

SUPPLEMENT # 2: A CLOSER LOOK AT TRUTH:

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In this this supplement our task is three-fold: (1) present a closer overview of Norman Geisler and Frank Turek's 12-point method to defend the Christian faith to both unbelievers and struggling believers alike, (2) understand the biblical and philosophical basis for truth, and (3) be able to defend the undeniability of the law of non-contradiction in conversation.

A. LAST TIME...

We examined the importance of being methodical rather than being incoherent and unintelligible when defending the Christian faith. We were introduced to over 9 different types of apologetic methodologies.

B. THIS TIME... let's take a closer look at the 12-step methodology and examine both truth and logic, steps one and two.¹

Step 1: Truth about reality is knowable (undeniable).

Step 2: The opposite of true is false.

Step 3: It is true that the theistic God exists.

This is evidenced by the following:

- Beginning of the universe (Cosmological argument).
- Design of the universe (Teleological argument)
- Design of life (Teleological Argument)
- Moral Law (Moral Argument)
- Religious Need Argument
- Joy Argument
- Innate Idea Argument

Step 4: If God exists, then miracles are possible.

- Criteria for Miracles
- Proof for Miracles

Step 5: Miracles can be used to confirm a message from God.

Step 6: The New Testament is historically reliable.

- External Proofs (e.g., historical, archeological, manuscript evidence; uniqueness: continuity; survivability; circulation translation).
- Internal Proofs (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; Matt. 5:17-18; John 10:34-35; 2 Peter 3:15-16; John 14:26; 15:26; What the Bible Says...God Says; Jesus view of O.T.; Extent of Biblical Authority; fulfillment of biblical prophecy).

Step 7: The New Testament says Jesus claimed to be God.

- John 8:58; 10:30; 17:5; Phil. 2:5-11
- Eternal (John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5)
- Omnipresent Matt. 28:20; Eph. 1:23)
- Omniscient (John 16:30; 21:17)
- Omnipotent (John 5:19)

¹ Sources consulted and adapted include William Lane Craig, *Hard Questions, Real Answers* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2003), Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be An Atheist* (Crossway: Wheaton, 2004); Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press) which offers a superb defense for the correspondence view of truth; Roger Nicole, "The Biblical Concept of Truth," in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).

- Immutable (Heb. 1:12; 13:8)
- He forgives sin (Mat. 9:2; Luke 7:47)
- He raises the deaf (John 5:25; 11:25)
- He executes judgment (John 5:22)
- He is identified with Yahweh (John 8:58)
- Possesses Divine Names such as:
 - Alpha and Omega (Rev. 22:13)
 - I am (John 8:58)
 - Immanuel (Matt. 1:22)
 - Son of Man (Matt. 9:6; 12:8)
 - Lord (Matt. 7:21; Luke 1:43)
 - Son of God (John 10:36)
 - God (John 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1)
- Possesses Divine Relations (Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3)
- He is one with the Father (John 10:31)
- Accepts Divine Worship (Matt. 14:33; 28:9; John 20:28-29)

Step 8: Jesus' claim to be God was miraculously confirmed by:

- His fulfillment of many prophecies about Himself;
- His sinless and miraculous life;
- His prediction and accomplishment of His resurrection.

Step 9: Therefore, Jesus is God.

Step 10: Whatever Jesus (who is God) teaches is true.

Step 11: Jesus taught that the Bible is the Word of God.

- Divine authority - Matt. 4:4, 7, 10
- Indestructibility - Matt. 5:17-18
- Unbreakability - John 10:35
- Ultimate Supremacy - Matt. 15:3,6
- Factual Inerrancy – Matt. 22:29; John 17:17
- Historical Reliability – Matt. 12:40, 24:37-38
- Scientific Accuracy – Matt. 19:4-5; John 3:12.

Step 12: Therefore, it is true that the Bible is the Word of God (and anything opposed to it is false).

- John 3:16
- Rom. 3:25
- Gal. 3:13
- Eph. 2:8-9
- Rom. 4:5; 5:1
- John 17:17
- Psalm 19:7-11

STEP 1: The Truth about Reality is Knowable:

1. The truth about reality is knowable (this is undeniable):

- a. Abstract truth corresponds to abstract reality (e.g., ideas, numbers).
- b. Concrete truth corresponds to concrete reality (e.g., God, people, objects).

2. We can know actual reality:

- a. It is self-defeating to claim “*we cannot know reality*” because this claim implies that we really do know something about reality. Such a statement implies we really do know something about reality. Moreover, one cannot deny truth without using it for any denial of it claims to be true (that is, corresponds or correlates to reality).
- b. It is also self-defeating to claim “*we cannot know reality.*” Such a claim implies we really do know something about reality.
- c. Therefore, **we are capable of knowing truth about reality.**

3. Correspondence View of Truth is Biblical, not merely philosophical.²

This third point is for the believer who doubts the basis for the correspondence view of truth [at this point you would not want to use biblical support to substantiate the correspondence view of truth if the unbeliever with whom you are speaking doubts God’s existence; there is no common ground by using the Bible unless the person already believes in the authority of the Bible].

- a. There is substantial Scriptural evidence for the correspondence view of truth. Therefore, to the believer I would like to now discuss this at length because I’ve heard it said that “Jesus is the *only* truth” (not the correspondence view) and the “*correspondence view of truth*” is sourced in philosophy, not the Bible.

My argument by using Scriptural evidence is that while Jesus Christ is a particular content of revelation or truth, Jesus’ existence corresponds to reality; His earthly ministry was an actual ministry with “*real*” existence. God created reality in such a way that people perceived Him, entering into both time and history (Phil. 2:5-11). In fact, Jesus’ claims of Messiah were evidenced by His miracles that were actually seen by both followers and enemies alike. Jesus’ bodily resurrection was a fact that corresponded to reality. In other words, it was not a “*matrix*” program where these things were

Definition of Truth:

Truth is that which corresponds to reality, identified things as they actually are, can never fail, diminish, change, or be extinguished, must be able to be expressed in propositional statements, and is sourced in the God of the Bible Who is the Author of all truth.

² This section is greatly indebted to Douglas Groothuis’ work, *Truth Decay* and Roger Nicole’s article, “Biblical Concept of Truth” for their analysis and defense of the biblical defense of truth and its correspondence; James Bacon Sullivan, “An Examination of First Principles in Thought and Being in the Light of Aristotle and Aquinas.” Ph.D. dissertation, Catholic University of America. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1939.

DID YOU KNOW?

Most people object to the truth of Christianity for the following reasons:

Emotional reasons:

such as witness of Christian hypocrisy, Christian exclusivism, and the doctrine of hell.

Intellectual reasons

such as the problem of evil.

Volitional reasons

such as not wanting to submit to moral accountability.

Yet despite these obstacles we suggest that if one looks at the evidence, it takes more faith to be a non-believer than it does to be a Christian because of the factual uniqueness of biblical Christianity.

contrived or imagined; God disclosed Himself by entering into a real world with a real existence. Therefore, those who claim such objections confuse reality (as God designed it) with a particular manifestation of truth; both are biblical. To say otherwise is unbiblical.

- b. Therefore, we will substantiate that the correspondence view of truth is biblical, not merely philosophical; God created reality correspondently or as it actually is (whether we recognize or not); we live in a real world that He created.
- c. The Scriptures use the Hebrew and Greek words for **truth and their derivatives repeatedly**. Consider the following:
 1. Hebrew term for **truth is “e-meth”** which is the root of the great majority of the Hebrew words related to truth, involves both the ideas of “*support*” and “*stability*.” From this root flows the twofold notion of truth as **faithfulness** and **conformity to fact**:
 - a. God is true (or faithful) to His word and in His activities and attitudes; God is the God of truth. So, David prays, “*Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O Lord, the God of truth*” (Psalm 31:5; see 2 Chron. 15:3).
 - b. Through Isaiah, God declares, “*I, the Lord, speak the truth; I declare what is right*” (Is. 45:19). Likewise, people need to response to the God of truth in truth, “*The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth*” (Ps. 145:18).
 2. Hebrew for truth (“*emet*”) may also represent that which is conformed to reality in contrast to anything which would be erroneous or deceitful. For example:
 - a. In several passages “*if it is true*” means “*If the charge is substantiated*” (Deut. 13:14; 17:4; Is. 43:9).
 - b. Many biblical texts include statements such as “*speaking the truth*” (see Prov. 8:7; Jer. 9:5) or “*giving a true message*” (see Dan. 10:1) or a “*true vision*” (see Dan. 8:26).
 - c. After Elijah raised the dead the son of Zarephath’s widow, she exclaimed that “*the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth*” (1 Kings 17:24).
 3. Hebrew term for truth (“*emet*”) may also denote, “**what is authentic, reliable, or simply right,**” such as “*true justice*” (Zech. 7:9) or as in swearing in a “*truthful, just and righteous way*” (Jer. 4:2) or “*your law is true* (Psalm 119:142).”
 4. There is no indication that truth in the Hebrew denotes a belief or social custom because beliefs can be false and customs be opposed to the will of God:
 - a. “*The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in those who are truthful*” (Prov. 12:22).

DID YOU KNOW?

There are 8 major consequences for denying the Law of Non-Contradiction. Consider the following from James Bacon Sullivan:

1. To deny the necessity and validity of the Principle of Non-Contradiction would be to deprive words of their fixed meaning and render speech useless.
2. Reality of essence must be abandoned; there would be becoming without anything that becomes; flying without a bird; accidents without subjects in which to inhere.
3. There would be no distinction between things. All would be one. Ship, wall, man would all be the same thing.
4. It would mean the destruction of truth, for truth and falsity would be the same thing.

- b. Jeremiah attacked the falsehood and unfaithfulness of his people when he said, “*How can you say, ‘We are wise, for we have the law of the Lord,’ when actually the lying pen of the scribes has handled it falsely?*” (Jer. 8:8)
- c. When Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, he drew a stark contrast between irreconcilable options: “*How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him*” (1 Kings 18:21). The ensuing power confrontation vindicated Elijah’s God as the one who is the faithful and true God. After God sent fire to consume the sacrifice left unchanged by the please of Baal’s frantic followers, the people “*fell prostrate and cried, ‘The Lord-he is God! The Lord-he is God!’*” (1 Kings 18:39).
 6. Therefore, the clear witness of the condemnation of all lies and deceit substantiates the idea of The O.T. concept of truth as “***faithfulness and veracity.***”
 7. N.T. understanding of “*truth*” is consistent with that of the Hebrew Scriptures:
 - a. N.T. word “*aletheia*” and its derivations retain the Hebrew idea of “*conformity to fact*” expressed in “*emet.*” For example:
 - b. Gospel of John uses “*aletheia*” (“*truth*”) and related words very frequently in a variety of settings.
 8. Apostle John uses truth vocabulary in its conventional sense of veracity, genuineness, and opposite of false; but he also expands the meaning of truth to include the reality of God the Father revealed in Jesus the Son.³
 9. Thus we may conclude that John’s understanding of truth presupposes a correspondence view of truth, but it also builds this foundation theologically by adding *specific content* concerning the manifestation of truth in Jesus Christ (John 7:28; 8:16). Therefore, the correspondence view of truth is biblical and includes Jesus Christ as a specific content of manifestation or revelation of truth, the 2nd Person of the Trinity.
 10. The related idea of faithfulness is typically expressed by words in the family of “*pistos*” which are translated “***faithful, reliable or trustworthy.***”
 - a. N.T. frequently combines the words “*grace and truth,*” which is reminiscent of the Hebrew “*mercy and truth.*” Jesus is “*full of grace and truth*” (John 1:14) and “*grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*” (John 1:17).
 - b. Use of the Hebrew “*amen,*” in the N.T. occurs 129 times. This is typically translated as “*truly*” or “*I tell you the truth,*” as when Jesus says, “*I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.*” In

³ D. M. Crump, “*Truth,*” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scott McKnight and I. Howard Marshall (Downer’s Grove, Il.: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 859.

8 consequences for denying the Law of Non-Contradiction from James Bacon Sullivan:

5. It would destroy all thought, even opinion, for its affirmation would be its negation.

6. Desire and preference would be useless, for there would be no difference between good and evil; there would be no reason to go home, for to go home would not be different from where one is.

7. Everything would be equally true and false at the same time, so that no opinion would be more wrong than any other even in degree.

8. It would make impossible all becoming, change, or motion. For all this implies a transition from one state of being to another; but if the Principle of Contradiction is false, all states of being are the same.

~ Cited from Josh McDowell's *New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 604.

Revelation 3:14, the glorified Christ refers to Himself as “*the Amen, the faithful and true witness*” (see also Is. 63:16).

11. Each member of the Trinity is closely associated with truth in the N.T. In praying for his disciples Jesus says, “*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth*” (John 17:17). The gospel is sometimes called “*the truth of Christ*” (2 Cor. 11:10). The Holy Spirit is called “*the Spirit of truth*” (John 14:17; 15:26) or simply “*the truth*” (1 John 5:6).
12. N.T. draws a **clear contrast between truth and error**. For example:
 - a. John warns of distinguishing the “*Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood*” (1 John 4:6).
 - b. Paul says that those who deny the reality of the God behind creation “*suppress the truth by their wickedness*” (Rom. 1:18).
 - c. Before Pilate, Jesus divided the field into truth and error: “*For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me*” (John 18:37). Pilate took the side of falsehood.
13. In another group of passages, mostly in John’s writings you have passages that make a comparison between that which is complete to that which is incomplete, definitive and provisional, full-orbed, and partial. For example, “*the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*” (John 1:17). Thus, Christ’s truth completed what was anticipated in the law (see also John 1:9; 6:32, 55; 15:1; Heb. 8:2; 9:24).

Therefore, if we could summarize the biblical view of truth it involves three interrelated concepts:

- 1. Factuality;**
 - 2. Faithfulness;**
 - 3. Completeness.**
- a. Nowhere does the Bible present truth as that which is culturally constructed or affirm it as a cultural manifestation of either or both the ancient Jews or early Christians. Rather, they believed they received truth from God who speaks truth to his creatures, and they were expected by God to conform themselves to this truth.
 - b. Moreover, the correspondence view of truth is not merely philosophical, but biblical because it is factual, faithful, and complete. Therefore, any believer who questions the correspondence view of truth must consult the usage of both O.T. and N.T. usages of “*truth*” and reflect upon what “*reality*” really is.

STEP 2: The Opposite of True is False:

1. The law of non-contradiction affirms that opposites cannot both be true.

As Aristotle observed, “*Nothing can be and not be at the same time in the same respect.*”

For example:

- a. Jesus cannot be both sinless and sinful;
- b. If there is exactly one God, there cannot be more than one God.

2. The law of non-contradiction is undeniable.
3. Therefore, the opposite of what is true is false.
4. Even those who deny it use it because it is a self-evident, inherent law of logic:⁴

The Law of Non-Contradiction is inevitable because it is a First Principle of Logic (self-evident, inherent laws of logic): Consider these self-defeating statements:

“**There is no truth!**” Is that statement true? How sure are you?

“**All truth is relative!**” Is that statement true? How sure are you?

“**It is wrong to judge!**” Why are you judging me?

“**Who are you to say?**” Who are you to ask the question?

“**Don’t take anyone’s advice!**” Is that your advice to me?

“**The law of non-contradiction is false!**” “Is that true?”

“**The law of non-contradiction is unknowable!**” “Then how do you even know it is unknowable?”

“**I don’t know!**” Then you are admitting that you know something; i.e., namely, you know you don’t know something.

⁴ Consult Norman Geisler, *Baker’s Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* for other “First Principles of Logic.”

How Should We Then Live?

1. Value the fact that truth is revealed by God. Truths are not merely opinions, constructed or designed by people for their benefit, etc.
2. Remember that objective truth exists and is knowable; there is no reason to follow the dark path of skepticism. Opinions may change but truth is real and is knowable.
 - a. It is a truth of all creation; not the unique view of Christianity.
 - b. Although God's ways are above our ways (Isa. 55:8-9), God is consistent and cannot lie (Tit. 1:2). God cannot deny himself or assert what is false; not can he make something both true and false in the same way at the same time (This is not a denial of God's omnipotence, because omnipotence concerns the ability to perform logically possible actions); God is not incoherent. Rather, First Principles of Logic such as the law of non-contradiction reflect God's personality.
3. Christian truth is absolute in nature. It is true without exception or exemption.
 - a. This does not mean that believers claim to have exhaustive knowledge about God or anything else. Rather, those who know Jesus confess His absoluteness, not their own. In other words, Christ's supremacy means our dependency.
 - b. To confess the absolute truth of Christ does not entail that we must be able to prove it absolutely.
 - c. To claim that the truth about God and God's ways with humanity is absolute is not to claim that believers are inerrant (without error) in their understanding about every aspect of the Christian faith.
4. Truth is universal no matter place or time. Correspondence view of truth corresponds to reality.
5. Truth of God is eternally engaging and momentous, not trendy or superficial.
6. Truth is exclusive, specific, and antithetical.
 - a. What is true excludes all that opposes it. This is why God asserts:
 1. "You shall have no gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). If there is but one God, all other claimants are impostors.
 2. "Enter though the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it (Matt. 7:13)."
7. Truth, Christianly understood, is systematic and unified.

- a. God designed the universe as His world; it is a uni-verse, not a multi-verse. Thus the universe He created flows from His character. That is why first principles of logic are inherent to reality, not created by philosophers; they were only discovered and labeled by others (e.g., law of gravity; 2nd Law of Thermodynamics). Moreover, they reflect God's personality since His is logical. Lastly, God gave us revelation using laws of logic such as the law of non-contradiction.
 - b. Truth is not fragmented. God created reality with harmony and unity.
8. Correspondence view of truth is an end, not a means to any other end.⁵
- a. Truth is not adaptable or moldable to one's perceived needs and preference. In other words, we don't "create" or "construct" truth; truth is as it is. Reality is not a "hologram" or "virtual" reality. Don't give up on reality.
 - b. Truth liberates. Though truth can be painful, truth liberates those who are being misled, deceived, or manipulated either by themselves or by others.

C. Conclusion:

1. Truth is powerful:

This is why truth is so powerful. It allows us to cooperate with reality, whether spiritual or physical, and tap into its power. As we learn to think correctly about God, specific scriptural teachings, the soul, or other important aspects of a Christian worldview, we are placed in touch with God and those realities. And we thereby gain access to the power available to us to live in the kingdom of God.⁶

2. Logic is necessary:

The philosopher Epictetus [AD 55 circa 135] confronted by a skeptic, made plain the inescapability of committing ourselves to the use of logic:

When one of the company said, "Convince me that logic is necessary," Epictetus asked, "Do you wish me to demonstrate this to you?" "Yes." "Then must I use a demonstrative form of argument?" And when this was admitted: "Then how will you know whether I argue fallaciously?" And as the man was silent: "Don't you see," said Epictetus, "how even yourself acknowledge that logic is necessary since without its assistance you cannot so much as know whether it is necessary or not?"⁷

⁵ On another issue, for the believer, we must realize that "doctrine" in itself is not an end to itself. It is not merely enough to know doctrine in order to be spiritually mature. In order to honor God we must fully live out doctrine. In other words, we must practice the truth if we are to reflect God's beauty. The spiritual life of the believer demands that we know, practice, and protect the truth (Romans 12:1-2; Psalm 19:7-11; John 17:17; 2 John) for we are called by means of the Holy Spirit to "reproduce" the life of Jesus Christ and that means that our lives are to consistently bear the "fruit of the Spirit" as described in Galatians 5:22-23.

⁶ J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God*, 81-82.

⁷ Denise Peterfreund White, *Great Traditions in Ethics*, 8th Edition (Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth, 1996), 2.