**KEY FACTS:**

- Seventy-two percent of Americans agree, "There is no such thing as absolute truth; two people could define truth in totally conflicting ways, but both could still be correct."¹
- Seventy-one percent of Americans agree, "There are no absolute standards that apply to everybody in all situations."²
- Fifty-three percent of those who claim there is no such thing as absolute truth identify themselves as born-again Christians.³
- Forty-two percent of those who identify themselves as evangelical Christians agree, "There is no such thing as absolute truth; two people could define truth in totally conflicting ways but both could still be correct."⁴

**KEY VERSES:**

Joshua 24:14–15
Judges 17:6; 18:21
1 Kings 18:21
Psalm 31:5; 146:5–6
Proverbs 9:10
Isaiah 59:15
Jeremiah 7:28
Malachi 2:6
John 1:17; 3–4; 14:6;
16:13; 18:38
Romans 1:18-32; 2:8–9
2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14–17
2 John 4–6

**KEY QUOTES:**

*Postmodernists*

"For the pragmatist [postmodernist], true sentences are not true because they correspond to reality, and so there is no need to worry what sort of reality, if any, a given sentence corresponds to – no need to worry about what 'makes' it true."⁵

"Truth isn’t outside of power, or lacking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and functions would repay further study, truth isn’t the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.”⁶

**Critique**

"There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative. If this belief is put to the test, one can count on the students’ reaction: They will be uncomprehending. That anyone would regard the proposition as not self-evident astonishes them, as though he were calling into question 2 + 2 = 4.... Openness—and the relativism that makes it the only plausible stance in the face of various claims to truth and various ways of life and kinds of human beings—is the great insight of our times.... The study of history and of culture [according to this view] teaches that all the world was mad in the past; men

---

² Ibid., pp. 85, 230.
³ Ibid., p. 83.
⁴ Ibid., p. 83.
⁵ Richard Rorty, Consequences of Pragmatism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1982),p. xvi.
always thought they were right, and that led to wars, persecutions, slavery, xenophobia, racism, and chauvinism. The point is not to correct the mistakes and really be right; rather it is not to think you are right at all.

"The students, of course, cannot defend their opinion. It is something with which they have been indoctrinated." 

"Ours is an age in which 'conclusions' are arrived at by distributing questionnaires to a cross-section of the population or by holding a microphone before the lips of casually selected passers-by in the street...In the sphere of religious and moral thinking we are rapidly heading for a state of intellectual anarchy in which the difference between truth and falsehood will no longer be recognized. Indeed, it would seem possible that the words true and false will eventually (and logically) be replaced by the words likable and dislikable."

**Key Sources:**


Fish, Stanley. *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1980.


**Key Critiques:**


Dykstra, David, ed. *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement.* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI:
