

Resources

- Geisler, Norman L. and Frank Turek. **I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist**. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004.
- Turek, Frank. **Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to Make Their Case**. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014.

Main Points

1

- Truth about reality is knowable.

2

- The opposite of true is false.

Chapter 1: Can We Handle the Truth?

"Men stumble over the truth from time to time, but most pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing happened." —WINSTON CHURCHILL

Q. Do we believe in the truth?

- We expect truth in virtually **every** area of our lives:
 - Loved ones, doctors, stock brokers, courts, employers, airlines, reference books, news, advertising, teachers, politicians, road signs, medicine bottles and food labels
 - What else?

Q. Why not expect truth in religion and morality?

- Those who reject religions or moral truth usually do so for **volitional** reasons
 - i.e. the desire not to be held accountable
 - In return, they are willing to accept self-defeating claims

We love the truth when it enlightens us, but we hate it when it convicts us. - AUGUSTINE

Q. What is truth?

- **Telling** it like it is
- That which describes an **actual** state of affairs
- That which corresponds to its **object**

Q. What is the “truth” about truth?

- It is **absolute** – not relative to anything else
- It is **narrow** – specific
- It is **exclusive** – excludes its opposite
 - Contrary beliefs are possible, but contrary truths are not
- It is **discovered**, not invented
- It is **unchanging**, even though our beliefs about it can change
- It is **transcultural** – true for all people, at all times, in all places
- It cannot be changed by **belief**, no matter how sincere
 - We can believe something is true, but we cannot make it true
- It is not affected by the **attitude** of the one professing it

Q. Why is it important to understand truth?

- Ideas have **consequences**
 - Good ideas have good consequences, Bad ideas have bad consequences
- False ideas about **truth** lead to false ideas about **life**
 - If we kill the concept of truth, we kill the concept of true religion or true morality
 - The consequences of this are not only true for those pushing the idea, but for us as well

TRUTH EXISTS.

Q. Can truth be known?

- To say we can't know anything for sure is **self-defeating**
 - Skeptics / Agnostics

Q. Can all religions be true?

- No, because many religions teach beliefs that are **mutually-exclusive**
- World religions have **more** contradictory beliefs that complementary ones
 - Disagreement on major issues such as the nature of God, nature of man, sin, salvation, heaven, hell and creation

Q. Isn't it intolerant to claim that some religious or moral beliefs are wrong?

- While most religions have some beliefs that are true, not all religious beliefs can be true because they are mutually exclusive (they teach **opposites**)
- Tolerance no longer means to put up with something you believe to be **false**
- Tolerance now means to accept every belief as **truth**
 - Religious pluralism

Q. Why is the new “tolerance” problematic?

- Since mutually exclusive religious beliefs cannot be true, it makes no sense to **pretend** they are
- The claim that “you ought not question someone’s religious beliefs” is an exclusive **religious** belief and an absolute **moral** position
- The Bible commands Christians to **question** religious beliefs
 - Deuteronomy 13:1-5
 - 1 John 4:1
 - Galatians 1:8
 - 2 Corinthians 11:13)
- The claims that we shouldn’t question religious beliefs comes from the false idea against making **judgments**
- Are pluralists ready to accept as true **all** religious beliefs?

Chapter 2: Why Should Anyone Believe Anything At All?

People almost invariably arrive at their beliefs not on the basis of proof but on the basis of what they find attractive. – BLAISE PASCAL

Q. Why do people believe what they believe?

- Sociological reasons
- Psychological reasons
- Religious reasons
- Philosophical reasons

Q. What are the right reasons to believe something?

- Any teaching (religious or otherwise) is worth trusting only if it points to the **truth**
- Many beliefs held today are not supported by evidence, but by subjective **preferences**
- In order to find truth, one must be ready to give up subjective preferences in favor of objective **facts** (logic, evidence, and science)

Q. How is logic helpful in finding truth?

- Logic is built into the nature of **reality**
- We use logic to make decisions every day
- Law of **non-contradiction** (opposite ideas cannot both be true at the same time and in the same sense, the opposite of true is false)

Q. What about skeptics?

- David Hume was a notable skeptic/empiricist (belief that all meaningful ideas are either true by definition or must be based on experience)
- A.J. Ayer converted this into the “principle of empirical verifiability”, popular in the mid-1960’s
- Skepticism of this nature **violates** the Law of Non-Contradiction because the belief itself is neither true by definition nor capable of being verified by our senses

Q. What about agnostics?

- Immanuel Kant was a notable agnostic
- “Complete” agnosticism states it’s impossible to know anything about the real world for sure because you only know what your senses are telling you (there are no **truths**)
- Agnosticism of this nature **violates** the Law of Non-Contradiction because it claims the truth about the real world is that there are no truths
- It also commits a **logical** fallacy known as the “nothing but” fallacy by stating that what the brain receives is *nothing but* phenomena, but in order to know this he would have to be able to see *more than* the phenomena
 - If there’s no way to distinguish between the phenomena and the real world, then you can’t see how they might differ. And if you can’t see how they might differ, then it makes much more sense to assume they are the same (an accurate representation)

Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy must be answered. – C.S. LEWIS

Q. So Hume and Kant are wrong, so what?

- The Suicide / Road Runner tactic can only reveal that a proposition is **false**
- It does not provide **positive** evidence that any particular claim is true

Q. How is truth known?

LOGIC

- The process of discovering truth begins with the self-evident law of logic called the **first principles**
 - They are called first principles because there is nothing before them
 - They are not **proven** by other principles; they are inherent in reality and self-evident
 - You don’t learn these first principles, you **know** them
 - Law of Non-Contradiction, Law of the Excluded Middle
- Consider this logical argument:
 1. All men are mortal
 2. John is a man
 3. Therefore John is mortal

- The self-evident laws of logic tell us that the conclusion is valid (because it follows from the premises)
- However, the laws of logic do not tell us whether the premises, or conclusion, are true
- An argument can be logically sound but still be false, so **logic** only gets us so far

OBSERVATIONS & REASONING

- To discover whether premises are true, we need more information
 - We get information by **observing** the world around us and drawing general **conclusions**
 - This method is known as **induction**
 - Most conclusions based on induction cannot be considered absolutely certain but only **highly probable**
- So can we trust inductive conclusions?
 - Yes, to varying degrees
 - Even when we don't have complete or perfect information, we often have enough to make reasonably certain conclusions
 - Beyond a **reasonable** doubt

Q. How are truths about God known?

- We use induction to investigate God the same way we do other things we can't see – by observing their effects
- From the **effects** we rationally presume a **cause** exists
- Consider this argument
 1. All books have at least one author (inductive investigation)
 2. I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist is a book (observation)
 3. Therefore, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist has at least one author (conclusion)
- Are there effects that we can observe that point to God?

Q. So what? Who cares about the truth?

- Even though people may claim that truth in morality doesn't matter, they don't really believe it when someone treats them **immorally**
- **Success** in life is often dependent on the moral choices a person makes
- All laws legislate **morality** – shouldn't the truth be what is legislated
- Regardless of what the real truth is concerning religion and morality, our lives are greatly affected by it **now** and perhaps into **the future** – we owe it to ourselves to find the real truth and then act on it