

TOPIC 2**NO ONE CAN KNOW THE TRUTH.
FACT OR FICTION?****Conversation Points**

- ★ I think that anyone who thinks they are absolutely right about everything is arrogant and absolutely wrong. **AGREE or DISAGREE?**
- ★ Older people generally have more wisdom than younger people.
AGREE or DISAGREE?
- ★ If I was given one opportunity to go back in time to undo a mistake I made, I would. **AGREE or DISAGREE?**

Reflection

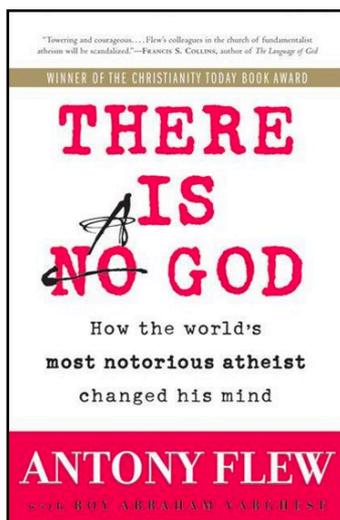
Antony was an Englishman and son of a Methodist pastor. But it seems that he did not have a very close relationship with his father. He grew to despise his father's belief in God. He set out to prove his father wrong. At the age of 15, while attending St. Faith's School, Cambridge, he declared himself to be an atheist. In the pursuit to prove his father wrong he became a brilliant student of philosophy (*the study of ideas*) and after secondary school he was admitted into Oxford University where he studied *philosophical religion* - specialising in *atheism*. After graduating, he went on to publish and lecture on *proofs for atheism* debating anyone who disagreed with him. He became an internationally renowned professor of philosophy. His major argument *for* atheism was that there was no *evidence* for God. Antony dismissed the Christian arguments for God because he felt there was no way to *falsify* them (have anyway to prove that they were untrue). In 1975, in his book, *Thinking About Thinking*, he called the Christian argument against atheism the *No True Scotsman* fallacy.

Person A: “No Scotsman puts sugar on his porridge.”

Person B: “But my uncle Angus is a Scotsman and he puts sugar on his porridge.”

Person A: “But no *true* Scotsman puts sugar on his porridge.”

But toward the end of Antony’s long and acclaimed career promoting atheism he went on a debate tour with the Professor of Philosophical Theology at Liberty University, Gary Habermas. In their debates, Antony encountered one of the world’s leading Christian theologians and philosophers. But not only was Dr. Habermas really clever, he was really kind. During their debates Professor Habermas *gently* countered each of Antony’s arguments, and then, at the end of the night after each debate was over, he invited him to join him for a meal. Over their many meals together, Gary Habermas listened to Antony Flew’s objections to God. At one point he stunned Professor Flew with a question. “You say that the only things that exist are *material* things composed of atoms. Is that idea *material* or *immaterial*?” And, “Have you considered that you - the real you - the *you* that thinks about your immaterial thoughts, is also *immaterial*?” With these questions Professor Antony Flew’s decades of atheism began to disintegrate.



Before he died he wrote his last book, *There Is ~~No~~ A God*. In the opening chapters he described the arguments that Gary Habermas had shared with him had led him to reconsider the evidence that he had largely been unaware of - the complexity of DNA having a natural (evolutionary) explanation, his own self-consciousness (his awareness of his thoughts as immaterial), and then toward the end of the book he discusses the otherwise inexplicable evidence for Jesus Christ actually rising from the dead. All of this, he said, was simply doing what Aristotle said to do - *follow the evidence!*

The Role of Evidence in Understanding the Truth

What happened to Professor Antony Flew was due *almost* entirely to his encounter with evidence that he was previously unaware of.

Therefore, someone may not be prepared to accept the truth because they don’t like *the person* sharing it. But it may also be *true* that if someone takes the time to listen to them, they might hear the truth from them. **Can you think of an example of this?**

From the Bible

1. On what basis did Luke, the author of the Book of Acts, claim that the physical resurrection of Jesus was true, based on Acts 1:3?

Truth always has *appropriate* proofs.

2. Read the exchange between Pilate and Jesus in John 18:37-38. Based on how Pilate spoke to the Jews, did he believe Jesus? Discuss.

3. Many people (including non-Christians) quote John 8:32, but in what way does the start of this sentence in John 8:31 change the way John 8:32 should be understood? (Refer to John 17:8.)

Truth is based on evidence.

4. As the apostle John concludes his gospel account of the life of Jesus, what reason does he give for doing so? (John 20:30-31)

We live in a time and place where many people don't even know what truth is. (Thanks, postmodernism!) Some think it's just a subjective opinion or preference, much like your favorite sport, movie, or candy bar. But the definition of truth is actually quite simple: Truth is a thought, statement, or opinion that lines up with reality.

ALISA CHILDERS
(Childers 2022, 25)

This truth can also empower us to engage with those around us and help us offer hope to a lonely society striving for significance in a world that tends to value us only by what we do. This constant striving has many effects on society, including a deep longing for real connection and community in a world that often promotes shallow and fake connections.

JASON THACKER
(Thacker 2020, 49)

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.
- Thacker, Jason. 2020. *The Age of AI, Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.