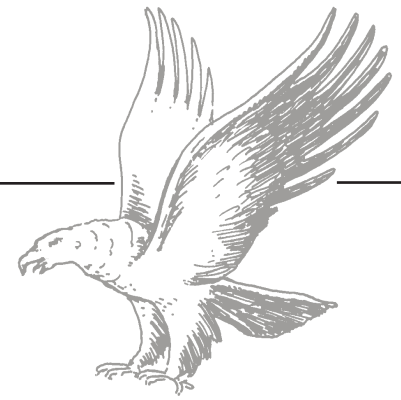


# Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”  
Isaiah 40:31*



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## Relativism's Fatal Flaw

Our culture's embrace of relativism is a devil's bargain, and we are paying a heavy price for the deal. We must be prepared to explain to others why truth is an external reality worth seeking.

*“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:32).*

*“Your word is truth” (Jn. 17:17).*

*“This is a nation that does not obey the voice of the Lord their God nor receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth” (Jer. 7:28).*



In his 1987 book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, Allan Bloom noted that “almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative” (p. 25). In the three decades since Bloom made that observation, the idea that truth is relative has thoroughly saturated American culture. We hear it all the time in statements such as, “that may be true for you, but it is not true for me”; or “there is no such thing as absolute truth”; or “truth depends on how you were raised.”

The idea that there is no objective truth that applies to everyone all the time has enormous implications in everyday life. Once people are convinced that all moral judgments are mere opinions, moral reasoning is replaced by fluid

emotions. When an entire society is dominated by relativism, it will be paralyzed when faced with an existential threat. After all, “who are we to judge” when enemies attack?

Long before Jesus commented on the subject, the Greek philosopher Aristotle offered a definition of truth that has served as a foundation of civilization for over two thousand years: “To say of what **is** that it **is not**, or of what **is not** that it **is**, is *false*, while to say of what **is** that it **is**, and of what **is not** that it **is not**, is *true*” (*Metaphysics* 1011b25). In simplified language, truth is *whatever aligns with reality*—what *is*. What we happen to believe about that reality doesn't change the fact—the truth—about it. Truth is “out there,” external to our opinions or feelings.

But we do not need a PhD in Aristotelian logic to see relativism's fatal flaw. Let's start by considering the claim, “**all truth is relative.**” There are two, and only two, ways of processing that statement. First, we can take it as an absolute truth claim—all truth is relative, with no exceptions. But if that is

absolutely true, then we have established that there is at least one truth that is absolute, not relative. The statement contradicts itself and cannot be valid.

Second, we can avoid that contradiction by insisting that the statement itself is relative. That is, the speaker speaks only for himself, not for others. But if the statement “all truth is relative” is limited to the speaker's perspective, then it cannot speak for *all* truth. Some other truth claims may, in fact, be absolute. The statement therefore is useless in establishing the nature of truth.

So those who insist that “all truth is relative” are stuck on the horns of a dilemma: Their relativism is either self-contradictory or irrelevant. It is a flawed approach to dealing with the real world.

This simple exercise does not address the question of what the truth is on any given subject. That requires a good deal of observation and study of evidence. But the search for truth is doomed from the outset if we insist that it doesn't really exist as an external reality. Objective truth *does* exist, and for our own welfare, we'd better believe it.

– David King