# Series: "Living Christian Truth in a Doubting World"
## West Side Christian Church Next Steps Summer Study
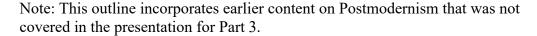Series Webpage: www.RichKnopp.com/living-christian-truth

Part 4
# Knowing Truth and Dealing With Doubts
July 8, 2025

Dr. Richard A. Knopp
Executive Director, Room For Doubt (www.roomfordoubt.com)

Website: www.richknopp.com
Email: Rich@RoomForDoubt.com

**Pre-session Instructions for Live Interaction:** Go to menti.com and use code 1402 4510 OR use this QR code:

Note: This outline incorporates earlier content on Postmodernism that was not covered in the presentation for Part 3.

## Introduction
A. Challenges to Christian truth.
   1. Modernism: Secular Humanists use reason and science to *reject* Christianity.
   2. Postmodernism: Expresses skepticism about absolute truth—truth for *everyone*.
B. "What is truth?" (John 18:37-38)
C. Types of Truth (a review): _____OBJECTIVE_____ and _____SUBJECTIVE_____
D. Lesson objectives.
   1. Examine Postmodernism's challenge to truth.
   2. Consider the nature of knowledge and its sources.
   3. Propose guidelines for dealing with doubts.

## I. Postmodernism: Skepticism about Truth.
A. Modernism vs. Postmodernism

| Modernism | Postmodernism |
|---|---|
| Truth is *discovered* | Truth is _____CONSTRUCTED_____ |
| Truth is *absolute* | Truth is _____RELATIVE_____ (Relativism) |
| Certainty | Skepticism |
| Order and rules | Fragmentation, with reality and illusion blurred |

B. Postmodernism and the elephant.
C. Postmodernism: An "incredulity toward metanarratives" (Jean-François Lyotard).
D. Postmodernism: Truth is a _____POWER_____ play used to oppress.
E. **Dangers and doubts** generated by **POSTMODERNISM** (relativism).
   1. "No truth applies to everyone; everyone has their own truth."
   2. "Christianity is just one spiritual way among many."
   3. "Jesus cannot be the *only* way to God, even if there is a God."
   4. "The Bible's morality is ancient and needs to be updated."

F. **Commendations** for Postmodernism (relativism).
1. Our knowledge IS limited; so be _____HUMBLE_____.
2. Truth sometimes IS a power play; so _____ACKNOWLEDGE_____ this.

G. **Criticisms** of Postmodernism.
1. Our deepest moral intuitions _____CONTRADICT_____ relativism.
2. No one actually lives as a complete "relativist." Relativism forces us to be _____INCONSISTENT_____.
3. Relativism cannot justify moral _____OBLIGATION_____ for social justice and humanity equality.

## II. The Nature and the Sources of Knowledge

A. **Knowledge** is "justified true belief."
1. If you know something, then you _____BELIEVE_____ it.
2. If you know something, then it is _____TRUE_____.
3. If you know something, then it is _____JUSTIFIED_____ (vs. a lucky correct guess).

> "The Christian faith works *because it is TRUE*; it is not true simply *because it WORKS*." (See Knopp, *What About God?*, 44).

B. The **Sources of Knowledge** (for everything and even God).
1. **Reason**
   a. Not autonomous from God (like Secular Humanism).
   b. Not fundamentally faulty (like Postmodernism).
   c. Christianity: Reason is adequate but _____LIMITED_____.
2. **Sense experience**
   a. Physical experience of the world.
   b. We can know God by his _____EFFECTS_____ in nature [Natural Revelation] (Rom. 1:20; Ps. 19:1).
3. **Inner experience**
   a. We can know God through our CONSCIENCE (Rom. 2:14-15; 9:1).
      (1) Conscience can be CLEARED (Heb. 9:14; 10:22; 2 Peter 3:21).
      (2) Conscience can be CORRUPTED (Titus 1:15; 1 Tim. 4:2).
      (3) Conscience is a GUIDE, not a GUARANTEE.
   b. Don't base your knowledge on your FEELINGS.
4. **Information from Others**
   a. "Special Revelation" (Heb. 1:1-2; Eph. 3:1-5; Col. 1:26).
   b. Written (Eph. 3:3; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11).
   c. Tradition: It can be very informative, but it's not ____AUTHORITATIVE_____.

## III. Knowledge, Faith, and Doubts: Some Guidelines

A. Having genuine knowledge does NOT require intellectual _____CERTAINTY_____.
B. _____NO ONE_____ has intellectual certainty about any worldview.
C. Doubts are _____INEVITABLE_____ because certainty is not attainable.

D. Doubt can be _____GOOD_____.
   1. John the Baptist (compare John 1:29 and Matthew 11:3).
   2. Thomas (John 20:27).
      NIV: "Stop doubting and believe."
      ESV: "Do not disbelieve, but believe."
   3. Father of sick son (Mark 9:22-24): "I believe; help my _____UNBELIEF_____."
   4. ALL of the early disciples had _____DOUBTS_____.
E. We can have comprehensive _____CERTITUDE_____ even without intellectual certainty.
   1. Early Christian conviction (Acts 1:3; 2:36; 17:31; 1 John 1:1-4; 2 Pet. 1:16-21; Heb. 11:1-3).
      a. Acts 1:3 "[Jesus] presented himself alive … by *many proofs* …"
      b. Acts 2:36 "Let all the house of Israel *know for certain* that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."
      c. Acts 17:31 "[God] … has given *assurance* to all by raising [Jesus] from the dead."
      d. 1 John 1:1-4 "That which … we have *seen* with our eyes … and have *touched* with our hands … and *heard*," we proclaim.
      e. 2 Peter 1:16-21 "… we were eyewitnesses of his majesty…. We have the prophetic word *more fully confirmed* …. "
      f. Heb. 11:1 "Now faith is the *assurance* of things hoped for, the *conviction* of things not seen."
   2. "Certitude" is having _____JUSTIFIED_____ belief.
   3. How can WE have such certitude (justified conviction)? [Wait for Parts 5 & 6.]

NOTE: The recommended reading for Week 5 (July 14) is the first part of chapter 4 in *Truth About God: What Can We Know and How Can We Know It?* pp. 64-83. For devotional times, read and meditate on the points and the Scriptures in this outline.

## Reflection and Discussion
## "Knowing Truth and Dealing With Doubts"

1. Briefly describe **Postmodernism** (or relativism). Where do you see this perspective in our culture or even in professing Christians? What did you learn that seemed especially important or helpful?

2. Reflect on the **sources of knowledge** in this lesson. What sources of knowledge about God's truth have you used or do you use? What specific things you have learned?

3. What **guidelines about doubt** strike you as particularly helpful? Which ones might be especially usable in your communication with others who have doubts?

4. What **Scripture(s)** seem most impactful on you? Why? How might you apply them to yourself?

5. In terms of a percentage, how much **"intellectual certainty"** do you have about your Christian beliefs? Try to explain **"certitude"** and how it differs from "intellectual certainty."

6. What **questions** or other **comments** do you have about this lesson?