

STEPS FOR FINDING GOOD FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS

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Abstract

This paper explores the research and truth that we found our beliefs on. Both online (Internet) and offline (non-Internet) articles have been researched, however, most are found with online copies available by URL link. Its answers hypothesis put forth by an article by Bella M. DePaulo, PhD (The Social Psychology of Good and Evil. New York: Guilford Press.2004) *The Many Faces of Lies* Chapter 12, pp. 303-326. The idea is that people function from a foundational belief that is then acted upon and when those beliefs are not based in unchangeable truth then chaos can result. This paper is the result of months of research and study, and it is the authors hope that a path will be revealed to find a truth on which foundational beliefs can be based whether religious or not.

Keywords: foundational truth, good fruit test, unchangeable truth

STEPS FOR FINDING GOOD FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS

Lies have made horrible things happen in this world. In 1918 US Senator Hiram Warren Johnson is purported to have said: “The first casualty when war comes is truth.” It is a just venture to search for such a thing as truth. Please brace yourself. The scenes I am about to present are as startling as any wartime event. Let us go back in history. A mother of two is standing and staring out at the crowds of people from her view atop a pile of wood. She sees her loving husband and her children, her husband is trying to hide innocent eyes. Her thoughts are racing while telling herself; she is only guilty of having a copy of the Bible, all she did was tell her friends that according to the Bible we are to call no man father (Matt 23:9 KJV Bible). She is now condemned to be burned alive, she has been convicted as a heretic by the Papacy. Those that love her watch as the fire consumes her body, the sounds of her screams are burned into memory. One question is at the forefront of the viewers minds: How could this happen?

Scene two: We find ourselves in the 21st century. As the screen flickers, the room is deathly quiet, and people are aghast at the images presented on the screen of the 60” television. Screams and sobs shatter the silence, the countenance of the room turns pale and white, one person collapses on a chair in total shock. The ISIS video was not the first time they had seen a brutal murder; after all in today’s entertainment this image is welcomed as an acceptable form, but there is no viewer that can call this entertainment. Traumatized viewers all over the world watched the knife in the hand of an ISIS terrorist as it made a slow stroke across the neck of an innocent man draining his life to the ground. In reality his only crime was being a journalist, but the Quran instructs non believing journalist are infidels and enemies of Islam, therefore, *must be killed* (Sura 2:191 Quran). The same question is on the forefront of the minds of the all those who viewed: How could this happen?

What is the purpose?

Presented here are two completely different occurrences. Hundreds of years are between the two happenings, the religions are not the same, and the genders are different. However, they have a few things in common. 1. Both subjects died innocently at the hands of their accusers. 2. Both of those accusers were acting on beliefs that they held as foundational truth. In revealing truth, especially foundational truth, empirical data is a must. In this paper historical data will be offered as empirical, in addition, empirical data that has been assembled by other professionals will be offered. In all cases the main argument is stemming from one underlying theme: “*You shall know it by its fruit*”(Matthew 7:15, KJV Bible). This is a form of empirical data that is proven through time itself, and when we scrutinize such topics as truth or lies, we must use the empirical data we find in history. More plainly said: what we have learned over time to be true, whether good or bad, will be in this paper used as empirical data. Everyone has foundational truths. If we found our life on it; is it not paramount? In DePaulo's studies, participants described conversations in which they lied as less intimate and pleasant than truthful encounters, suggesting that people are not entirely at ease with their deceptions.” (Bella M. DePaulo, PhD, DePaulo et al, 1996). To rephrase, everyone knows a lie on some level. I submit that founding your life on unchangeable truth verses subjective or relative truth has to be the number one cornerstone in life. Too often people act in violence as a result of what they hold to be true. Too often those truths we have in our foundations are false. So this paper will attempt to provide a way of finding truth suitable for our foundations. Without this one foundational brick in life all other ventures end in an unfulfilled life or a life of “bad fruit”, and in the worst case death.

What is truth and does it matter?

In a recent Barna Research Group survey 66% percent of adults responded that they believe that "there is no such thing as absolute truth, but that truth is relative" (Barna, 2005). This is a big problem when we are looking for a stable foundation on which to base our lives. There is nothing stable in viscosity. Relative truth is liquid and changing and is therefore not a good foundation. This causes me to conclude such ideas as faulty thinking. Just to prove my point, here is a truth that is very hard not to except as true for all--everyone dies, now that is absolute not relative. However, if people feel there is no absolute truth then what are people believing in? In recent surveys only 11% of the world's population is atheistic or agnostic. Atheism is the belief that there is no god of any form (Hemant Mehta, 2015). While the humanist belief is a little more agnostic with the belief that man is his own god; that wisdom and knowledge is the path to enlightenment (Fred Edwords, 2008) that leaves the remaining 89% of the world's population believing in some form of religion. Here is a crude breakdown: 2.2 billion Christians (32% of the world's population), 1.6 billion Muslims (23%), 1 billion Hindus (15%), nearly 500 million Buddhists (7%) and 14 million Jews (0.2%) as of (PRC, 2012). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to examine all these beliefs, we must put a few of these beliefs to the "*by its fruit you will know it*" test; since it seems whole world "is believing" in something. To do this we must establish a definition of the basic ideas in these foundational topics before we set our attentions on them. We need to attempt to define what truth is, as well as what a lie consists of. In an attempt to find the solution for telling truth from lies we will first take advantage of common sources such as a dictionaries to define the roots of human behavior.

Truth what is it?

Truth is defined by Webster dictionary as: *a* (1): the state of being the case: *fact* (2): the body of real things, events, and facts: *actuality* (3) a transcendent fundamental or spiritual reality *c*: the body of true statements and propositions.

Truth is a strange thing. So many think that truth is subjective or changeable. In-fact Einstein in his special theory of relativity basically finds that there is no definite truth until it is perceived (Miller, A. I, 1981). In other words, everything is true until it is viewed then only one thing is true. So if I am wondering if my spouse has done the dishes the following statements are both true at once: My spouse has done the dishes and my spouse has not done the dishes. Relative truth says that both are true. The truth according to relativity is that she has both done the dishes and has not, both are true. Since this idea comes from such a notable figure we tend to accept it and repeat it--after all this sounds very existential. I say prove it. At the end of the day, only the absolute truth is proven. My wife either did or did not do the dishes, but not both. Only one answer is true. The question of not knowing the truth does not make the truth relative. When the truth is revealed to us it is absolute. This is the world that I want to live in. I prefer stability and the type of belief that there is no absolute truth offers none. In science we prefer facts--something quantized and qualified. In religion we like transcendence--something greater than ourselves. We tend to amass to ourselves "true statements and propositions" at our foundations. Since religious truth and transcendent fundamental or spiritual reality seems to be the main idea when speaking of truth we base our life on it. So let us see what the Bible says about truth. Truth has many references in the bible. One finds the word "Truth" 235 times in the bible. In the O.T. (Old Testament) the word truth is generally put forth by Strong's reference #571 which follows:

“Stability; (figuratively) certainty, truth, trustworthiness.” This has its root from word 539 which is: “To trust or believe, to be permanent or quiet; morally to be true or certain” (Strong's, 1890). To add to this, I found that the word faith only appears two times in the O. T. This is rather strange as the idea of faith is so central to religious belief, so I continued to dig. I found that the two times that it was in the O.T. the Hebrew word it was translated from was the same word that “truth” was translated from. So to summarize the word “Truth” in the O.T. basically is what God speaks and to have faith is to believe that truth. Things change in the N.T. (New Testament). First off, the meaning of truth embodies a person. John 14:6-7 6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (NIV). Truth is now the person of Jesus Christ. The Strong's definition from the Greek word is: “Persuasion, i.e. credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly, constancy in such profession; by extension, the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself” (Strong's, 1890). To recap we have the following: In science and atheism truth are facts and only facts. In Spiritualism they are the means of transcendence, in Humanism they are relative (Fred Edwords, 2008), in most religions God is truth, and in Christianity Jesus Christ is Truth. The commonality is that we all look for our foundational beliefs to be true, but it seems that no one agrees on what that truth is, we need a way to tell truth from untruth in order to cement our foundational beliefs to create a stable foundation that will hold up to the test of time.

What are Lies?

According to the Webster's dictionary the lie is defined as: To make an untrue statement with intent to deceive or to create a false or misleading impression.

Lies tend to have a broad gamut as well. What seems to be a lie to one person may not be a lie to another. Lies seem range from a white lies to a serious lies. In an excerpt from the article “Truth about Lying” in Psych today almost all of us engage in self-deception, little denials or rationalizations that remove unpleasant evidence of our warts. Episodes of this self-enhancement are reported to be absolutely normal. In fact, slightly overrating ourselves seems to be psychologically healthy. Self-deception alleviates stress, benefits relationships, and makes us more resilient by sheltering the ego from the storms of reality. In recent years, cognitive psychologists have gathered bountiful evidence that self-deception is a basic feature of the human mind. There are many advantages to deceiving ourselves (Allison Kornet, 1997). Allison Kornet asserts that lying is part of everyday life and that it is normal and- in fact- is part of self-preservation; therefore, we must lie to be healthy. In addition, she asserts that, “A little bit of self-deceit can be good for you”. Finally she finishes with, “But when it comes to the core challenges of adult life—career, money, sexual identity and marriage—fooling yourself can have devastating consequences.”(Allison Kornet, 1997)

In the article “The many faces of lies” DePaulo asserts, “People can be separated into two groups, those that lie and those that do not“(Bella M. DePaulo et al, 1996).” It further informs us that, “that participants were not completely at ease with the telling of their lies.” According to that we should know a lie from the truth. Further, we always suffer “bad fruit” when lying according to Chris Lliades MD who defines a lie as “any communications deliberately designed to mislead” (Chris Lliades, MD, 2015). Congruently, the bible dictionary defines a lie as to practice deceit, falsehood, and treachery either by word or action. It is the exact opposite of truth (Bible Dictionary, 2015). According to this we should know the difference, but it seems when our arsenal is only this form of “lie intuition” we just brush it off and believe according to source

anyway. Just because Einstein said it does that make it true? Jesus Christ made a statement that is quoted often, “a little yeast affects the whole”. It has been restated many times in many ways, but the main idea is that lies carry consequences, the consequences can range from a shorter life to, according to our data, very violent outcomes. Most would agree that these consequences are not good, and thus fall in the bad fruit column. However, there are some thought to be good or at least passive in nature. Maybe we just need to know more. So are some more facts.

What are the facts about lies?

In the Article “The truth about lies” Researchers found lying can have the following “bad fruit”: Cancer, obesity, anxiety, depression, addiction, gambling, poor work satisfaction, and poor relationships,” (Chris Iliades, MD, 2015). Congruently, in a study on what lying does to your brain those that did not lie reported improvements in their relationships, less trouble sleeping, less tension, fewer headaches, and fewer sore throats (Adam Dachis, 2012). I put to you that lying has “*bad fruit*”. When something leads to cancer we tend to implement all kinds of warnings. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been awarded to those that have worked around asbestos (Asbestos.com, 2015), cigarettes carry a warning right on the package, pills companies have to tell you the side effects, and most manufactures are even sued then. So let me be your “Surgeon General” and decree this warning about lying. Lies have bad fruit and therefore should never be used as foundational truths. In-fact, the bible dictionaries definition points out that lies are “The exact opposite of Truth”. This helps us to also note that truth is “good fruit”. We take truth inherently as good anyway. In Christianity (the largest percentage of the world’s population) death is the enemy of God. Such verses in the bible as “Death, Hell, and the Grave were thrown in the lake of fire (Rev 20:14 KJV Bible),“ and “the soul of God hates violence (Ps 11:5 KJV Bible)“ prove this point. We find solace in such teachings as; pray for

those that would hurt you, do good to those that would use you, love your enemy as yourself.

These beliefs are revolutionary even for today, and are heralded as good for even atheists.

Unfortunately, although they have time tested good fruit that employs acceptance, forgiveness, and love, we still fail as a people to put them into our underlying foundational beliefs.

What about foundational beliefs?

Our lives are based on foundational beliefs that we act upon. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that those beliefs are founded in something that is not changeable, or has “bad fruit”. Having foundational truths is not the problem, it is when those truths are false that is when problems arise. For instance this paper started with a common scene from the dark ages where a woman was wrongfully convicted by the papacy for being a heretic. This occurred thousands of times, and we still fail today to learn from such catastrophes, we need to apply the “good fruit” rule and lean good from bad. Because we have not we have the product reported in scene two. So let us now look closer at those two beliefs through the filter of what truth is employing the “by its fruit” method; then let us apply that knowledge that we learn by employing the fruit method on past events to more current events. We start with the question, why was the papacy bad fruit?

The papal state.

First it seems to change the truth to its own needs. In its catechisms, the papacy has omitted the second commandment against veneration of images allowing the worship of idols, and has shortened the fourth commandment from 94 words to eight and divided the tenth commandment into two commandments to make up the loss of the one they took out. It gives the Pope the right to change the Bible as He sees fit, and says that the one voice of God on earth is the Pope “Supreme Father” and He, therefore, can never be questioned. As a result, thousand were burned alive in the reformation. The 1200 year rule of the Papal States are known as the

dark-ages because all the unjustified death that occurred. Even Queens found their end on the burning post as the conclusion of their attempts of supplying each home with something as simple as the bible in a common language. This was thought such a threat that thousands were killed in the 100 year effort to stop the commoners from having a bible--calling them the “forbidden books” (Jeff Johncoat, 2010). However, people did get the bible in their own language and when they began to read it for themselves they found the bible explicitly said to call no man father, never to add or subtract from it, and mercy rules over justice. This revealed that for a millennia the papacy had been lying to them. The result was just what the Pope feared. In 1791 at Avignon papal government was removed from authority. No longer were people ruled by the Lies put forth by the Papacy (Michael C. Broach, 2002). To add to this, people now found out about the scams for money such as buying your loved one out of purgatory or absolving your life’s sins for a sum of money, and began to call on God themselves and live by faith. That is a lot of history but we need to be well versed so we can apply what we learned.

Does Islam have Correlation?

We see this same theme today with Islam. One the articles that I read in my research proves that Islam is not a religion of peace using empirical data. I found most reprehensive in this article the fact that Muhammad married a 6 year old girl and consummating the marriage when she was eight. (TheReligionofPeace.com, 2015). What column does one put that in, good or bad fruit? This custom still happens today and much worse. I have a friend who is in Kurdistan. Her first hand report tells of such things as girls of eight years of age or above being group raped and then sold as slave wives for fifty cents, those that are not eight years old are killed on the spot burned alive or raped to death. Boys over the age of eight are killed by just as horrible means, forcing some to recant their beliefs and then killed any way. If boys are under

the age of 8 they are retrained to be weapons to kill their own people in the name of Allah—they are disposable and this is their only value. The empirical data is present for all to see, such as the bombing of 911. This religion has a lot in common with the early papal state. For instance it is a government controlled by a religion that is headed up by one person who is proclaimed to be “the only voice of God on earth.” How much empirical data do you need to know that the rape of an 8 year old girl is wrong? How much data do you need to know that when someone who states that they are the only voice for god on the earth who has fruit that is infected throughout by violence and unjust killing is lying. People give them power by founding their lives on those lies. Instead of blindly following we have a mandate to first make sure that these foundational beliefs are in the right column. We cannot accept something as true just because someone says it is no matter how notable the source. Whether the Pope, Einstein, or an Imam we must apply what we have learned to be true through the good fruit test. For further empirical data on Islam see this reference (James M Anderson, 2015).

It is Not Religion.

I know at this point we might be thinking that the atheists have it right and all religion bad--this is not true. In researching I have found much empirical data in support of the contrary. According to the data, religious beliefs are medically, socially and psychologically beneficial to health and longevity. The American Heart Society reported in 2006 that church-goers have lower blood pressure than the non-faithful, further, in 2004, at UCLA it was found that college students involved in religious activities are more likely to have better mental and emotional health than those who are not, to add to this, in 2006, the University of Texas discovered that the more often one goes to church, the longer one lives. Here is a small list of the “good fruit” reported these studies: Those who attended religious services were 36% less likely to die than those who did

not, breast cancer healed quicker, coronary disease and rheumatoid arthritis have better outcomes; children are less likely to be diseased by meningitis, immune systems are documented as better with prayer, depression is healed and overcome at an astounding 70% faster, and finally a study of older adults for the U.S. Journal of Gerontology revealed that atheists had a notable increased chance of dying over a six-year period than those who are faithful to their religious beliefs. The conclusion of these studies show that religious people lived longer than atheists even if they did not go regularly to a place of worship (Tom Knox, 2011). These studies show that to have faith, and to be religious is not the problem. Religion and faith have “good fruit” according to empirical data. Although we could be like many and say that “God is to Blame”, Or “Religion Kills”. The data does not support that conclusion.

Then What is the Problem?

The problem lies in what we believe is the “Truth.” One who becomes radicalized in Islam is indoctrinated into something that allows violence and accepts non truths into their foundational belief for life as truth (James M Anderson, 2015). Atheist see violence and unjustness and choose to believe there is no God (Tom Knox, 2011). Catholicism believed it could kill indiscriminately at the Pope’s word (Michael C. Broach, 2002). However, none of these can pass the “Good Fruit” test. We as a people in the United States believe in equality. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”(Declaration of Independence, 1776).

In Conclusion.

Once we believed the world flat, the earth at the center of the solar system, that we could heal someone by “bleeding” them, and that the black man and the woman were a lower life form.

Through historical data we found truth. The Laws put forth by Jesus Christ have Life at their root and “good fruit”. Now we believe the bible when it says the earth is round (Job 26:7, KJV Bible). Jesus revolutionized the times by elevating a woman up next to a man in his ministries. One of the first pastors was a woman, many black men and women became church planters. Somehow we went backward from that sense of equality, as well as that sense of empathy within the dark ages and papacy rule. Today, unfortunately, we have not assimilated the biggest messages; that God is no respecter of persons (Rom 2:11 KJV Bible), to hold other needs before our own (Phil 2:3, KJV Bible), and the biggest, mercy always rules over judgment and justice (James 2:13, KJV Bible). They are time tested, with love and respect at their core. As foundational truths go I find that one could do a lot worse than Jesus Christ. Muhammad went on something like 75 raids in three years. Islam is repeating the travesty of our past and we are failing to measure it against what we know. The Pope killed thousands in an attempt to monopolize the word of God. Hitler killed hundreds of thousands in the name of purity. Now Isis is killing in the name of Allah. In contrast, Jesus never killed anybody, has never went on a raid, never ordered the deaths of people but instead died instead in our place. Do not misunderstand, I am not making a case to believe and follow Jesus, although there seems to be a good one. But that there is one thing that has allowed times greatest tragedies to repeat; the fact that people allowed a lie as a truth in their foundational beliefs simply because they were told it was so. We need to identify those lies especially when we are leading people, or even nations. DePaulo's studies, state that lies are a necessary part of life, I disagree, to found your life on Truth is the necessity of life, and knowing the truth is the first qualification of decision making, especially if those decisions affect others. If we are ill equipped to decipher truth then Jesus seems to always be a safe bet. If one does not want to be a follower of Christ or have faith, and a shorter life is

acceptable, than at least let this axiom work, “by its fruit you will know it”. Prove truth over lies using this time tested method. Surely one has only to look at history to see good or bad fruit, and on the occasion if that does not work then I suppose only time will tell.

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