

FEATURE: What Truth Can a Test Tube Reveal?

- VOICE: Professor, I'm curious. Today we're beginning a new program series, entitled "Truth in the Test Tube."
Why do we call the program by that name? What truth can a test tube tell us?
- PROF.: Several kinds – from "tiny, trivial truths" to "transcendent, titanic truths" that are matters of life and death. Let's talk about them.
- FORMAT: THEME AND ANNOUNCEMENT
- VOICE: Professor, I can think of some topics that would logically fit into a program called "Truth in the Test Tube." For example, medical examiners can determine whether a person died of natural causes, or whether he was poisoned.
Is that what you mean by "Truth in the Test Tube"?
- PROF.: That's *part* of it. The reverse of "why did this person *die*?" would be "Why are all of us *alive*?" What amazing engineering do our heart, lungs and other organs contain, that keep us healthy and energetic for decades?
For example, one episode we're planning analyzes the ear – and calls it "The Pipe Organ in Your Head." Each individual organ of our body is a marvel in its own right. And the intricate way that they coordinate with each other is even more amazing.
- VOICE: My friends and I sometimes discuss matters that they call "the big questions." They ask questions like "How did the universe originate?" and "How did life begin?" Will we be discussing subjects like those?
- PROF.: Yes. And you can add to that list "How did *human* life begin?" and "Why is there something instead of nothing?"
- VOICE: Issues like those are "big" in importance – because they help us to understand who we humans really are. Are we just animals, or do we have special characteristics that make us significant?
- PROF.: Important questions like those deserve answers from some of the world's greatest thinkers. So several of our program episodes will feature answers from Nobel Prize-winning scientists.
- VOICE: Another "big question" that my friends often discuss is "Does life have any purpose?" Some have concluded that life is futile, so they have ended their own lives. Can our "test tube" provide answers to prevent others from making that tragic mistake?

- PROF.: Well, respected scientists will share their insights on the purpose and meaning of life. Some of them will discuss the related issue, “Is death the end of our existence, or does some part of us continue to exist after our body stops breathing?”
- VOICE: Looking at the list of some of the topics we’re going to discuss, I see titles like “Science and Only.” What do you mean by that?
- PROF.: Well, scientists sometimes oversimplify things. One professor made a good point when he said that “man is a complex machine” is a scientific statement, but “man is *only* a complex machine” is a philosophical speculation – an opinion not backed by science.
- VOICE: That’s an interesting distinction. I look forward to that discussion in a few weeks.
- PROF.: Another oversimplification is the idea that if we analyze the chemicals in our body, we discover that we are worth less than a dollar. A chemist analyzed that claim and discovered that our true worth is about 6 million dollars!
- VOICE: Quite a difference! Please explain it to me.
- PROF.: Not today. This time we’re surveying some of the subjects that we will be covering.
- VOICE: Another unusual title that I see on the list is “Maybe We’re All Martians.” What on earth do you mean by that?
- PROF.: That statement was made by a space scientist. As he researched the theories of how the first simple life could have begun, he realized that it’s very unlikely that non-living chemicals could have developed into the first living cell on Earth. So he speculated that maybe the first living substance could have originated somewhere in space and might have migrated to Earth.
- VOICE: I can see we’re going to be discussing some interesting ideas. The list also contains biographies of famous scientists – including scientific pioneers like Sir Isaac Newton and modern astronomers such as Allan Sandage [SAND-udg].
- PROF.: Yes. Our program editor personally interviewed several of the top experts, including a world-famous geneticist who was honored in a ceremony hosted by the president of his country.
- VOICE: Another program will deal with “What Nobel Scientists Think about God.” Aren’t all scientists atheists?

PROF.: Not at all! In that episode we will hear a variety of viewpoints, a range of conclusions that scientists have reached from their “test tube” research. For example, one Nobel Prize-winning physicist said his scientific discoveries agree perfectly with what he reads in the Bible.

VOICE: You’re telling me a lot of things that surprise me. I’m glad we’ll have time to discuss these in more detail in future episodes.

But, speaking of God, some of my friends think that only weak and cowardly people believe in Him. Don’t most scientists share that opinion?

PROF.: Well, some do, but certainly not all. There’s nothing weak about a person who discovers ways to cure or prevent various diseases. And there’s certainly nothing cowardly about an astronaut who steps into a space vehicle, blasts off, and walks on the surface of the moon. That takes real courage!

VOICE: Do you mean some astronauts believe God exists?

PROF.: Yes. As one of them observed Earth from thousands of kilometers away, he remarked that his view agreed with the Bible’s statement about the circular shape of the earth. Another astronaut read from the Bible while he was on the moon. His voice was broadcast live around the world, starting with the words, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

VOICE: I see other interesting topics that we will be discussing in episodes of “Truth in the Test Tube.” Some of them use computer vocabulary to illustrate points – like “Defragmenting Your Mind” and “When God Logs In.”

PROF.: Yes. And another episode analyzes software to illustrate the idea that nature has a “programmer” or engineer who designed and built it.

VOICE: But I have a question about the name of the program, “Truth in the Test Tube.” How much truth can we really discover in laboratory glassware?

PROF.: We are using the expression “test tube” figuratively – to express the entire range of scientific apparatus and research activity. That includes things we’ve learned about parts of nature that we can see only with powerful microscopes. It also includes discoveries that were made from a telescope orbiting in space.

VOICE: Some of my friends say religion has opposed science for centuries. For example, they talk about the way some religious leaders opposed Galileo.

PROF.: That’s one of the few instances where Christians really did oppose scientific progress. There have been many instances where the worldview based on the Bible has actually *encouraged* science.

VOICE: Really? Give me an example.

PROF.: The Bible says the universe and everything in it were made by an intelligent, logical God. People who believed that, expected to be able to analyze the universe and discover that it worked by logical laws and principles.

The pillars on the campus of the world-famous Massachusetts Institute of Technology contain the names of famous scientific pioneers. When two of the institute's professors researched the philosophical and religious views of these great men of science, they discovered that more than half of them were believers in Jesus Christ.

VOICE: Some titles that we expect to discuss sound strange to me. For example, one program is called "I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist." I always had the impression that atheists claimed to think logically, and that religious people were the ones who had faith.

PROF.: What else do you and your friends at university talk about? What other subjects do you think we should discuss on the "Truth in the Test Tube" program?

VOICE: Several of them are puzzled by the idea of miracles. One told me he thinks ideas like walking on water or Jesus being born of a virgin mother and no human father, defy logic.

PROF.: Thanks for that input. I'll put those on the list of subjects to discuss.

VOICE: Other friends believe their genes control their actions. They think they can't prevent themselves from doing things that they later regret. I would suggest putting a discussion of that on your list.

PROF.: You're full of good ideas! We'll include that topic. And I'm open to any additional suggestions you might have.

VOICE: Speaking of being open, someone said an open mind is like an open mouth. It is satisfied only when it is *filled with something solid*.

With subjects like "Maybe We're All Martians" and "I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist," we'll have plenty of fascinating ideas to share.

PROF.: During the coming weeks on "Truth in the Test Tube," we plan to discuss various "truth claims" – and *test* them to see which ones are really "*solid truth*."

FORMAT: THEME AND ANNOUNCEMENT

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