

SO MANY QUESTIONS

Question 5: No-one can claim to have 'the truth'—everyone's opinion is valid

Think about it

1. What kind of question is this?
 - a. Knowing
 - b. Meaning
 - c. Living

2. What are some of the reasons someone might have for asking this question?

3. How would you go about answering this question? Jot down the kinds of things you think could be included in an answer.

Summarize your answer

In your own words, using three or four simple points, write down how you would answer the question/challenge “No-one can claim to have ‘the truth’—everyone’s opinion is valid”.

Do not turn page over until after you complete this side! 😊

For further thought:

No-one can claim to have 'the truth'—everyone's opinion is valid

- This is a very common view today. It is otherwise known as relativism, the claim that there is no such thing as objective or absolute truths which are true for everyone, whether or not they realize it. Instead, there is only subjective truth or 'what's true for me'—type truths.
- First, there's a logical inconsistency in the claim that there's no such thing as absolute truth because the claim itself is stating an absolute truth: "The truth is that there is no such thing as the truth".
- Second, there's a logical inconsistency in saying that all truth claims are equally valid because some truth claims are contradictory (e.g. Muslims deny that Jesus died and then rose from the dead. Christians say that he both died and rose. Both can't be true).
- Third, there's a moral inconsistency because relativism is unworkable. If there's no objective right and wrong, and each person decides their own truth and morality, how can one person judge or limit another person's actions? How can we say the Holocaust was wrong? How can we object to our car being stolen?
- The real question is "Is Jesus right?" Is he right when he says that he is the only one who can deal with people's sin? Is he right when he claims to be the only way people can be reconciled to God? And if Jesus is right, that's not arrogance or intolerance; that's truth everyone needs to hear.

Other approaches

- The fact is that everyday people claim to have the truth about one thing or another. Everyone has a right to their own opinion. (It's no coincidence that freedom of speech is one of the great legacies of the Judeo-Christian heritage which lies behind modern western culture!) And Jesus taught that we ought to love everyone, and his life showed clearly that God's purposes are not brought about by force but by doing God's will. But Jesus was equally clear that he was the only one who could reconcile people to God. When it comes to our relationship with God, he even said, "Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice" (John 18:37b). So Jesus not only claimed to have the truth, he claimed he was the only way to God and that all other paths lead people in the wrong direction (John 14:6). Simply having an opinion about Jesus doesn't make you right; you need to ask if your opinion is based on an open-minded examination of the facts. When was the last time you read one of the Gospels?

Further reading:

- John Dickson, *If I were God, I'd make myself clearer*, Matthias Media, Sydney, 2002.
- Josh McDowell and Bill Wilson, *A Ready Defence: The Best of Josh McDowell*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1993.
- Kel Richards, *Defending the Gospel*, Matthias Media, Sydney, 2006, chapters 7 and 8.