

Is It Possible to Know Anything?

I. Faith Requires Knowledge

- A. Faith is not the absence of knowledge

- B. Faith means to place our entire weight upon what we know
 - 1. Proof → confirms knowledge → strengthens faith

 - 2. Heb. 11:1—“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”

 - 3. John Calvin: faith is the “firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us” (*Institutes* III.2.7).

 - 4. Reformers: *notitia* → *assensus* → *fiducia* (“hearty trust”)

 - 5. Knowledge is a necessary but not sufficient condition for faith

II. How to Acquire Knowledge

- A. Moderns: proof is required. Optimistic Certainty. Fig. 10.1
 - 1. Reason (Descartes) & Empiricism (Locke): knowledge requires certainty

 - 2. Truth is objective, universal, and absolute

 - 3. Result: naïve, naughty, and no room for God.

B. Skeptical Postmoderns: proof is required. Pessimistic Humility.

1. “Humble” stance because we are finite and fallen

2. Truth is subjective, local, and perspectival

3. Result: so humble that we mumble. What do we know that is true for everyone?

C. Postmodern Christians: proof is not required. Humble Assurance. Fig. 10.2

1. Knowledge = justified true belief

2. Christian Presuppositions: Fig. 10.3
 - a. God exists: justifies the deliverances of reason
 - 1) Romans 1:18-32

 - 2) God’s existence supplies the only warrant to trust our mental equipment and empirical senses. See Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford, 2000), 227-40 and Victor Reppert, *C. S. Lewis’s Dangerous Idea* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003).

 - b. Scripture is God’s Word: justifies the deliverances of revelation.
 - 1) Scripture is self-authenticating

 - 2) John Calvin, *Institutes* I.7.2: “Scripture exhibits fully as clear evidence of its own truth as white and black things do of their color, or sweet and bitter things do of their taste.”

Figure 10.1: The Modern Structure of Knowledge

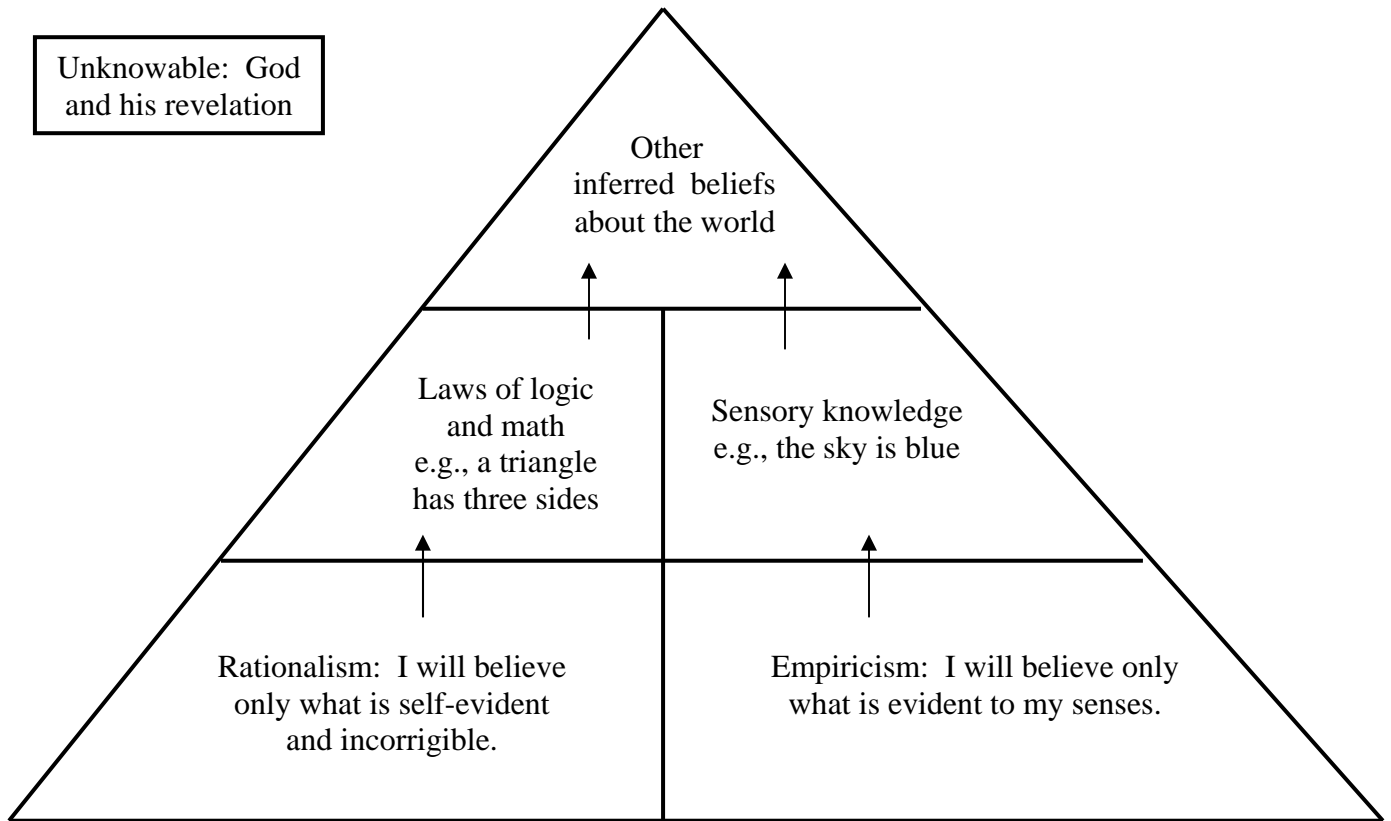


Figure 10.2: How Do You Know?

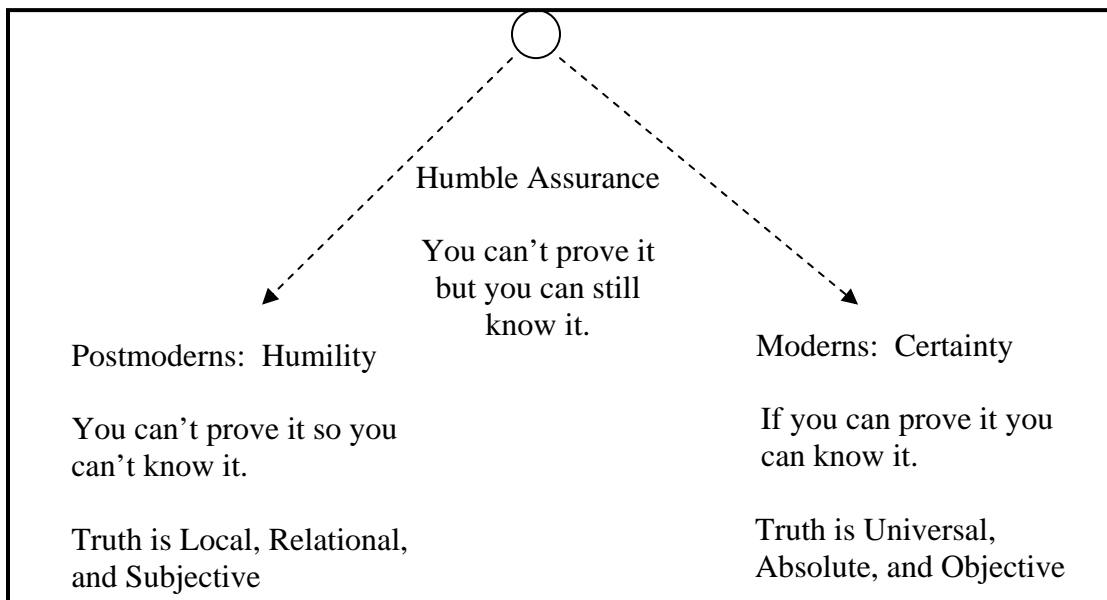


Figure 10.3: The Christian Structure of Knowledge

