

Truth or Consequences

Apologetics Study Guide #1

“Do you swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?” is the oath a witness takes before giving testimony in a court of law. To give false testimony is perjury and is a very serious crime which carries a very serious penalty. We depend on people around us to tell us the truth but often times they don’t. Sometimes it is deliberate and sometimes they simply don’t know the truth. It is our job to find the truth because there are severe consequences for embracing falsehood. To find it we must first know what it is. **Truth** is that which corresponds with reality. It is more than just a belief or opinion it is what actually exists.

If I am going to accept something as the truth, especially considering the consequences of being wrong, I want to be able to identify what is true and what is false on objective grounds. A truth test is appropriate. Jesus said in John 14:6 “...I am the **way**, the **truth**, and the **life**. No one comes to the Father, except through Me.” and I believe sets forth a threefold criteria for finding and testing truth.

1. The Way: the path or the means by which we have access to God and eternal life.
2. The Truth: reality which is laid before our eyes clearly evidenced by the facts.
3. The Life: an empowered and vitalized existence.

A truth claim should logically and sensibly lead you to the appropriate conclusion or end, it should clearly be evidenced by the relevant facts, and it should be empowering to our personal existence. I believe the following is a useful guide for evaluating truth claims...

Truth Template

Test #1: Does it make sense? (The Test of Logic)

- A. Does it contradict itself?
- B. Does it contradict known facts?
- C. Does it have a definable meaning?
- D. Does it have explanatory power?

Test #2: Can you prove it? (The Test of Evidence)

- A. Is there abundant information?
- B. Is there more than one line of evidence?
- C. Is it adequate to accommodate all relevant evidence?
- D. Does it battle and win against contrary claims?

Test #3: Can you live it? (Experiential Relevance)

- A. Does it give a clear direction for living?
- B. Does it provide harmony in existence?
- C. Does it produce the desired end?
- D. Is it morally superior to known options?

[Close](#)

I believe this method is sound but whether you use it or not you must have some means of evaluating truth claims. You must have a method or you will end up with madness. Worse yet you will be under the control of what is false. As Christians we are commanded to gain and distill a structured and reasoned defense for our faith; 1 Peter 3:15, 2 Corinthians 10:3-6. We do this to protect our own minds, to protect the minds of others or lead them to the truth, and to protect the dignity of our God and our faith.

*“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit,
according to the traditions of men, according to the basic principles of the world,
and not according to Christ.”*

Colossians 2:8

“Test all things; hold fast that which is good.”

I Thessalonians 5:21