

POWER OF TRUTH

Leonard E. James

Verity Learning Academy, Science & Mathematics Tutoring

This article discusses the power of truth. Our modern era is marked by lots of information from media, government leaders and agencies, politicians and political parties and other sources. Much of that information is questionable or downright untrue. When we receive information how do we know we can trust it? This article provides an answer to this question.

I am Leonard E. James. I am an ordained minister for more than 40 years. I am, also, a technical professional with over 55 years of experience. Much of my ministerial and professional experience has involved determining and communicating truth. My father was a mathematics teacher who taught me the basics of logic from early childhood. A primary focus of logic is proving the truth and validity of statements in the light of evidence presented.

BASIS OF LOGIC

My sense of logic began to solidify when I was a graduate student in mathematics and computer science in the late 1970s. I read a book by Daniel Solow entitled, How to Read and Do Proofs (latest edition 6, Wiley, 2013). While the book goes into some deep mathematics it gives some easy-to-understand concepts. I have come to see three concepts in logic, two from Solow and one I have added as we shall see.

Definition (From Solow)

According to Solow a definition is, “An agreement, by all parties concerned, as to the meaning of a particular term.” If any party to the discussion has a different understanding of the meaning of a term, the resulting logic is invalid and the truth gets lost.

Assumption or Axiom (From Solow)

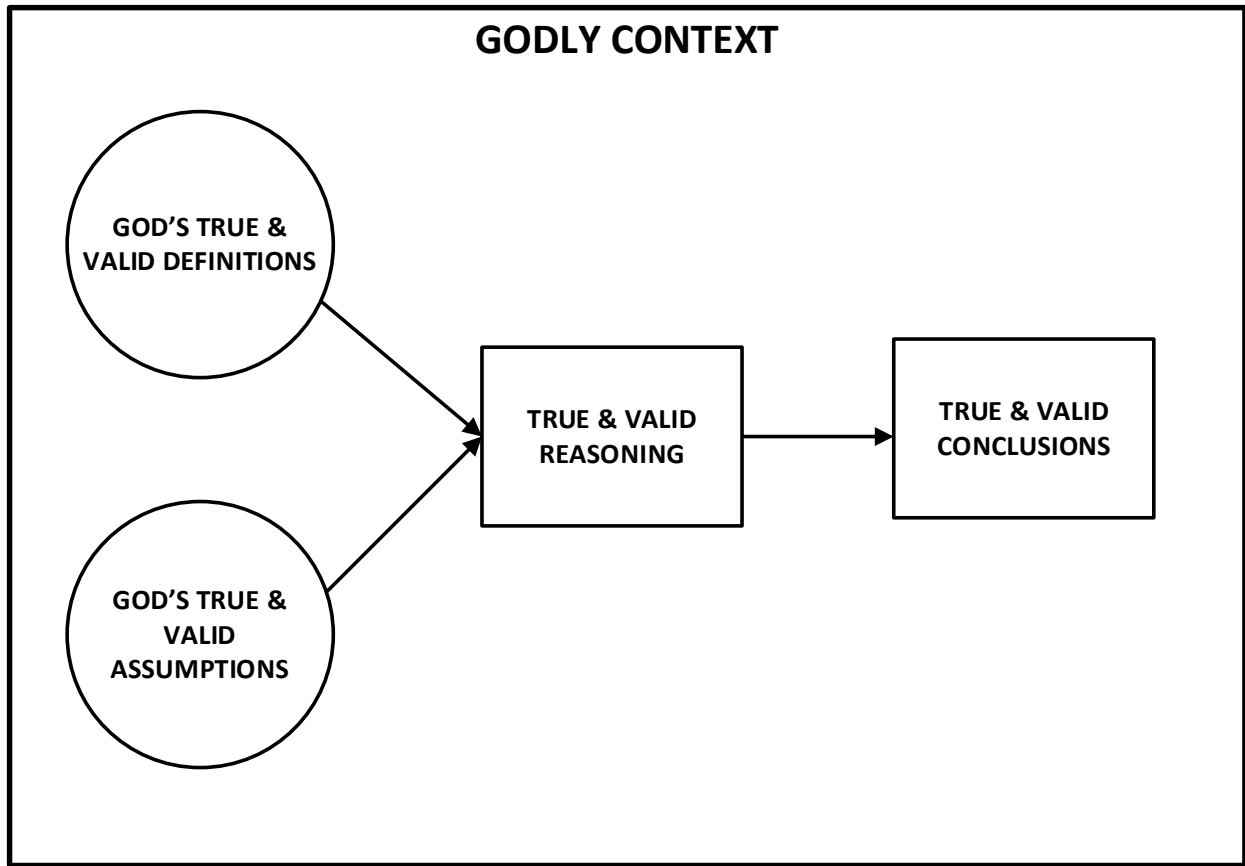
An assumption or axiom is a statement that is taken for granted as true without proof. In high school geometry we encounter theorems, that is, statements that are to be proved. In a theorem the axioms or assumptions are the givens, statements taken as true without question.

Context

The definitions and assumptions in any logic or reasoning only apply to a context. The context consists of the issues under consideration. The definitions and assumptions are invalid outside of the stated or implied context of the problem or issue at hand and they must be relevant to that context.

THE ULTIMATE CONTEXT, GODLY TRUTH

There is much to take from the words of Jesus Christ in John 8:31-32, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” This is a weighty statement. If we believe and act on lies, we will have problems and, one way or another, lose our freedom.



The above figure shows the basis of sound logic in a Godly Context. First, the Godly Context is designed and created by God, the Eternal. From Creation everything existed in Godly Context.(John 1:1-2) The Power of Truth is always derived from a Godly Context.

Jesus Before Pontius Pilate

The Jewish leaders seeking to crucify Jesus took Him before Pontius Pilate to obtain legal justification for the act. Pilate questioned Jesus and could not find fault with Him. In the process he raised the question, “What is truth?” (John 18:28-38) The Jewish leaders were adamant and Pilate literally washed his hands of the matter. (Matthew 27:23-25) This shows two things. First, without a Godly context truth is elusive. And, secondly, when facing a difficult situation many simply dismiss the question by “washing their hands of it”.

U.S. Constitution & Godly Context

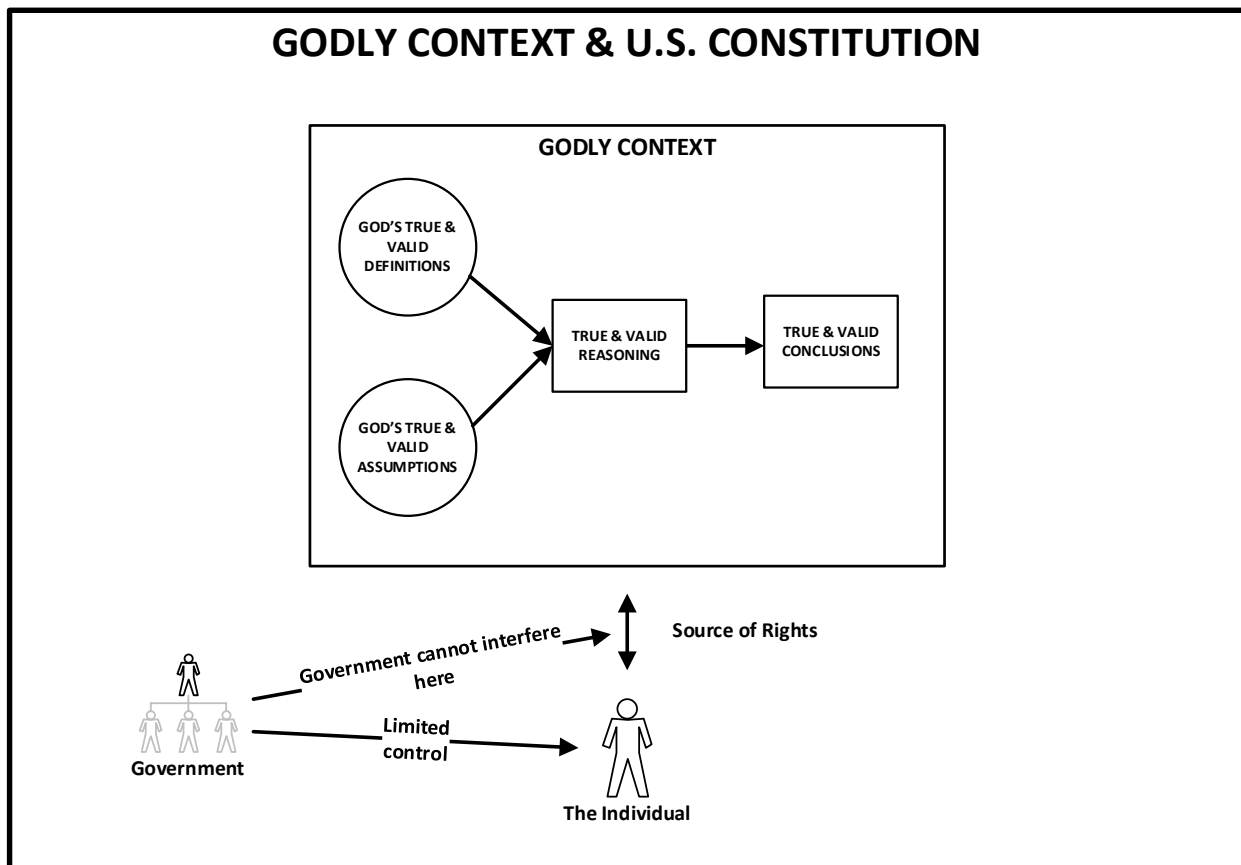
The United States of America is unique in the world. The Founding Fathers were migrants from Europe, primarily England, or descendants of migrants. Some had come from Spain or France. European countries were monarchies, ruled by kings, who exercised complete, often tyrannical control. These countries had state religions, the Catholic Church or the Church of England in the English case. Those who migrated had issues with the king or varied from the state religion in their faith.

Over time the most dominant migrants were under English rule in separate colonies. Eventually, the English King George moved to assert control over the English colonies. Tax policies became the most annoying to 13 colonies and in 1776 they rebelled and declared independence. The document declaring the break from England was the Declaration of Independence. A key quote from that document is, “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.” Here the Founders acknowledged God as the source of their rights, **not government**. (See the figure below.) After the Revolutionary War a Constitution was adopted in 1789 as the basis of U.S. law. In 1791 the first ten amendments, called the Bill of Rights, were ratified. The First Amendment restricts government from passing laws to restrict or interfere with five basic rights. It reads:

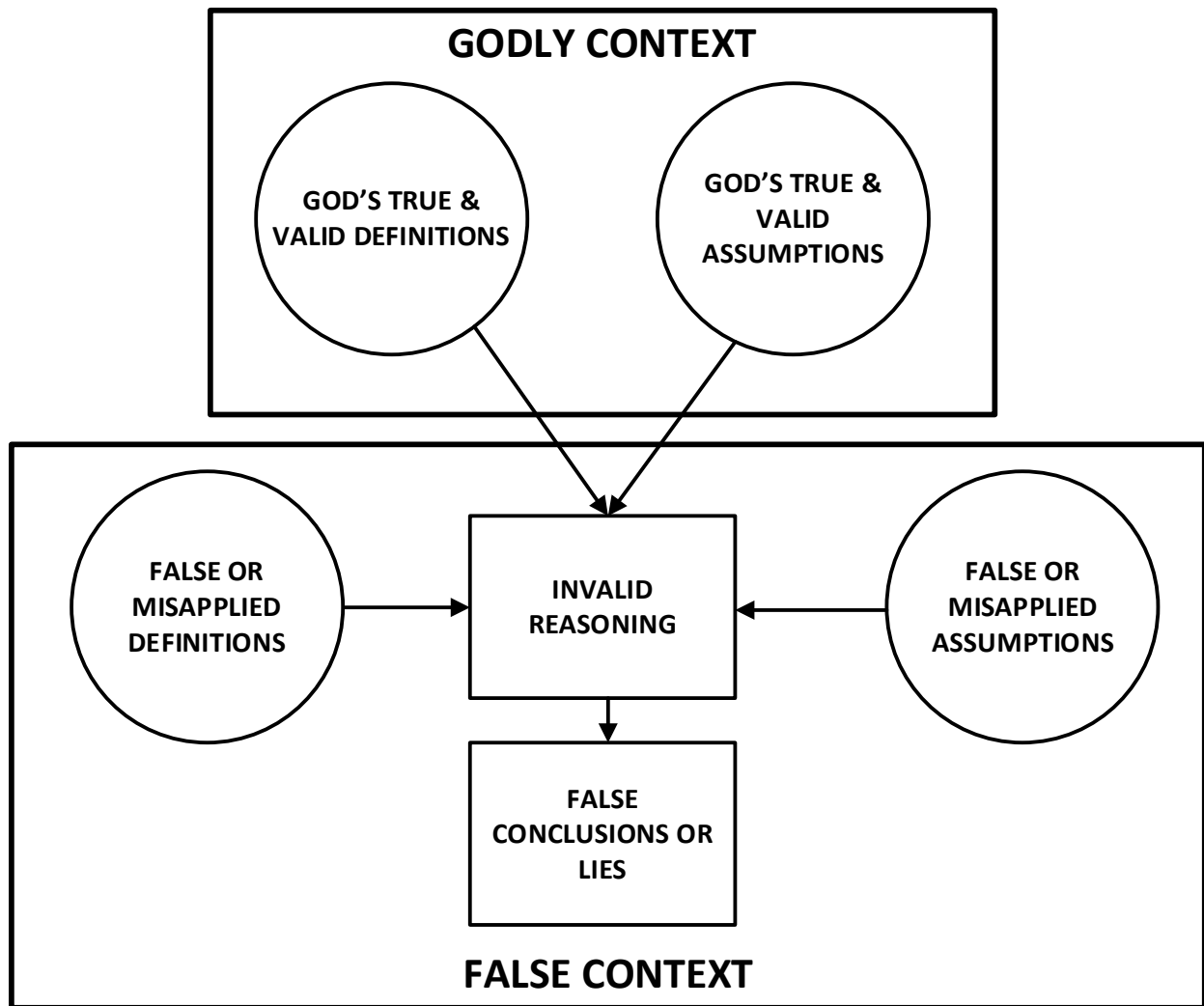
“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

It is clear that the first right in the first amendment concerns the connection between each individual and the Godly Context.



COMMON LOGICAL FLAWS

Logical flaws arise when some definitions or assumptions are in a False Context which are outside the Godly Context. Because of this the reasoning is, also, outside the Godly Context and the conclusions cannot be true. See the figure below. Everything in the reasoning process is outside the Godly Context even though some of God’s definitions or assumptions may be used. The use of false definitions or assumptions invalidate the process.



Misapplying or Misunderstanding Definitions

When the definitions are misapplied or are misunderstood by a party engaging in the discussion, it enters a False Context. The party who misunderstands a definition may not be a fault. The misunderstanding may be the result of deception. A deceiving party might deliberately apply a well-known term with a different meaning.

Current Infrastructure Legislation

The term, infrastructure, is generally understood to apply to public roads, bridges, waterways, airports, electric grids and the public Internet. The definition in the proposal has been corrupted by including items, such as, home care under Medicaid, wage increases for healthcare workers, support for retrofitting over two million older homes and new school construction. These other items are called “human infrastructure” and vary from the generally understood meaning of infrastructure. While there is merit in some of these additional items, they are not infrastructure. Under the general definition of infrastructure, the issues involve construction, maintenance, upgrading physical structures. More recently, there are concerns including communication networks and data management. The added items include medical care, real estate and education. As often happens in the political and legislative

arena there is an attempt to include unrelated items in popular legislation that could not receive support on the individual merits. Often this exercise hurts all issues.

Faulty Assumptions or Axioms

One area of assumptions/axioms involve input data to the reasoning process. The data must be relevant to the context. It must apply to the problem to be solved. The data must be correct. In my career I worked as a chemist and an engineer and I dealt with lots of data from chemical plants and oil fields. The data I used was taken from instruments installed on the systems under examination. These instruments required calibration so that their readings were correct. Bad readings lead to bad data lead to incorrect conclusions and can be dangerous. Also, it is important to use the correct data or one can give the correct answer to the wrong question. Clearly, this can be a very complex issue.

COVID Pandemic

There is no better current example of misuse of data than the CPVOD-19 pandemic. The number of false and misleading statements associated with COVID is vast. For example, consider the delta variant. It is widely reported that it is “more virulent” than the original virus. This means it is more easily transmitted. However, the infections, generally, are less severe and less deadly. In making decisions about public policy which numbers should be used? The number of infections is increasing, but less in number from the previous infection peak. There is the complication that the test used generates a higher level of false positives, that is, a person can have a test indicating an infection, but the test is incorrect. Another measure is the number of hospitalizations. The number is low. Another measure is the number of deaths from the delta variant. Again, this number is low. The number we hear is the number of infections. The main question is, “Is this the right number to use in setting policy?” If so, what policy? Should we mandate general vaccination or masks? If so, for whom? Some want to require vaccination of young children. However, there is indication of more risks from the vaccines than COVID in young children. How do we handle those who have had COVID, but survived and who have natural immunity? There are indications of adverse effects in vaccinating pregnant women. There are a lot of questions. Furthermore, effective therapeutics, hydroxychloroquine or Regeneron, are basically ignored. The desire for a “one size fits all” solution is misguided. The science and data do not support general mandates. Where is the truth?

Corrupting the Context

A key thing we must do is to correctly understand the context of the problem. In essence we must ask the right questions. Sometimes we can miscast the context. A correct specification of the context is required so that the correct definitions and assumptions can be identified.

Voter and Election Integrity

The 2020 election was marred by suspicions of voter and election fraud in a number of places. A number of states, including Georgia, Florida and Texas, have worked to pass laws to assure voter and election integrity. There have been other elections with major questions, 1960 and 2000, are examples. Elections empower the elected people to run the government. Their decisions are important and can have tremendously positive or disastrously negative effects. Those chosen can engage in closed meetings and make decisions without our knowledge or consent. Unscrupulous politicians often act to “stack the deck” in their favor via election fraud.

There are key questions that must be answered concerning every voter. We should not make assumptions here.

1. Does the voter/person actually exist? Are votes being created behind the scenes to favor a particular candidate?
2. Is the voter a living person? There have been elections determined by dead voters.
3. Is the person voting a citizen of the United States?
4. Is the person voting the actual voter?
5. Does the person voting actually live in the voting precinct?
6. Does the person vote more than once? Does a person vote in multiple precincts, cities or states?

These are legitimate questions. Seeking to answer them does not endeavor to deprive a legitimate voter of the right to vote. I am a Black man who grew up in segregated Mississippi. I am well aware of people who were deprived of the right to vote, even to the extreme of murder. It is because of those atrocities that I am particularly aware of other methods to compromise voting rights by fraud.

Consider my personal situation. My name is Leonard James. I live in a city in Collin County Texas and I am a registered voter. Since moving to Texas almost 40 years ago I have lived in another city in Collin County and in Denton County. I have been a registered voter in North Carolina, Virginia, two precincts, and Ohio. Should I be able to vote in all seven locations? Furthermore, both my father and grandfather were named Leonard James. My grandfather died in Ft. Worth in 1964. Should I be able to vote in Ft. Worth? My father died in Jackson, MS In 2003. Should I be able to vote there? The first and last names are the same.

There are numerous situations in my personal history that could lend themselves to voting irregularities. Most of the issues I have raised here can be simply addressed by requiring a valid voter identification with a picture and current address. The point here is to set a valid context to the issue with valid definitions and assumptions. The key is to strive for truth.

CONCLUSION

I have addressed the importance and power of thinking and reasoning in truth. Jesus Christ clearly said that truth is the basis of freedom. When we allow false ideas and lies to dominate our thought processes, intractable problems result for ourselves and others. We must embrace truth. We must embrace the Godly Context.