

Session 1 Discussion Prompts

1. Pre-conference survey responses revealed a striking paradox. On the one hand we are at a time when the church seems to have at its fingertips a massive new communication opportunity, but at precisely the moment when what's most needed seems to be space for time and attention. Assemble a list of topics, issues, and situations that require time and attention in ministry.
2. React and review to the presenter's anecdotes about glib, "no big deal," or, "I told you so" initial reactions to the pandemic of 2020. Discuss and analyze the claim that "true sentences are not enough."
3. Review and restate the practical distinction between "Knowledge" statements and "News" statements. Seek to make connections between the distinction and how pastors and teachers communicate with people in ministry.
4. Formulate questions for further discussion and clarification with the presenter during the first Q&A session.

Synthetic Statements

Synthetic statements are true or false by their correspondence to the world itself. They are empirical.

A hostile war party is approaching.

Water boils at 100 degrees at sea level.

Analytic Statements

Analytic statements are true or false by definition. They are formal in character.

Two plus two equals four.

Chicago is on the Hudson River or Chicago is not on the Hudson River.

Table 1 Sample messages from Percy's essay arranged into synthetic and analytic categories. Such is the standard division in the scientific-logical approach.

Knowledge Statements

Broad statements of knowledge that are available to anyone on any island at any time.

Two plus two equals four.

Water boils at 100 degrees at sea level.

News Statements

Synthetic statements that bear directly on the predicament of the islander.

A hostile war party is approaching.

There is fresh water in the next cove.

Table 2 Sample messages from Percy's essay arranged into **KNOWLEDGE** and **NEWS** categories. This is the valid and plausible mode that the castaway uses.

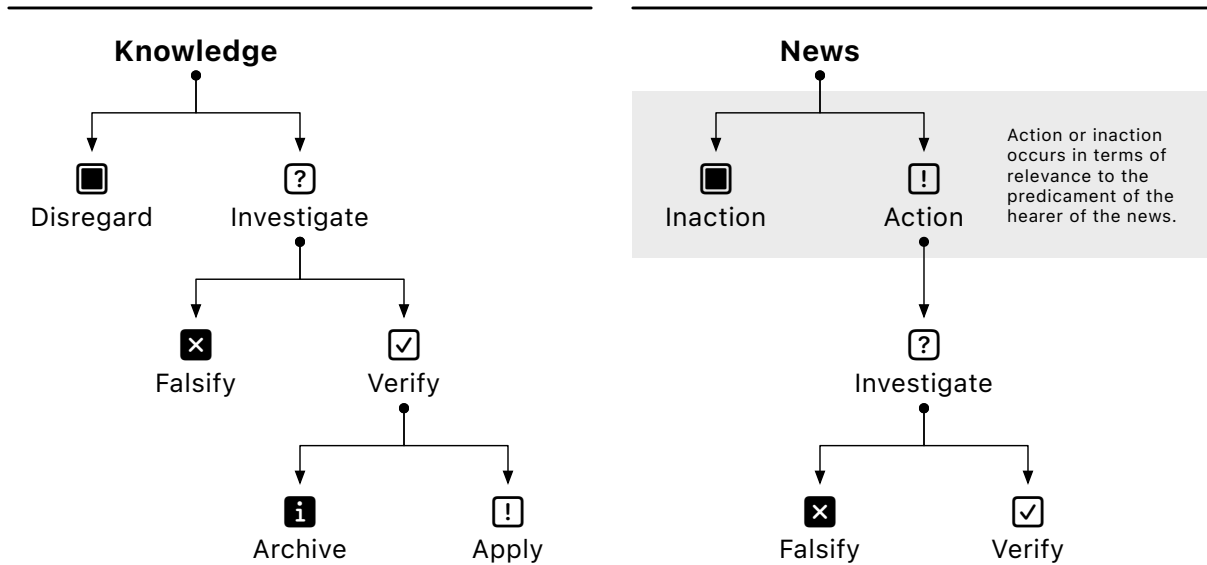


Figure 1 The natural process of **KNOWLEDGE** illustrated as a flowchart reveals the multiple "off ramps" available to the disinterested or skeptical hearer. **NEWS**, on the other hand, immediately engages hearers and their predicament at the point of hearing. The matter of verification or falsification is deferred.

Knowledge

Individual people and events are valuable only as data points.

Particular

People
Events

General

Abstractions
Principles

News

Individual people and events are of greatest possible significance.

General

Abstractions
Principles

Particular

People
Events



Figure 2 The scale of significance differs dramatically between the modes of **KNOWLEDGE** and **NEWS**. In **KNOWLEDGE** individual people and events are of least significance while broad abstractions are of greatest significance. In **NEWS** the significance is inverted.