

Authority and Epistemology

What are the different ways we know things? How do you know you like chocolate? 2+2 is 4? That you stop at the red light and go at the green light? That your friend likes you? Or, more importantly, that the Bible is true? What are the authoritative sources that help us know these things? How do they belong together for developing the Mind of Christ?"

Ellis Potter, a native Californian, is a former Buddhist monk who became a Christian under the influence and ministry of the late Dr. Francis Schaeffer. He worked for many years with Schaeffer at L'Abri Fellowship, Switzerland and was the pastor of the Basel Christian Fellowship for ten years. Potter's unique background includes music and the arts, theology and philosophy, which qualifies him to lecture on a variety of subjects including the relevancy of Christianity to the arts and modern philosophical and social movements. He often lectures on a comparison of Biblical and other worldviews, seeking to establish the clear truth of God's Word. He now works as an independent missionary, based in Basel, Switzerland and directs most of his attention and energies eastward to the developing nations of Central and Eastern Europe. With his wife, Mary, he founded Eastern European Renewal (EER).

I. What are the authorities in your life?

II. We need authority in order to survive.

III. What is it that they all have in common? What is authority?

IV. How do you know:

- a. You like chocolate?
- b. $2+2=4$
- c. You stop at the red light and go at the green light.
- d. Your friend likes you.
- e. The Bible is true.

V. Four authoritative sources that inform our epistemology:

- a. The Bible

- b. Rationality
- c. Institution or community
- d. Experience

VI. All of these four are essential, none are adequate and all are dangerous.

VII. In the Bible and in life there is accurate and non-accurate truth.

VIII. We approach the Bible in two ways:

- a. As a well or source of information, comfort, guidance, rebuke.
- b. As a story of God's creative and salvific history.
- c. The well approach centers on us.
- d. The story approach centers on God.
- e. Both are necessary.