



1 COURSE AIM

Explore the nature of truth and how that affects our lives in the world as Christians. In other words, how do we really “know” anything? And if we can know truth, how should that affect our lives and the world around us?

1.1 COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: What Is Truth? - Exploring the roots of biblical Epistemology (our understanding or model of knowledge and truth; its nature, scope and limits).

Week 2: The Divide - Exploring the fallacy of the upper story vs lower story divide which leads to the sacred vs secular and private vs public divide.

Week 3: Total Truth, Applied - Concluding with the biblical response to the divide with total truth as found in the bible. Practical questions answered and practical examples of its application in everyday life.

2 WEEK 1: WHAT IS TRUTH

This week we will be exploring the roots of our biblical understanding of knowledge and truth as Christians. This is an area known as Epistemology. We will tackle this in five short modules. Starting with a definition of key terms, followed by a look at the place of philosophy in our study, this will lead on to the varied models of Epistemology including the true one found in scripture and finally a summary of why this not only underpins our worldview but has a very real effect on life in the real world.

2.1 MODULES

1. Defining Terms
2. Why philosophy matters
3. The bible’s model of Truth
4. Other models of Truth
5. Worldview in the real world

2.2 KEY SCRIPTURE

The whole gospel of John but in particular

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.



John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

John 18:38 Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him.

Acts 17:24–28 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for " 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, " 'For we are indeed his offspring.'

Ephesians 4:21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,

2.3 KEY TERMS

Philosophy: The effort to think clearly and deeply about fundamental questions, including "What is knowledge?" (epistemology), "What is reality?" (metaphysics) and "What is good?" (ethics).

Epistemology: The branch of philosophy concerned with questions about knowledge and belief and related issues such as justification and truth.

Truth: Truth is from a sense of being. Conformity to reality or actuality; often with the implication of dependability as opposed to what is false and wanting.

Knowledge: Knowledge is justified true belief. It can be propositional knowledge (knowing certain facts or states of affair) or experiential knowledge (knowing something because of direct personal experience).

Worldview: An articulation of the basic beliefs embedded in a shared grand story that are rooted in a faith commitment and that give shape and direction to the whole of our individual and corporate lives.

A religious (all humans are religious) framework which influences the way interpret all reality and answer fundamental questions like "Where did we come from?"

2.4 KEY CONCEPTS

2.4.1 God, The Source of Truth

Because God is a described as a Rock which is firm and dependable and has the innate attribute of truth and faithfulness, he exists as the very source of all that is real, even of reality itself, it all finds its origin in him and exists in context to him but remains distinct from him.

This state of God's being and the reality that he wilfully created in context to himself explains the nature of evil, because evil is all that is not true, all that is perverted, against and diluted from the reality and truth of God's person and ways. This anti-truth is seen most clearly in the Devil (see John 8:44).

God is both the moral lawgiver as the source of truth and judge of his creatures in correspondence to his own nature which is pure truth, ultimate reality.

2.4.2 Creation, Fall, Redemption

Taking the Bible as the ultimate authority for Christian thought, we can arrange our Christian worldview into three broad categories:

1. Creation > 2. Fall > 3. Redemption

The outline of creation, fall and redemption define the bible's meta narrative or big story of God, humanity and the rest of creation. This is a real drama which encompasses all of reality. Nothing falls outside this framework except of course God himself in his holiness as both the ultimate essence and source reality.