

The Truth about the Truth

Recently I saw a video of a conversation that occurred at the Occupy Wall Street protest in New York City. One man monopolized the discussion by unleashing a barrage of questions, constantly shifting topics, talking over the other man, and never allowing him to answer (even his sympathizers tried to get him to allow the other man to answer). He then concluded by saying, "What I have learned over the years is to never argue with a fool; and you, my friend, are a fool." This illustrates that asking many questions does not necessarily imply really seeking answers. In fact, the same can be said of asking even just one question - remember when Pilate asked Jesus "What is truth?" (John 18:38). In pursuing truth, the issue is not tenacity but sincerity, it is not having asked, but having asked honestly. I hope this flier will answer a couple of questions about truth for the honest inquirer.

Truth is. That is to say, there really is reality, and there are ideas that really reflect reality, and these ideas are truths. To demonstrate, the statement "There really is reality" is an idea, and since it really reflects reality, it is true. Simple.

One definition suggested: "*Metaphysical truth* is that which

corresponds with reality, or reflects reality—what really is." (McDowell. *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. 1999. P. 586)

Truth is absolute. That is to say, that which is true is true for everyone, everywhere, and at all times.

As an illustration of this, take that conversation at the Occupy Wall Street protest: it is really true that the one man called the other a fool, and this fact cannot be altered by anyone anywhere from that point on no matter what they believe. This can also be illustrated with Jesus' resurrection: He really was resurrected - this is true; and this fact cannot be altered by anyone anywhere at any time no matter what they believe. Amen! (Or, "Truly!" as Amen can be defined.)

Truth is knowable. That is to say, it is possible to have ideas that accurately reflect reality. This is demonstrated in having an idea about self. Having an idea about our existence necessarily implies that we exist; otherwise, if we did not exist, we could not have any idea, no less one about our existence. Remember the old saying, "I think, therefore I am"? Descartes (d. 1650) used this expression to demonstrate "the immediate clarity and distinctiveness of self-evident

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propositions” (“Cogito ergo sum,” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*). To put it simply, it is obvious that we can know about our reality, as illustrated by the very idea that we exist.

For Biblical proof that truth is knowable, remember that Jesus said “If you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (John. 8:31-32, *emphasis added*).

I cannot state these conditions more clearly, and I do not believe I have to because most of us know them. But would you believe that some people believe there is no such thing as truth? It’s true! And would you believe that some others believe all truth is subjective? It’s absolutely true! And do you know that some “know” that there is absolute truth *but it is unknowable*? You know it!

Why does this last part concern us? Because, if any of these beliefs are

true, we cannot know the God of this world or His will for us! The stakes are that high.

I do not have the space to thoroughly refute such false conclusions, so here is just one example of how they are based on self-defeating arguments. Immanuel Kant (d. 1804) - a major figure in the development of modern philosophy - concluded that “we cannot know the real world” (as summarized in Norman Geisler’s *Sys. Theo.* 2002. Vol. 1. P. 321). To state Kant’s position more fully it would be, “One thing I know about the real world is that I cannot know anything about the real world.” I know I cannot know anything? Preposterous!

For those who believe differently about the truth, this little essay is not likely to change their minds. (True?!) But please drop us a line if you would like to discuss it further. Or let us know if you would like to discuss anything else about God, His Son Jesus, His word the Bible, becoming one of His people, or living a godly life.

The Indian River Church of Christ

We meet in the Shopping Center at 2 South Main Street in Philadelphia NY.

We assemble Sunday mornings at 10 for Bible study and at 11 for worship.

We also assemble Thursday evenings at 7 for Bible study.

Our website is www.indianriverchurchofchrist.com.

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