

Leaders Guide

Session 2: Can all Worldviews be true?

Introduction: The worldview chart from Session 1 is reviewed briefly. Each worldview has very different views of God and we logically understand that God cannot be a personal Being, an impersonal force, and not exist all at the same time. So, the basic belief about God from each worldview cannot all be true. How can we find the truth? Philosophers have been thinking about this question for a long time and we have picked two of the most common tests for truth. The first is no logical contradictions which is also referred to as Coherence. The belief system should not have contradictory ideas and it should also build a holistic framework of beliefs that fit together. The second is that it holds to or conforms to reality which is also called Correspondence. Courts of law are where these two tests for truth are used daily and we also use them in our lives.

Truth - Reality in the World: The main teaching is to show that we live in a world of many absolutes such as the laws of physics and such things as gravity or momentum. Absolute truths are defined in the handout and more examples such as math or even language are given. We also see them in the business world with ‘best practices’ and ‘code of ethics’, which seem to be more global and absolute than we imagine. 5 core ethical values are stated by the Institute for Global Ethics: Honesty, Responsibility, Fairness, Respect, and Compassion.

Most people have a feel for these things and have experienced them, but anyone living today has grown up also being taught that all moral truth is relative to the society that you live in. But if this were true than we couldn’t say that Nazi Germany which eliminated Jews, homosexuals, and handicapped persons did anything wrong. And we couldn’t say that ISIS is wrong when it decapitates people and rapes women. Most people do believe in moral absolutes, so where did they come from?

There are many people that object to truth and say things like ‘There is no truth!’ or ‘No one has the truth?’, but we point out that all these statements are self-defeating and you can’t logically deny that truth exists.

Postmodernism: Most people today really struggle with this idea of truth and we can trace it back to an era of human history that began in the middle of the 20th century and continues today called postmodernism. We explain some of the history of this movement and the main idea is that no one has the truth. There is a lot of skepticism in rational thinking and science and with anyone who claims to have the truth.

We discuss an old parable about the 6 blind men and the elephant which shows some of the postmodern thinking, but in the end, it also shows us that absolute truth does indeed exist and we can know it. So maybe we should stop asking ‘If truth exists?’ and begin asking ‘What is the truth?’

Discussion Questions

- Have you experienced any of the absolute truths or laws that were described?
- Do you think that these truths impact your life?
- The Institute for Global Ethics believes that there exist 5 global ethical values (Honesty, Responsibility, Fairness, Respect, and Compassion) which are needed to build healthy societies, businesses, schools, or homes. Do you agree? If yes, why do you think the world functions best like this and not according to some other values?
- Do you believe in absolute moral truth or is all moral truth relative to society? If you believe in absolute moral truth, where did this come from? If you believe in relative moral truth to a society, are some societies more moral than others? If yes, what do you base that judgment on? If no, why is the world fighting ISIS?
- Do you think that Postmodernism has influenced how you view truth?
- Did you have any thoughts or reactions from the parable of the 6 blind men and the elephant? Or from something else that was shared?
- Did this session make you think of some other questions?