you ever been in a conversation with someone and made *objective/insulin* claims, but they interpreted your claims as *subjective/ice cream* claims?
 - What happened? How did they misunderstand what you were saying?
3. How can you help people who view morality and religion as ice cream preferences (subjective truth) to see that they are actually insulin (objectively true)?
 - What kinds of questions could you ask them?
 - What kinds of illustrations could you use to convey the idea that morality and religion are objective?
 - What popular beliefs in our culture are objective truth claims? How could you use these popular beliefs to help explain objective truth?
4. When people get offended by objective truth claims you share, how can you de-escalate the situation and help them to calm down and have a productive conversation?
 - How would having a de-escalation tactic/plan encourage you to have more conversation about sensitive issues?
 - Read these verses as you formulate your de-escalation plan (Proverbs 15:1, 1 Peter 3:15, 2 Timothy 2:24-25)

ACTION POINTS:

1. Listen to "Why I Don't Speak about Absolute Truth" by Tim Barnett:
<https://www.str.org/w/why-i-don-t-speak-about-absolute-truth>
2. This week, try to talk to someone who disagrees with you about religion or morality. Kindly talk with them about their view and present your view as well. The goal of this conversation is to stay calm, remain respectful, and present your reasons for your objective truth claim, while listening to their reasons for their claims.

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TRUTH EXISTS AS A PERSON (VIDEO 12:07)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The Bible is clear that Jesus is the only way. Read the following passages.
 - John 3:16
 - John 3:36
 - John 14:1-6
 - John 17:3
 - Acts 4:8-12
 - Acts 10:43
 - Romans 10:9
 - 1 Timothy 2:5
2. Religious Pluralism: The idea that all paths/religions lead to heaven is clearly contrary to what the Bible says. Yet it is very popular in our current society. Why do you think that religious pluralism is so appealing?
 - How does tolerance fit into the appeal of religious pluralism?
3. When someone says that all religions are basically the same, we need to point out that it is the differences that matter. Let's practice.
 - Islam, Judaism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christianity all believe that Jesus existed. What are some major differences each of these religions believe about who Jesus is and what he did?
 - Islam, Judaism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christianity all believe in an afterlife. What are some major differences each of these religions believe about the afterlife and how we attain the best afterlife possible?
 - Islam, Judaism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christianity all believe in God. What are some major differences each of these religions believe about God, his nature, and his attributes?
4. Have you suffered loss because you stood up for the true message of Jesus? Sometimes we can be offensive in how we present Christian truth claims, but often people are offended merely by the claims themselves.
 - How do you cope with the loss of relationships because you believe and stand for what Jesus teaches?
 - How do you handle the discouragement that can come when people reject you because you stand for the truth?
 - Have you ever been tempted not to stand for the truth so you could maintain good relationships and not have people upset with you?
 - Read Hebrews 4:15-16. What can you do to practically to live out these verses?

ACTION POINTS:

1. Read "How to Deal with Criticism" by Tim Barnett: <https://www.str.org/w/how-to-deal-with-criticism>