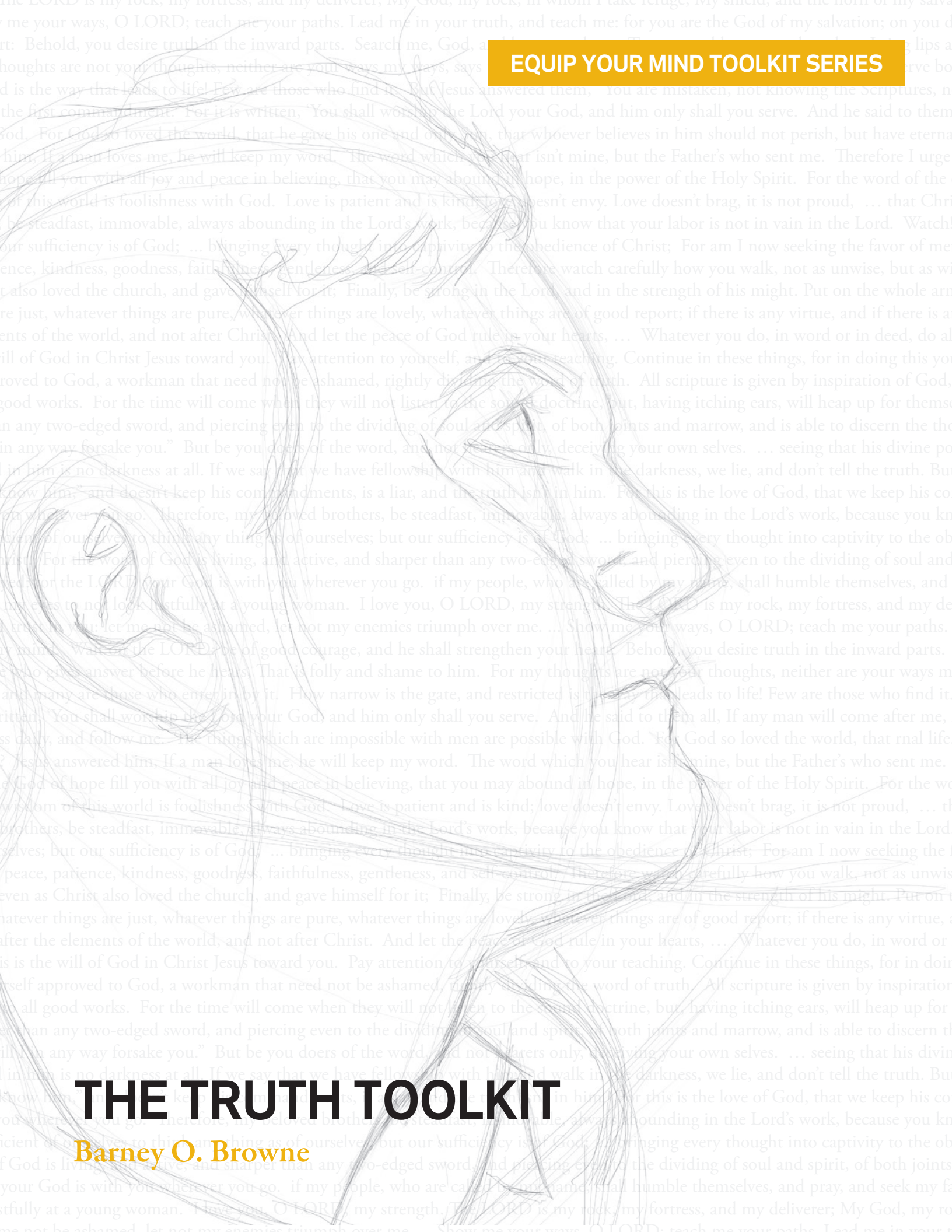


THE TRUTH TOOLKIT

Barney O. Browne



The Truth Toolkit

**“There is but one straight course,
and that is to seek truth and pursue it steadily.”**

George Washington

Barney O. Browne

MindEquip

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The Truth Toolkit

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Introduction

About Truth

The basic definition for *truth* is that which accurately represents reality. To the extent that you want to align your life with reality, you must know what is actually true so that you can make wise choices. I have assembled this *Truth Toolkit* to encourage people to seek and test for truth in every area of life. This document includes several practical “thinking tools” as well as a selection of Bible verses that reflect God’s perspective on truth.

Human beings must continually be guarding their minds against these two dangers:

- Believing something to be false when in reality it is true.
- Believing something to be true when in reality it is false.

Both conditions reflect being out of touch with reality. Sometimes these conditions occur in minor matters and the consequences are insignificant. An example would be purchasing ice cream with the wrong flavor printed on the carton. This may be disappointing but would not be serious. In other situations wrong beliefs can be serious and even devastating. Sometimes the consequences may be immediate such as assuming a patch of highway is free of ice when it is not. At other times serious consequences may not become apparent until later. Examples include making a decision based on false information regarding buying a house, choosing whom to marry, or deciding whether to entrust someone with an important position that will affect many people’s lives. Being out of touch with reality on truly important matters because of false beliefs can be devastating for individuals, families, organizations, and nations. Only by continually pursuing truth can we increasingly align our lives with reality.

Consider how the word “truth” is under attack and being redefined. In our culture today the word “truth” is frequently used in conversations. However, the concept being communicated is actually closer to the word “opinion.” Consider the increasingly common phrase that goes something like this: “Your truth is right for you and my truth is right for me.” Such a statement denies the existence of an absolute reality. Rather, it equates the word “truth” with one or more opinions about some reality. One may believe that he is pointing north. However, if in reality he is not pointing north, his belief will not change reality. He is out of touch with reality and doesn’t even know it. This represents a serious thinking handicap—a mindset that will hinder him from being discerning and wise regardless of his native intellectual abilities.

People who are misled regarding the meaning of truth or who are unskilled in testing for truth will be more easily deceived and manipulated. This results in being less in touch with reality and thus less able to make wise, moral, and safe choices. These are decisions that affect not only their lives but also the lives of those in their sphere of influence. Because reality rules, truth matters!

About the *Truth Toolkit*

This *Truth Toolkit* consists of a set of “thinking tools” and bible verses that are pertinent to the subject of truth. It is organized into two main sections. The first section consists of “thinking tools” that are helpful in pursuing and testing for truth. These are common sense concepts, principles, and questions that lead to accurately thinking about truth and reality. These tools have proven to be invaluable in my testing of my own thinking, the truth claims of others, and the never-ending river of information that flows into my life each day. The second section consists of a selection of Bible verses that speak about truth from God's perspective. The Creator God is the source of ultimate truth. Only He fully understands the reality we live in and the truth of who we really are as individuals. To the extent that we accurately understand and truly trust these verses, they will lead us further into the Bible and into a greater understanding of God's big picture. It is through the Bible that God teaches us the truth about Himself, His promises, who we are as human beings, this world, the spiritual realm beyond our direct perception, where this world is headed, our place in eternity, and about the Bible itself. Accurate thinking coupled with trusted biblical truth and wisdom are foundational keys to a Christian life that is truly in touch with reality.

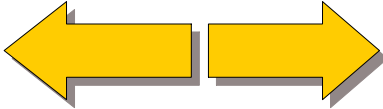
I have designed this Truth Toolkit for personal reference and for teaching and mentoring others. The graphical page layouts and the readability of the font make this document well suited for projecting onto a large screen in a classroom environment.

If you find this document useful I encourage you to share it with others. Permission is granted to everyone to freely copy and distribute this document under the condition that it remains unchanged and is given away for free.

The Truth Toolkit

A Reference for Those:

- **Seeking Truth**
- **Testing for Truth**
- **Desiring to Align Their Lives with Reality**

Truth  **Reality**

**Truth is that which
accurately represents Reality**

**"There is but one straight course,
and that is to seek truth and pursue it steadily."**

George Washington

"Science is the search for truth,"

Linus Pauling

(specifically truth regarding the physical world around us)

**"Truth is the first thing to go
when people want to go their own way."**

Frank Peretti

**"Men occasionally stumble over the truth,
but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing ever happened."**

Sir Winston Churchill

What does "truth" mean to you?

1. "Truth is whatever I believe to be true. It's a personal decision."
2. "Truth is whatever works—whatever gets the job done."
3. "Truth is whatever seems fair and right, based on the situation."
4. "Truth is what the majority of people decide is true."
5. "Truth is what the "experts" declare to be true."
6. "Truth is what I want it to be."
7. "Truth is that which accurately represents **reality**."

Reality:

"1. Actual being or existence of any thing; truth; fact; in distinction from mere appearance." (NWD)

Every aspect of our lives is subject to the **realities** of this world.

Truth is that which accurately represents **reality**.

Knowing what is **true** is of utmost importance
as you make moment by moment choices.

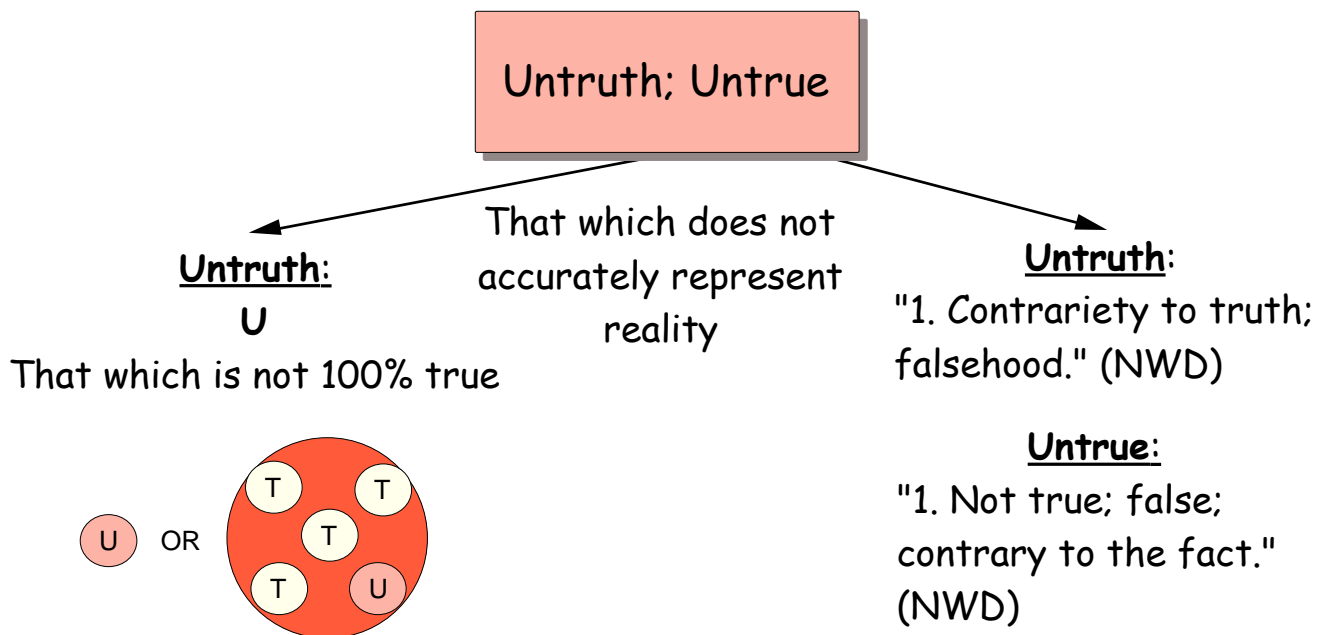
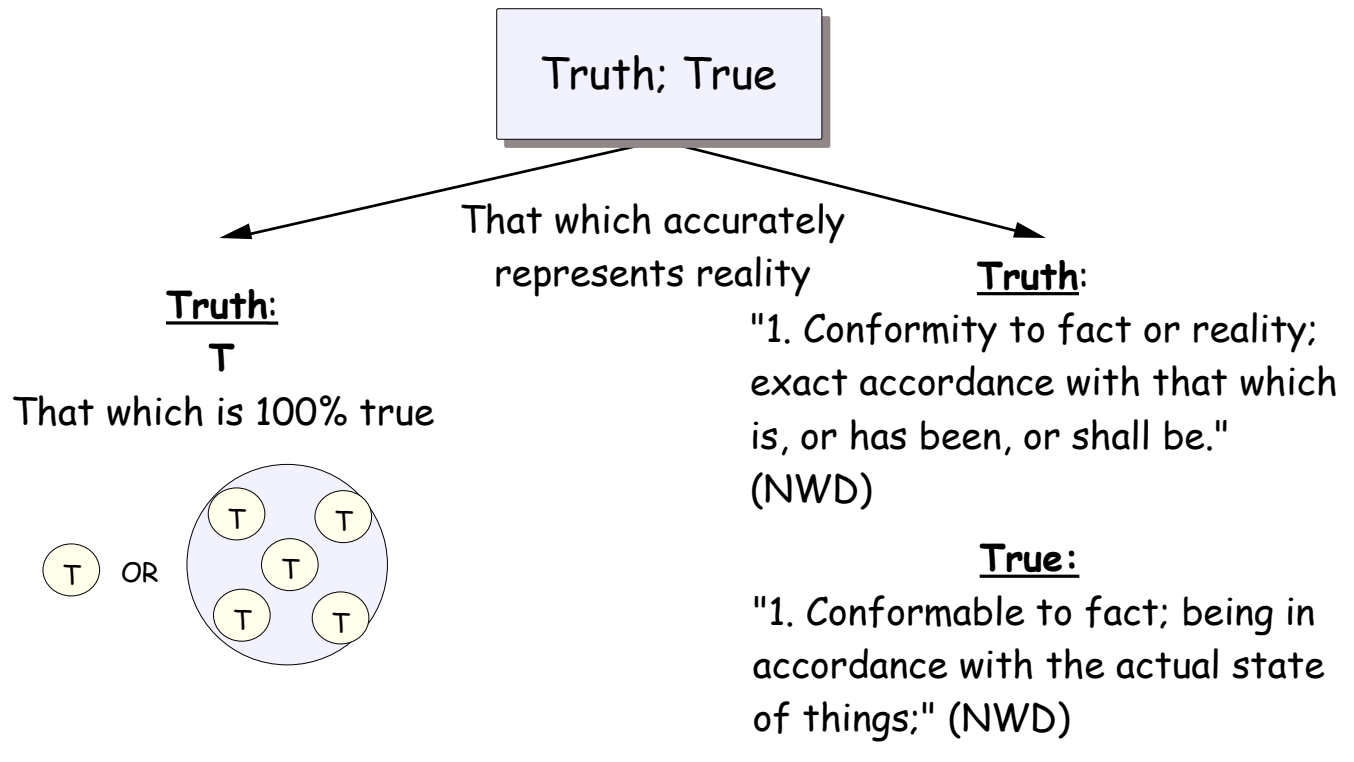
Align your life with **reality**.

Test everything
for **truth**.

Important Word Definitions

Effective communication requires that we agree on the meanings of the words we are using.

What do I mean when I use the words "truth", "true", "untruth", and "untrue" in this document?



Our Beliefs and Truth— What Are the Possibilities?

Beliefs that Are True In Touch with Reality

1. Things that we assume or believe to be true which in reality are true.

2. Things that we assume or believe to be false which in reality are false.

Beliefs that Are False Out of Touch with Reality

3. Things that we assume or believe to be true which in reality are false.

4. Things that we assume or believe to be false which in reality are true.

How Important is Truth to You?

1. To what extent do you test for truth what you see, hear, read, and think?

2. To what extent do you cling to beliefs that are based on assumptions that you have not thoroughly tested?

3. How would you handle new information that appears to be credible, but is also contrary to a belief that is precious to you?

4. If what you believed was not true, would you want to know it?

Barriers to Discovering or Following Truth

1

1. Believing that something is true because you want it to be true

6. Believing that something is true without carefully considering the evidence

2. Believing that all truth is relative and that there is no absolute moral truth

7. Believing that something is true because it sounds reasonable and practical

3. Believing that something is true because an "expert" states it is true

8. Convincing yourself that something is true because it supports what you want to do

4. Accepting that something is true because a "famous person" says it is true

9. Believing that something is true because almost everybody else believes it is true

5. Believing that something is true because "the news", a TV documentary, a book, or a magazine states that it is true

10. Misusing the word "truth" by assigning a different meaning to it (e.g. calling something a truth when it is really just an opinion)

Barriers to Discovering or Following Truth

2

11. Being deceived by oneself or by others

12. Being distracted or too busy to test for truth

13. Inaccurate or illogical thinking

14. Not testing underlying assumptions or evidence

15. Presuming that one already knows what is true

16. Unwillingness to follow where the truth may lead

Questions Useful for Discovering and Testing for Truth

1

1. When is this true?
(always or only at
certain times)

2. Under what conditions
is this true?

3. Have any anomalies or
inconsistencies been detected?
If so, what is causing them?

4. What are your
foundational beliefs and
assumptions?
Are they valid?
How sure are you?
To what extent have you
tested them for accuracy?

5. Does everyone have the same
understanding of the meanings of
the words being used?
If not, agreement on the meanings
of words must be reached. Unless
this happens, the pursuit of truth
and the effective communication of
truth will be impaired.

6. Are the presented facts
actually true? What is the
supporting evidence?

7. Are the stated goals
consistent with the observed
actions? If not, why not?

8. Are the stated values
consistent with the observed
actions? If not, why not?

9. If what you believed was not
true, would you want to know it?

10. Does the "container" accurately
reflect the "contents" of the
container? You cannot presume to
know the contents of something
simply by observing the container.
You need to directly observe the
contents or reliable indications of
the contents before reaching any
conclusions.

Questions Useful for Discovering and Testing for Truth

2

11. What **evidence** is consistent with what is claimed to be true?

12. What **evidence** is inconsistent with what is claimed to be true?

13. Are you working with "**source evidence**"—evidence that you have experienced first hand?

14. Are you working with "**interpreted evidence**"—evidence that was interpreted and communicated by others?

19. What do you mean?

20. How do you know?

21. What consequences reasonably follow?
What difference does this make?
(assuming you are right)

22. What if you are wrong?

23. Is all of the pertinent information being presented?
Is it being presented clearly and objectively? If not, why not?

15. How reliable is the **evidence**?

16. What is the source of the **evidence**?
Is that source reliable?

17. Has the integrity or accuracy of the "**source evidence**" been compromised?

18. Has the integrity or accuracy of the "**interpreted evidence**" been compromised?

Wisdom for Discerning Truth from Untruth

1. The truth of something exists even before it is discovered and understood.

2. Truth is not defined by the majority of people or by opinion polls.

3. Truth mixed with a little error is no longer truth.

4. When you detect an anomaly or inconsistency, check it out.

5. Before you decide to believe that something is true, test it for accuracy.

6. Knowingly leaving out relevant facts presents a distorted picture of reality. This is deception. This is another form of untruth.

This is widespread in our nation. It is no longer wise to rely solely on traditional sources of news and information.

7. Deception is effective to the extent that it appears to be true.

8. The skillful packaging of untruth in such a way that it looks like **truth** on the surface is widespread in our society. This includes our nation's major institutions: government, business, education, media, and religion. The targets and casualties are biblical churches, the family, and the individual. The best defense is to test everything for truth.

9. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.
1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 NIV

10. The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him.
Proverbs 18:17 NIV

11. The most dangerous counterfeit is the one that most closely resembles truth.

What Does the Bible Say?

1

1. Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the **truth**, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6 NKJV

5. Behold, You desire **truth** in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.
Psalms 51:6 NASB

2. So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the **truth**, and the truth will set you free."
John 8:31-32 ESV

6. Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD,
But those who deal **truthfully** are His delight.
Proverbs 12:22 NKJV

3. For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in **truth**. He loves righteousness and justice: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.
Psalms 33:4-5 KJ2000

7. Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!
Isaiah 5:20 ESV

4. Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness,
And Your law is **truth**.
Psalms 119:142 NKJV

8. Examine me, O LORD, and try me;
Test my mind and my heart. For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes,
And I have walked in Your **truth**.
Psalms 26:2-3 NASB

What Does the Bible Say?

2

9. And you shall say to them, 'This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, and did not accept discipline; **truth** has perished; it is cut off from their lips.
Jeremiah 7:28 ESV

10. Justice is turned back, And righteousness stands far away; For **truth** has stumbled in the street, And uprightness cannot enter. Yes, **truth** is lacking; And he who turns aside from evil makes himself a prey. Now the LORD saw, And it was displeasing in His sight that there was no justice.
Isaiah 59:14-15 NASB

11. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and **truth**; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and **truth**."
John 4:23-24 NKJV

12. These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son, that your Son also may glorify you:

...
Sanctify them through your **truth**: your word is **truth**.
John 17:1, 17 KJ2000

13. "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, 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 NIV

14. Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was **true**.
Acts 17:11 NIV

What Does the Bible Say?

3

15. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the **truth** and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.
Romans 2:8 NIV

16. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of **truth**, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,
Ephesians 6:13-14 ESV

17. Finally, brethren, whatever things are **true**, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.
Philippians 4:8-9 NKJV

18. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in **truth**, the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe.
1 Thessalonians 2:13 KJ2000

29. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the **truth**. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the **truth**, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and **truth**.
1 Timothy 2:3-7 NASB

20. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of **truth**.
2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV

What Does the Bible Say?

4

21. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the **truth** and turn aside to myths.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 NIV

24. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the **truth** is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

1 John 1:8-10 NASB

22. Having purified your souls by your obedience to the **truth** for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,

1 Peter 1:22 ESV

25. Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the **truth** is not in him.

1 John 2:3-4 NKJV

23. This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the **truth**; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1:5-7 NASB

26. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the **truth** that is in you, even as you walk in the **truth**. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in **truth**.

3 John 1:3-4 KJ2000

What Does the Bible Say?

5

27. Your word is **true** from the beginning;
and every one of your righteous judgments
endures forever.
Psalm 119:160 KJ2000

28. The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever."
Isaiah 40:8 NKJV

29. Jesus replied, "You are in error
because you do not know the Scriptures
or the power of God.
Matthew 22:29 NIV

30. A Psalm of David.
To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
O my God, I trust in You;
Let me not be ashamed;
Let not my enemies triumph over me.

Show me Your ways, O LORD;
Teach me Your paths.
Lead me in Your **truth** and teach me,
For You are the God of my salvation;
On You I wait all the day.
Psalms 25:1-2, 4-5 NKJV