

TOPIC 3**TRUTH CLAIMS CAN BE TESTED.
FACT OR FICTION?****Conversation Points**

- ★ If I received an unbelievably large inheritance, I would simply spend the rest of my life travelling around the world. **AGREE or DISAGREE?**
- ★ The most important thing in life is to be happy. **AGREE or DISAGREE?**

Reflection

Even as a young boy growing up in British Columbia, Hugh was oddly curious. He was inquisitive about plants, rocks, machines, but he was especially curious about the night sky. His father was keen to feed his son's curiosity and would often take him for hikes through the woods where he pointed out to him the different species of wildlife, birds, insects, and plants. His father showed him that even a wild raven could be tamed and trained as a pet who could open and close her cage by using a twig in her beak to manipulate the latch. When Hugh was about eight years old he built his first telescope and began his fascination with space. In High School, Hugh was considered an intellectual protégé. When he was seventeen he began to ask questions that most seventeen year olds weren't asking. His fascination with the vast cosmos made him acutely aware of how enormous the universe was and how unusual it was for a planet, such as earth, to have advanced life. He began to ponder how it came to be. His pondering led him to evaluate the views of the world's major religions holy books. Hugh approached each holy book with the same approach he used for conducting scientific experiments or evaluating scientific claims. Thus, he reasoned, if any of these books disagreed with what he knew to be true from his scientific education, he could dismiss it. When he read those holy books that described the universe having created itself, he knew immediately that this had to

be false. When he read a holy book that described earth existing before anything else in the cosmos came into being, he also immediately dismissed it because he knew that cosmologically (cosmology is the study of how the universe was formed) this could not be true. When he read a holy book that acknowledged that the universe had a beginning when all matter, space, and energy came into existence, he would continue to examine it because this corresponded with what he knew was true from his study of astronomy. He found that out of all of the world's holy books there was only one that corresponded with what he knew was true scientifically. In his final year of high school, before he moved to Toronto to begin his science degree in astrophysics, he was given a gift of a pocket-sized book from "a Gideon". Hugh says that it was this book that helped him to see that world was not just some random, cosmic accident - and that there were scientifically credible evidences for a supernatural agent who was outside of our material space and time, who must possess immeasurable intelligence, resources and power to bring this cosmos and all that it contained, into existence. Dr. Hugh Ross is now nearly 80 years old. He still has that little pocket-sized book from when he was seventeen where he wrote his name in the back of it, after that the Gideon had given it to him.



Hugh went on to earn his PhD in astrophysics and worked as a researcher at the prestigious CalTech. But he continued to explore how his scientific understanding could be integrated with his growing understanding that there must be a Creator who was identified in the Judeo-Christian holy book as, *God*. This led him to be the first modern scientist to develop what he called *A Testable Creation Model*.

The Role of Testing to arrive at the Truth

Hugh Ross accepted that the foundation of science was *testing* a theory to determine whether it was true. As he began to explore the answers offered by the world's religions, he applied the same scientific method of *testing* to determine whether each religion was true.

It may be possible that when someone is asking a question about what *you* believe, they are *testing* you for whether your beliefs are also *testable*. **How could you fail their test?**

From the Bible

1. In writing to the Thessalonians the apostle Paul tells them not “despise” (ESV), “treat with contempt” (NET), “scoff at” (NLT) prophecies, in First Thessalonians 5:20, and gives a principle for accepting a claim as true in First Thessalonians 5:21. What was that principle?

Truth can be verified. Sometimes that involves t _____, e _____, i _____, and c _____ with known existing facts.

2. Read Luke 1:1-4 and consider whether Dr. Luke sought, and has presented, verifiable truth claims. If so, what kind of verifiable truth did he offer or what did he neglect?

There is a difference between scepticism and cynicism. Scepticism involves doubt being resolved by truth-testing. Cynicism is a refusal to even test the truth claim.

3. In Luke 24:1-12, Dr. Luke names several eyewitnesses to the newly vacated tomb of Jesus where two mysterious figures declared that He had been raised from the dead. When the women returned to where the 11 Disciples were, note how in Luke 24:11 these Disciples responded, and then note how Peter responded (Lk. 24:12). Who was sceptical and who was cynical in this account? Discuss.

The Christian worldview considers God as ultimate truth. The person of Jesus Christ reveals that truth to humankind in an objective, knowable, and applicable way. All truth is God’s truth. It is universal, absolute, and unchanging and excludes whatever is contrary as falsehood.

KENNETH SAMPLES

(Samples 2007, 78)

Seventeenth-century theologian and philosopher, mathematician, inventor, physicist, and writer (it's okay; everyone was smarter back then) Blaise Pascal famously wrote, "People almost invariably arrive at their beliefs not on the basis of proof but on the basis of what they find attractive." Pascal made an important observation about how humans tend to determine their authority for truth. Simply put, most of us aren't simply analyzing facts and coming to unbiased conclusions. We tend to base our authority for what we should and shouldn't do, think, and believe mostly on what makes us feel comfortable.

ALISA CHILDERS
(Childers 2022, 134-135)

Additional References

Childers, Alisa. 2022. *Live Your Truth and Other Lies. Exposing popular deceptions that make us anxious, exhausted, and self-obsessed.* Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Samples, Kenneth R. 2007. *A World of Difference. Putting Christian truth-claims to the worldview test.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.