

## Objective Truth

**Big Idea:** The truth is something out there, outside us.  
The truth is a person. (John 1:1)



*Our ability to live a fully human life is a function of the degree to which our lives are aligned to extrinsic realities.*

If we discard God then there is:

- No basis for human rights. The only basis of human rights is God creating man in his image.
- No objective truth, just opinion, what feels good, what works, power struggle.
- No stable identity. Identity becomes fluid and self-defined. I create my own reality.

True religion is about faith in extrinsic (out there) solid historical reality. The Bible is full of references to verifiable historical events, cultures, civilisations, kings, cities. Things are not true because they are in the Bible, they are in the Bible because they are true.

Compare the Bible with the [Book of Mormon](#).

Application:

- Keep re-calibrating your heart. Keep coming back to the truth in the Bible.
- Keep reading. Readers lead; leaders read.
- Keep feeding your mind with truth rather than junk. Over the years it will become evident which you have been feeding yourself with.

### Annotated reading list

[Jean-Paul Sartre – ‘Existentialism is a humanism’, 1946](#) – argues that there are consequences in believing and in disbelieving in objective truth

If one considers an article of manufacture as, for example, a book or a paper-knife – one sees that it has been made by an artisan who had a conception of it ... the paper-knife ... serves a definite purpose, for one cannot suppose that a man would produce a paper-knife without knowing what it was for ... When we think of God as the creator, we are thinking of him, most of the time, as a supernal artisan ... Thus, the conception of man in the mind of God is comparable to that of the paper-knife in the mind of the artisan: God makes man according to a procedure and a conception, exactly as the artisan manufactures a paper-knife

Atheistic existentialism, of which I am a representative, declares ... that if God does not exist ... there is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it. Man simply is. ... Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism.

Tim Keller – *The Reason for God*

[In] the story of the blind men and the elephant... each blind man could feel only part of the elephant – none could envisage the entire elephant. In the same way, it is argued, the religions of the world each have a grasp on part of the truth about spiritual reality, but none can claim to have a comprehensive vision of the truth.

This illustration backfires on its users. The story is told from the point of view of someone who is not blind. How could you know that each blind man only sees part of the elephant unless you claim to be able to see the whole elephant? How could you possibly know that no religion can see the whole truth unless you yourself have the superior, comprehensive knowledge of spiritual reality you just claimed that none of the religions have?

C S Lewis – *The Abolition of Man* – writing with almost prophetic insight in 1943 Lewis shows that once society has rejected absolute, extrinsic values we are left only with power – the powerful elite decides what is right and wrong. See especially chapter 3:

There is something which unites magic and applied science while separating both from the wisdom of earlier ages. For the wise men of old the cardinal problem had been how to conform the soul to reality, and the solution had been knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue. For magic and applied science alike the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of men.

The power of man to make himself what he pleases means... the power of some men to make other men what they please.

When all that says, "It is good" has been debunked, what says, "I want" remains.

I am not here speaking of the corrupting influence of power... The very word corrupt... implies a doctrine of value which I meaningless in this context [when all absolute values have been dismissed].

I am very doubtful whether history shows us one example of a man who, having stepped outside traditional morality and attained power, has used that power benevolently.

Nicholas Wolterstorff – especially *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, 1984<sup>1</sup>

Jim Belcher - Deep ChurchAdditional Reading:

John Gray – *Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals* – like Sartre and Nietzsche, Gray argues that atheism has not been thoroughgoing enough in its rejection of God – humanism is still clinging to values which no longer have any foundation (now God has been dismissed) – instead we need to follow through to the logical conclusion and accept that there is no right and wrong, no difference between humans and other animals and simply go with the flow of instinct and our animal natures (Taoism).

Douglas R. Groothuis – *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism*

D. A. Carson – *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter by Alvin Plantinga, Reason & Belief in God, [available online](#).