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Caroline Moore
Lynchburg College

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Kierkegaard on Truth

by

Caroline Moore

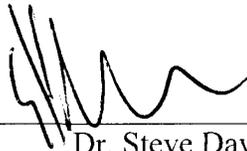
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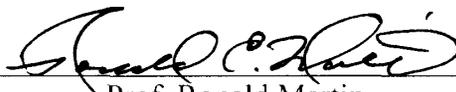
Dr. Tom Brickhouse



Dr. Steve Dawson



Dr. Annette Evans



Prof. Ronald Martin

Introduction:

Many philosophers believe in three types of truth and all of them are considered objective: correspondence, coherence and pragmatist. Objective knowledge “can designate a knowledge-claim having, roughly, the status of being fully supported or proven.”ⁱ If asked, philosophers often say that they believe in a mixture of two or more of the objective truths because each of the truths has points of weakness. While the objective truths cover much of what is considered to be valid truth, they all leave something out, subjective truth. Subjective truth is “a judgment or belief” “that is compelling for some rational beings (subjects) but not compelling for others.”ⁱⁱ Søren Kierkegaard was one of the first philosophers to promote a form of subjective truth. It fills the holes that objective truth cannot cover. While objective truth is the more common belief, objective theories are limited to factual, provable truths and subjective truth is necessary to have a full idea of what counts as traditional and personal truth. This thesis will define objective truth and Kierkegaard’s subjective truth in order to argue that a subjective truth and subjective knowledge are necessary in order to have a complete understanding of knowledge and truth.

Literature Review:

Let’s begin with an investigation of the different sorts of objective truth. The correspondence theory is one of the types of objective truth. “What we believe or say is true [is correct] if it corresponds to the way things actually are”.ⁱⁱⁱ Correspondence truth focuses on the facts. “A belief is true if and only if it corresponds to a fact”.^{iv} A proposition is considered true

when there is a relation between the proposition and the world. The world holds a fact that is similar to the proposition and therefore the proposition can be considered true.^v These definitions are the basic form of correspondence. However, if a proposition does not directly resemble a fact from reality, it cannot be true. Correspondence theory of truth faces difficulties. It is not clearly defined as to “what the relation of correspondence between a statement and the world amounts to”.^{vi} It is also difficult to prove statements dealing with what should or would happen in certain circumstances. The difficulty lies in trying to “identify any reality to which it corresponds”.^{vii} “Many of our more complex true statements seem not to correspond to any aspect of the world”.^{viii} Another weakness of the correspondence theory of truth is that some truth “is independent of our knowledge”.^{ix} “If there is a mind-independent world”, then there exists truths that “outstrip what we know”.^x There are ways to alter and simplify the truth theory of correspondence; however, it no longer remains the correspondence theory of truth. It is merely a simplified resemblance.

The coherence theory of truth states “a belief is true if and only if it is part of a coherent system of beliefs”.^{xi} The theory claims that a statement is true if and only if it relates to another system of statements. “Truth is a matter of how beliefs are related to each-other”.^{xii} Properties of your beliefs are the only thing you need for justification of your future beliefs. However, if you are constantly justifying your beliefs with other beliefs, it is an infinite regress. There is no way to officially prove your belief to be true because you will constantly have to prove the next belief. Also, the main difficulty for the coherence theory is “what system of statements a statement must cohere with to be true”.^{xiii} If it is referring to a person’s beliefs, then truth becomes relative to the individual. “A statement might cohere with one person’s system of beliefs, and hence be true relative to that system, while failing to cohere with some other

person's system of beliefs, hence being false relative to that system".^{xiv} If the system of beliefs involves a culture, then truth becomes relative to the culture. What is true for one culture may not be true to a different culture. The coherence theory has an extreme weakness because it is "difficult to specify what that system of statements should be" to classify what counts as truth.^{xv} It may be necessary to consider the coherence theory of truth as a "guideline for discerning, or identifying, truth" rather than defining truth.^{xvi}

Pragmatist theory of truth states that "true beliefs are guaranteed not to conflict with subsequent experience".^{xvii} "A statement is true if and only if it is useful in a certain way".^{xviii} Truth is a verification that beliefs receive when they are used in our interactions with the world.^{xix} The pragmatist theory of truth is relative because the usefulness of a belief can vary between individuals. A particular belief could be useful for one person and then useless for another. That belief then becomes true for one individual and false for the other. Also, "it is possible for a belief to qualify as useful but still be false".^{xx} An individual then could never judge which beliefs are true and which are not because false beliefs could still prove to be useful. If we are to verify what is true based off of what beliefs are useful, we may be verifying many false beliefs on the simple basis that it proved to be useful when applied to the world.

Each of the objective truths has weaknesses that limit their ability to capture all that we mean by "truth." While the theories may work in certain circumstances and situations, they do not work for all possible or potential circumstances. Each of them reaches a point where it cannot prove a certain type of statement or where it enters circular reasoning or infinite regress. Eventually, we know that a certain statement is true; however, none of the objective theories can prove it. Certain individuals hold beliefs that they passionately believe to be true for them; but, they cannot seem to prove them using any of the objective theories of truth. However, this should

not discount their beliefs to be false or misleading. In these situations, it is necessary to rely upon a subjective truth to find some legitimacy in your own personal truth.

Soren Kierkegaard is an existentialist philosopher who is considered the father of Existentialism. "The heart of [Kierkegaard's] philosophy is his position on the relation between reason and faith."^{xxi} The major point of Kierkegaard's philosophy is that truth is subjective. "What good is purely objective truth if it is not appropriated into the life of the knower?"^{xxii} A total commitment of the knower is necessary in any field in order to obtain truth. The second point of Kierkegaard's philosophy is that "the more a given claim demands of the subject by way of total commitment and concomitant risk, the more truth must be said to reside in the claim."^{xxiii} The final point of Kierkegaard's philosophy is the acceptance of faith as a paradox. "Faith alone provides the basis for religious truth."^{xxiv} He also understands that his writing on subjectivity is not for everyone. He identifies his key audiences as the non-academic Christians who should avoid cultural complacency and the intellectual elite who promote misleading, dishonest versions of Christianity.^{xxv}

Kierkegaard does not hold that there is no such thing as objective truth. He means to insist that there is a higher truth that is obtainable to individuals based off of a relationship between the knower and the object or premise. "To exist is to be 'in the truth', whether what is affirmed is 'objectively' true or not, and faith is thus justified by the truth subjectively 'in' the believer, not by grounds for believing that what is affirmed - the being of God - is actually the case."^{xxvi} For Kierkegaard, the issue does not lie in whether or not the premise is true. The individual does not have to believe something that must be true. It is the relationship between the knower and the premise that puts the individual in the truth and creates a higher, subjective truth for that individual alone. The focus is not on the content; it is on the inwardness. "At its

maximum this inward 'how' is the passion of the infinite and the passion of the infinite is the truth."^{xxvii} Subjective truth is "an objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness ... the highest truth attainable for an existing individual".^{xxviii}

There are higher truths that we live and die for. Reason only takes us so far and then you enter the irrational and take a leap of faith by accepting the absurdity of the higher truth because there is no proof for it. Subjective truth is "most influential in a person's life".^{xxix} It is "an objective uncertainty, held fast through appropriation with the most passionate inwardness" and is the "highest truth there is for an existing person".^{xxx} According to Kierkegaard, subjective truth is characterized by objective uncertainty and passionate inwardness.^{xxxi} He wanted to emphasize the "primacy of faith over reason".^{xxxii} Kierkegaard did not wish to get rid of objective truth. He only suggests that subjectivity is "to be the key philosophical concern".^{xxxiii} He did not deny the "usual definition of truth as a correspondence between thought and reality".^{xxxiv} He wanted to demonstrate "the importance of subjectivity in the personal truths that affect us the most deeply and not the inevitable primacy of subjectivity over objectivity".^{xxxv} "Philosophy must focus on the existing individual and on individuality", or subjectivity, "experienced as passionate inwardness".^{xxxvi} It is best to live with both objective and subjective truths but not at the same time.

For Kierkegaard, the goal in life is to "understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do; the thing is to find a truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die".^{xxxvii} He believes that "one must know oneself before knowing anything else. It is only after a man has thus understood himself inwardly and has thus seen his way, that life acquires peace and significance".^{xxxviii} "It is clear enough that for Kierkegaard this means moral and religious truth, the truth about how human life should be lived".^{xxxix} Subjective truth is found when you

look at the “how”; “there is a kind of relationship of which we may say with absolute certainty that the individual who is in this relationship to an object is ‘in the truth’, even though the object to which he is so related may turn out to be an untruth”.^{xli} It is not about “whether a person’s beliefs are objectively right but whether the person has the right kind of relationship to what is believed”.^{xlii} Being in the truth is about the “absolute sincerity” and the passion of how you believe what you think to be true.^{xliii} It is an “ethical” and “personal kind of truth in mind”.^{xliiii} Subjective truth is the “fullest truth attainable by human beings” because of the inward relationship and passion “with which one holds to an object”.^{xliv} “In the end, [Kierkegaard’s] position is not that what a person believes in unimportant but that how a person believes is crucially important.”^{xlv}

In Kierkegaard's philosophy, he outlines three stages in a person's life: the aesthetic, ethical and religious stages. "Many individuals exist in an aesthetic stage, in which life is only a series of idle moments. There is little consistency and no sense of duty".^{xlvi} The "ethical stage of existence is unsatisfactory, and [Kierkegaard] argues for a 'teleological suspension' of the ethical."^{xlvii} The ethical stage ignores the individual and puts emphasis on the universal. "The universal is not enough."^{xlviii} In order to reach the individual and subjective, one must enter the religious stage. "A sense of the absurd leads to the experience of anguish that turns man towards faith".^{xlix} The religious stage is characterized as "private and personal".^l "Universals are abandoned in the name of a higher goal - a goal that cannot even be communicated".^{li} The knight of faith exemplifies the religious stage. The knight of faith "cannot discuss his actions or construct a theory about it. His action is carried out in the context of the absurd".^{lii}

Religion, specifically Christianity, is the prime example Kierkegaard uses to explain subjective truth. "An individual may be faced with the alternatives of being a believer or an

atheist. His decision cannot be made by a cold study of the advantages of each position. The decision is unreal".^{liii} There must be an indescribable pull towards faith in order to be considered a true believer. He states, "An objective acceptance of Christianity is paganism or thoughtlessness".^{liv} "Objectively, Christianity has absolutely no existence".^{lv} Christianity focuses on reaching the highest form of passion; however, passion cannot and does not exist objectively. It must be reached subjectively. The highest form of passion is faith in the "sphere of human subjectivity".^{lvi} Subjective truth in relation to Christianity is about having a passionate inwardness and acceptance of the absurd. It is about having a passionate relationship between the believer and the object of faith and Christianity. The object of faith is "God's reality in existence as a particular individual, the fact that God has existed as an individual human being".^{lvii} The relationship is what the subjective truth becomes; it is the devout connection between you and God that puts you in the truth. When Christianity is accepted with objective reasoning, there is no risk, faith or inwardness. In order to have a true Christianity, one has to have passionate inwardness and acceptance of the absurd in order to have faith. Someone cannot strive to know and reason through his or her faith and Christianity. When he has learned his faith, he cannot have a true faith because he cannot strive to know faith. The criteria to have faith are to accept the absurdity of the faith and accept that there is no proof for it. One must experience anguish in order to grow towards being and in faith. "When he experiences anguish, salvation becomes possible because it is through anguish that he recognizes the force and extent of his freedom".^{lviii}

Kierkegaard provides an example of a man of faith in order to exemplify what it takes to become subjective and a true believer. Abraham is Kierkegaard's man of faith "because he expects the impossible. He abandons any kind of human understanding".^{lix} Abraham "undergoes the anguish" and his faith becomes "unreal".^{lx} He equally and passionately believes both that his

son, Isaac, will become the father of Israel and that Abraham must kill him. "Abraham's faith 'does not consist in the willingness to sacrifice Isaac, but in the belief that he will *somehow* get Isaac back.'" ^{lxi} Abraham understands the earthly evidence that supports the rational belief that if you kill someone, they will not come back. However, when the knight of faith's subjective truth conflicts with evidence that supports a rational judgment, the evidence and rational judgment have no power over the knight of faith and his subjective belief because he is living in the eternal, higher authority. He must also go through this anguish and absurdity in silence because if he speaks to others about his plans, no one would understand him. ^{lxii} Abraham's journey is one of solitude and silence. Abraham cannot be justified in the ethical sphere, so he remains silent because his family will not understand and his society will consider him a murderer because his society lives in the ethical sphere. ^{lxiii} For Kierkegaard, Abraham is proof that the subjective journey must be one of silence that others will not understand if you try to explain it to them. It is something that is internal, personal and for your understanding only. Therefore, no one ever fully knows or is meant to know that you are on a journey of subjective truth.

Among the Existentialists, there are two other philosophers who agree with Kierkegaard's philosophy of subjectivity and faith. Jaspers and Marcel are also "interested in the growth and development of the self". ^{lxiv} Kierkegaard, Jaspers and Marcel all arrive at the same theme. Society is at a "loss of inwardness". ^{lxv} Society "fails to encounter the most important ideas - those of self-realization, communication, and transcendence". ^{lxvi} The masses have entered an "age of reason, which has abandoned the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity". ^{lxvii} Religious institutions have also become too "absolute" and "restrictive". ^{lxviii} Kierkegaard and Jaspers reject the institutional aspect of faith and religion and argue that a "religious experience" "transcends the limits of the church". ^{lxix} According to Kierkegaard, religious institutions make

religion an objective belief. If religion is objective, then "man thinks of religion much as he does of a physical possession" that can be disposed of.^{lxx} Jaspers and Marcel agree with Kierkegaard that reason cannot be used in regard to faith. "Jaspers argues against the view that God's existence can be proven. A major content of faith is the knowledge that God exists, but the attempt to confirm faith by the intellect breaks down".^{lxxi} An individual is not meant to be able to prove faith or be able to communicate their subjective truth. Kierkegaard, Jaspers and Marcel all agree that faith cannot be rationally organized. The relationship between man and faith cannot be intellectual. All three of the philosophers agree that the philosophical emphasis should be placed on the subjective rather than the objective.^{lxxii}

Kierkegaard and Socrates are also connected with subjective truth. Socrates is Kierkegaard's knight of infinite resignation. He rests in between the ethical and religious stages for Kierkegaard and is not classified into a certain sphere.^{lxxiii} In "The Apology" by Plato, Socrates is displayed as a man with objective uncertainty. Socrates displays the ethical subjectivity rather than the Christian subjectivity.^{lxxiv} However, he is still a man of subjective truth because he does not fear the unknown that comes in death. He references the possibility of a life after death that is unknown to humans. "Socrates has ... the right appreciation of existence, living with objective uncertainty."^{lxxv} Socrates' "Socratic ignorance is an expression of the objective uncertainty" and "Socratic inwardness in existing is an analogue to [Christian] faith."^{lxxvi} Kierkegaard places Socrates' ignorance and inwardness "just below Christian faith on a continuum of increasing subjective truth, paradox, and passion."^{lxxvii}

A doubter of subjective truth may wonder, "Why is faith, or being subjectively in the truth, the highest truth attainable for an existing individual?"^{lxxviii} According to Kierkegaard, subjective truth activates inwardness to the highest possible degree and inwardness is the

"highest manner of existing for an existing individual".^{lxxxix} It is the highest manner of existing because "it brings man into the right relationship to 'the truth' on which his eternal happiness depends".^{lxxx} To be at the highest degree of this qualification is to truly exist. "Only the man of faith truly exists."^{lxxxix} The "criterion of 'true' existence" is subjective inwardness.^{lxxxii} To live only in objectivity is to ramble "comfortably on by way of the long road of approximation without being impelled by the urge of passion".^{lxxxiii} "Subjective knowledge counts every delay a deadly peril, and the decision so infinitely important and so instantly pressing that it is as if the opportunity had already passed."^{lxxxiv}

Exposition and Defense:

I should begin by providing my definition of subjective truth. Kierkegaard provides a suitable definition of subjective truth. He wrote that it is an uncertainty that cannot be solved objectively. The uncertainty is developed throughout the course of a lifetime on a journey that develops a passionate inwardness within the individual. Subjective truth is the highest truth that an existing individual can obtain. I agree with Kierkegaard's definition; however, I find it incomplete. For me, subjective truth is a passionate belief that cannot be proven through objective facts or truths. It involves believing in something that is contrary to the current, rational evidence or believing in something which potentially could have no evidence at all. An easy example is Christianity. Christianity believes in heaven and hell, God, and life after death. None of these beliefs can be proven. The existence of a heaven and a hell has not been proven because they have not been found to exist anywhere in the universe. God and life after death remain beliefs that have no evidence to prove or disprove them. It takes a lifetime to develop and grow

and upon death, your journey is still incomplete. Throughout your journey, you are not meant to look for evidence or proof to support your beliefs. The purpose of your journey does not greatly vary or alter over the course of your lifetime and it does not give allowances for actions or behaviors that go against its morality. While Christianity is the easiest example of subjective truth, any religious or passionate belief within reason can suffice for the appliance of truth in subjectivity.

Now I must address what I mean by “within reason.” It is a phrase that does not have an exact definition other than to say that your passionate belief must be rational. But what qualifies as rational? Your passionate belief must be one where you commit no harm to humanity or individuals. Your subjective truth cannot allow for the harm of individuals, groups, civilizations or communities. It must also not allow you to cause injury or harm to yourself in any permanently altering physical or mental way. The journey will be a struggle and a hard journey to partake in. It will be mentally and physically draining at times and mentally and physically gratifying at other times. That harm to your physical and mental state is necessary for the development of your subjective truth. However, anything beyond the personal struggle is not to be allowed by your passionate belief if it is to be called a subjective truth. Any belief that goes beyond this limit is no longer in the realm of the rational and slips into the realm of the irrational.

While reasonability is applied to this aspect of subjectivity, reasonability and rational is only applied to the type of subjective, passionate belief and the method of expressing this belief. While there is no sound reasoning to limit the power of rational, it must still be limited. If rational is applied to every aspect of subjectivity, it no longer maintains its title. As Kierkegaard promotes, individuals must live in both the objective and subjective realms of truth, just not at the same time. Individuals who accept objective truths are rational beings and must continue to

be rational in the subjective realm when choosing their passionate belief to pursue in their personal lives. An individual who lives in objectivity is considered rational and to have a subjective belief does not give him or her the opportunity to be irrational.

An attempt might be made to connect Kierkegaard's subjective truth with irrational beliefs, behaviors and actions. Some might say that subjective truth attempts to allow for validity and acceptance of behaviors and actions such as those of Hitler, Bin Laden and Jihadi John. These types of individuals thought that what they believed was true which led to hideous, heinous actions that devastated individuals, groups and countries. However, Kierkegaard's subjective truth does not give way to irrational behavior and actions. Kierkegaard's subjective truth promotes establishing a subjective truth in Christianity with focus on individual purpose and meaning with morals adhering to a fixed standard. While Kierkegaard does not directly address the potential connections between subjective truth and irrationality, he does focus his philosophy on the development of moral truths through the integration of Christianity and divine intervention.

My additions to Kierkegaard place greater emphasis on differentiating subjectivity and irrationality. Everything has a limit before it becomes bad for you. Too much of everything can be bad for you and the same goes for subjectivity. If the Abraham of this time suddenly announced that God was speaking to him and that he had to sacrifice his son, he or she would be placed in a mental hospital for further diagnosis of a mental condition such as schizophrenia. While I agree with Kierkegaard that Abraham was a knight of faith who had to suffer and struggle through his journey to subjective truth in faith, I would not recommend taking Abraham's path in this day and age. I would also place limits on what subjectivity can be applied to. Allowing religion to be a subjective truth can lead to extremists who call upon their

subjective beliefs to commit terrible acts against humanity in the name of their religion. There has to be limits on the extent of subjectivity in faith.

Calling on subjectivity to find truth in your faith is a worthy journey to undertake. If a nonbeliever or a young Christian wants to pursue their faith to develop a stronger bond between them and their religion, then that is a good usage for finding subjective truth. With this said, there needs to be a line drawn that distinguishes rational usage of subjectivity and irrational usage of subjectivity. As has previously been stated, any attempt to cause harm or injury to yourself or others is strictly prohibited for the use of subjective truth to define your belief. Any attempt made to force beliefs on others is also prohibited. Your subjective truth is specifically that, your individual, personal subjective truth. It is only meant for you. If others agree with you, that is fine. However, if others disagree with you or ask for proof, it is not your goal to try to convince or force beliefs on others. Subjective truths are meant for you to embark on a personal journey to grow as a being in faith or passionate belief with the benefits, growth and temporary struggle being only for you to bear. Any other attempt to use subjective truth is not to be called subjective truth. Attempting to use it to explain your belief in something that does not provide your life meaning or purpose is also a dishonest use of the phrase.

Some may attempt to compare or connect relativism with subjectivism. Relativism is the “philosophical position that all points of view are equally valid, and that all truth is relative to the individual.”^{lxxxv} There are three major types of relativism: cognitive, situational and moral. Cognitive relativism is the position that “all truth is relative.”^{lxxxvi} There is no objective truth with cognitive relativism. Situational relativism promotes that “ethics are dependent upon the situation.”^{lxxxvii} Moral relativism is the position that “all morals are relative to the group within which they are constructed.”^{lxxxviii} In an attempt to avoid relativism, we must adopt a framework

of fixed moral standards to avoid irrational, immoral actions along with relativism. It also must be stated that I will only be defending Kierkegaard's subjective truth and his position on it.

Cognitive relativism states that there is no objective truth at all while Kierkegaard includes objective truth as a necessity. As was stated earlier in the literature review, Kierkegaard never attempts to get rid of or deny objective truth. He understood the need for objective truth and that subjective truth works in addition to objective truth, not as a replacement of objective truth. In this sense, subjective truth and cognitive relativism are distinct and cannot be compared. Kierkegaard's subjective truth only claims that some truths are subjective to the individual. Objective truths are needed to live in the world. They are facts of life that we cannot ignore or attempt to disband. Subjective truth merely needs to be included in the truths of life because subjective truth involves the greater truths that relate to a person's purpose or goal in life.

Situational relativism concludes that ethics and morality are dependent on the situation that you are in while Kierkegaard's subjective truth is not capable of such variation dependent on situations. Kierkegaard's subjective truth places emphasis on the journey and struggle it takes to develop your subjective truth. It is not a journey that is meant to vary or change on a constant basis. Your purpose and goal are not meant to vary. Your method towards achieving the purpose or goal can alter; however, the base morality cannot alter based on the situation or position. As earlier stated, Kierkegaard noted that the journey is meant to take an individual a lifetime and even in death, should not have completed the journey. The steady focus on achieving your subjective truth is to develop your own personal purpose and meaning on earth. The personal purpose is meant to develop a morality that you stick to in all circumstances and rely on to lead you on the right path.

Moral relativism deals with the development of morals within a society and that morals are relative to the society in which they are formed. Kierkegaard does not deny that there are universal morals. There are certain morals that are shared amongst cultures and societies. Also, Kierkegaard promotes a Christian, religious, personal moral code. In my defense of Kierkegaard's subjective truth, individuals need to understand that their subjective truth needs to follow a framework of fixed moral standards that promotes rational, moral actions instead of allowing for any action that follows any form of irrational belief. If a society or culture promotes a flawed form of morality, it is not okay to claim that it is your subjective truth. There is a difference between subjective truth and irrational beliefs. Certain beliefs are developed within a society and through the way you were raised. All of these beliefs that you were taught must be held to the subjective truth standard before they can be claimed as a truth for you. If the beliefs you developed in a society are irrational, immoral or harmful, they are not to be related to subjective truth.

More important than objective truth is subjective truth that gives our life meaning. People cannot prove many things that give life meaning. But, the belief in their truth is essential to have a meaning and purpose in life. If an individual continued through life with no sense of purpose, their lives would be lost in a haze that gave them no final goal or objective to obtain. Also, those who have a purpose cannot deny it. Individuals who go to college have the goal of obtaining a degree. Individuals who want to be a doctor go through the steps necessary to become a doctor. A person who feels like his or her calling is to be a missionary, he or she will go through life making the steps needed to become a missionary. A goal can be to obtain a certain job, salary, religion, social status, or many more possibilities. The journey that they take to reach those goals is the subjective path they take with the belief that what they are pursuing is a truth for them.

While these examples are smaller examples, the biggest and most important goal is to develop a purpose in life that you can live by and be guided by.

The goal to figure out your purpose in life is the greatest goal to reach for. For some, it can be as easy as going to school and discovering your path. For others, it can take a lifetime of searching before they find it. The journey to establish and work towards your purpose is a subjective truth. You pursue that purpose with the hope and trust that you are working towards your own personal truth. For many, their purpose is found through a religious belief that provides them with a sense of morals and values to work with. The journey towards establishing your personal worth and belonging can be aided by establishing a faith and religion is one of the greatest subjective truths that individuals accept wholeheartedly with little proof or assurance. However, faith is not the only way to establishing a subjective truth. Many non-believers also pursue a subjective truth.

It is not necessary to be a person of faith to be on a subjective journey. For my subjective truth, non-believers have their own form of faith by lacking the acceptance of an established religion. Once a non-believer has established his or her purpose, their subjective journey is still just as personal and a truth for them as for any believer in faith. A non-believer may feel that it is his or her purpose to be a doctor to help those in under-developed countries. He or she does not know with proof that it is his or her intended purpose. However, he or she pursues that purpose with the wholehearted truth that it is intended. The journey that they embark on is still just as meaningful and it still lacks just as much proof or evidence. But, they still strive towards it with the knowledge that it is true for them. The reliance on subjective truth provides people with a sense of relief and assurance that they are here for a reason despite the lack of evidence to support their pursuance in the belief.

People without subjective truth may consider the big picture analysis that their life is just a mere ninety or so years of life on a planet that is incredibly old. Once they die, others will be there to replace them. There is no significance or meaning that is attached to their lives. It is easy to become depressed or disheartened with this view on the meaning of individual lives. Subjective truth can save individuals from that end result. A strong, passionate belief that your life has meaning and that you will live by that belief until the day you die is an exact example of subjective truth.

Finally, emphasis must be placed on the relationship between the person and the belief rather than just the belief itself. The subjective truth is found within the person's relationship with their belief. The belief itself may not be true. For example, an individual who believes in Christianity has a passionate relationship with their belief in Christianity. The religion itself may end up being false; however, the relationship is where the truth is found. The passionate inward connection the person feels to the belief is what allows them to be in truth and have a subjective true belief. While the belief itself is subject to being objectively true or false, the relationship is the key aspect that allows them to have a true belief according to subjectivity. In this realm, the relationship between the individual and the belief is of a higher importance and authority than the factuality of the belief itself. While objectively the belief may be proven to be false, subjectively the belief is of lower importance when compared to the connectedness that exists and grows within the individual. An individual must also not apply their objective life to their subjective life and try to establish proof for their potentially false subjective belief. The purpose of having a passionate, inward truth is to accept that it may not apply to objective reasoning or earthly evidence. Your relationship with your truth is higher than that of earthly objectivity and instead reaches the higher, eternal subjectivity.

Conclusion:

Objective truth is a key source of knowledge for daily living. However, it is not the only source of truth. Subjective truth is an essential source of knowledge that provides us with personal truths that relate to our purposeful, meaningful lives. Subjective truths involve an individual journey to developing ourselves and our passionate beliefs. While we cannot live without objective knowledge, this does not make subjective knowledge worthless. Subjective truth helps individuals find reason to live and goals to strive for. It is a truth that philosophers have developed different forms of and it is criticized due to misunderstanding; however, that does not take away from the importance of this form of truth. Kierkegaard's subjective truth is the most precise philosophy on subjectivity and its qualities and the essence of this form of truth needs to be added to our broad idea of truth.

ⁱ Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (n.d.). Retrieved March 24, 2015, from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/objectiv/>

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