

What is Truth?

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For Discussion: In a 'Post Truth' World, What Do Pastors Appeal To As Their Final Authority?

(Skip Heitzig; harbingersdaily.com; Dec 2, 2025)

<https://harbingersdaily.com/do-pastors-view-the-bible-as-unshakable-truth-or-a-book-to-be-weighed-along-with-societal-norms/>

What does it mean that we live in a post-truth world?

Being in a post-truth essentially means objectivity has lost its footing to subjectivity; feelings and opinion are preferred over facts.

- A more common term for this is postmodernism.

What comes to mind when we consider the question, what is truth?

John 18:37-38 – *Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"*

Jesus is the personification of Truth. But Pilate did not recognize this. Instead, he rationalized that it wasn't possible to know the truth, that the truth is relative to a person's perspective.

- Pilate was ahead of his time in embracing a postmodern worldview.

What is truth?

It is first helpful to note what truth is not:

- Truth is not simply whatever works. This is the philosophy of pragmatism—an ends-vs.-means-type approach. In reality, lies can appear to "work," but they are still lies and not the truth.
- Truth is not simply what is coherent or understandable. A group of people can get together and form a conspiracy based on a set of falsehoods where they all agree to tell the same false story, but it does not make their presentation true.
- Truth is not what makes people feel good. Unfortunately, bad news can be true.
- Truth is not what the majority says is true. Fifty-one percent of a group can reach a wrong conclusion.
- Truth is not what is comprehensive. A lengthy, detailed presentation can still result in a false conclusion.

- Truth is not defined by what is intended. Good intentions can still be wrong.
- Truth is not simply what is believed. A lie believed is still a lie.

The Greek word for "truth" is *aletheia*, which refers to "divine revelation" and is related to a word that literally means "what can't be hidden."

- The Hebrew word for "truth" is *emeth*, which means "firmness," "constancy" and "duration." Such a definition implies an everlasting substance and something that can be relied upon.

From a philosophical perspective: Truth is that which corresponds to reality. It is simply telling it like it is.

- Any opinion that contradicts truth is wrong.

What is postmodernism?

It is a philosophy that affirms no objective or absolute truth, especially in matters of religion and spirituality.

- When confronted with a truth claim regarding the reality of God, postmodernism's viewpoint is exemplified in the statement "that may be true for you, but not for me."

The term "postmodernism" literally means "after modernism" and is used to philosophically describe the current era which came after the age of modernism.

- Postmodernism is a reaction to modernism's failed promise of using human reason alone to make the world a better place.
- Because one of modernism's beliefs was that absolutes did indeed exist, postmodernism seeks to "correct" things by first eliminating absolute truth and making everything relative to an individual's beliefs and desires.

Why is postmodernism dangerous?

It rejects absolute truth along with distinctions in matters of religion and faith. The result is a philosophy of religious pluralism that says no faith or religion is objectively true and therefore no one can claim their religion is true and another is false.

When did modernism become the philosophy of the culture in Western Civilization?

During the Reformation. Prior to that, the intellectual aspects of Western civilization and the concept of truth were dominated by theologians. But, beginning with the Renaissance the 14th – 17th centuries, thinkers began to elevate humankind to the center of reality.

- Rene Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am” personified the beginning of this era. God was not the center of truth any longer – man was.

When did postmodernism replace modernism?

The seeds of relativism were sown in 1781 by Prussian Immanuel Kant who argued that true knowledge about God was impossible, so he created a divide of knowledge between “facts” and “faith.”

- While modernism believed in absolutes in science, God’s special revelation (the Bible) was evicted from the realm of truth and certainty.

The patron saint of postmodernist philosophy was Frederick Nietzsche who held to “perspectivism,” which says that all knowledge (including science) is a matter of perspective and interpretation.

- Many other philosophers embraced this idea rejecting any hint of absolute truth.

What has been the ugly fruit of postmodernism?

- Loss of Discernment – Postmodernism makes it impossible to objectively adjudicate between competing truth claims.
- Pluralism – all beliefs must be considered equally valid. This is irrational because of the contradictions between different beliefs.
- Christianity is rejected because of its exclusiveness.

How is postmodernism not even logical?

Postmodernism claims there is no absolute truth. As apologist Frank Turek would respond: “Is that true?”

- Postmodernism is ultimately self-defeating... how can the only absolute truth be that there are no absolute truths?

Why has postmodernism grown to dominate the culture?

People who have gotten further from a relationship with God lose the ability to think rationally...

Romans 1:28 – *even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind*

Critical Thinking... If you don’t use it, you’ll lose it!

How has the influence of postmodern culture impacted the church?

Loss of respecting Scripture as having the authority of God’s Word...

From the Skip Heitzig article:

A Gallup poll: “A record-low 20% of Americans now say the Bible is the literal Word of God. That’s down from 24% the last time the question was asked in 2017.

Even more telling; George Barna’s research found that:

- only 4% of Americans have a biblical worldview
- only 11% of those professing to be born again actually have a biblical worldview.
- Only 37% of pastors have a biblical worldview.

Christian culture researcher George Barna surveyed seven cornerstones of a Christian worldview:

1. God is eternal, omniscient, omnipotent and just Creator.
2. Humans are sinful by nature.
3. Jesus Christ grants forgiveness of sin and eternal life when sinners repent and profess their faith in Him alone.
4. The Bible is true, reliable and always relevant.
5. Absolute moral truth exists.
6. Success is defined as consistent obedience to God.
7. Life’s purpose is to know, love and serve God with all one’s heart, mind, strength, and soul.

What do those with a biblical worldview believe?

The beliefs that are essential to the Christian faith...

- the deity of Christ
- salvation by God’s grace and not by works
- salvation through Jesus Christ alone
- the resurrection of Christ
- the Gospel: Christ died for our sins
- monotheism and the Holy Trinity

Also, there’s the Five Solas of the Protestant Reformation...

1. Sola scriptura: “Scripture alone”
2. Sola fide: “faith alone”
3. Sola gratia: “grace alone”
4. Solo Christo: “Christ alone”
5. Soli Deo gloria: “to the glory of God alone”

How does yielding to the world’s postmodern culture impact a person’s worldview?

Proverbs 29:25 – *Fear of man will prove to be a snare*
Those who are more concerned with what the world thinks of them than what God thinks will not be able to embrace a biblical worldview.

- When a believer starts making compromises with the world’s thinking, he loses focus on God’s perspective.

state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.”

Is having a postmodern worldview a salvation issue?

Yes, to be saved, it is absolutely necessary to believe God's Word.

Romans 10:17 – *So then faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Having the wrong, culture-influenced view about God and His Word is spiritually deadly.

Romans 12:2 – *do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*

If a person is truly born again, there should be evidence that they are becoming more like Christ...

- They cease to be conformed to this world that rejects the truth about God.
- Being transformed is having our minds renewed to think like Christ.

Why is renewing our minds so important?

What we know in our minds to be true forms a conviction in our hearts of that truth, and that conviction in our hearts translates into action.

- Therefore, we must first renew our minds.

How can we replace the error of the world's way of thinking?

By replacing it with God's truth, and the only infallible source of God's truth is His revealed Word, the Bible.

- Transformation through renewed minds comes as believers expose themselves to God's Word through the faithful exposition of it each week in church, personal Bible study, and group Bible study.
- A solid church that believes in preaching the Word, reading the Word, and singing the Word is invaluable in helping us renew our minds.

There are no shortcuts. There is no magical formula for renewing our minds. We must fill our minds with God's Word. As Jesus prayed to the Father, *“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth”* (John 17:17).

How is Christian meditation different from the meditation of Eastern religions?

Christian meditation is filling your mind with thoughts of God and His Word. Eastern religions would have you empty your mind which opens you up to demonic influence... which brings to mind:

Matthew 12:43-45 – ⁴³ *“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. ⁴⁴ Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵ Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last*

What is the prophetic significance of the postmodern impact on biblical worldviews?

It is contributing to the apostasy of the church...

1 Timothy 4:1 – *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons*

It has resulted in a Laodicean lukewarm commitment to Christ...

Revelation 3:16 – *because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.*

Knowing the truth is essential; it makes people less susceptible to deception...

Ephesians 4:14 – *that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting*

...As G.K. Chesterton said:

“Once people stop believing in God, the problem is not that they will believe nothing; rather the problem is that they will believe anything”

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- Postmodernism has contributed to apostasy, a sign of the times
- Having a biblical worldview is a salvation issue