School of Jewish & Biblical Studies

Introduction to Apologetics

TEARING DOWN WALLS OF UNBELIEF

Image of Paul using apologetics in Athens

Instructor: Jeremy David Livermore, M.A., P.E.

Winter & Spring 2012
1. **Class Information**

   a. **Class Structure**
      
      i. Start time at 7:00.
      
      ii. Finish time at 8:45.
      
      iii. We will take a 10 minute break sometime around 7:50.
      
      iv. If people can we would love to have refreshments provided each week.
         1. Sign up list going around.
      
      v. Class ends on June 7th.
      
      vi. Break for Easter 1 week.

   b. **Class Requirements**
      
      i. No cost for the class ($20 for your materials)
      
      1. Suggested Donation for Hadavar Ministries, School of Biblical and Jewish Studies.
      
      ii. No homework
      
      iii. No tests
      
      iv. No required reading (but strongly recommended)
      
      v. All the books are beginner level except *Scaling the Secular City*
      
      
      
      
      
      
      
      
      vi. Brought some books from home for you to come check out.
      
      vii. Recommend 1 chapter per week in these books.
viii. I can help guide you through the reading each week to let you know what chapters we will cover.

ix. How many plan to do the reading?

x. Only! Class requirement – SHOW UP EVERY WEEK!!!
   1. Attendance List is a way for me and the school here to have your email addresses and contact information.
   2. This will be used to communicate each week of the upcoming lecture topic and study.

c. **Class content**
   i. Take a look at the next handout after “Introduction” called “Branches of Apologetics”
   ii. It’s too hard to gage when we will get to each topic so I purposely did not create a syllabus with a schedule of topics.
   iii. Level of difficulty is broad and deep.
   iv. Hopefully, this class will be the beginning of a lifelong learning journey for you.

d. **Goals:**
   i. After appropriately completing the requirements of this course one ought to be able to:
   ii. Identify the 6 branches of Apologetics and their subdivisions.
   iii. In each apologetics area, know and evaluate the basic arguments for and against each particular view.
   iv. Articulate, reason, weigh evidence, present and critique arguments for and against the Christian faith.
   v. Identify & evaluate pop cultural ideologies with an apologetical reference system.
   vi. Demonstrate the plausibility of the Christian world view that integrates biblical, theological, philosophical and historical truth.
   vii. Develop the ability to engage in conversational apologetics with believers and non believers.
   viii. Integrate apologetics in the context of the local church.
Minister with passion and humility in the area of defending and commending the faith.

For the non-Christians, I want to especially speak to you at this moment. First thanks for coming into this church. We welcome you with open arms. Second, please know that this class is for you equally as much as it is for the Christian. I will explain how and why coming up.

e. **Instructor**

i. Jeremy David Livermore, P.E., M.A.
   1. jeremy@apologetics.com
   2. cell 951-515-8836

ii. If necessary, hours available outside of class to meet and discuss issues: by appt only on weeknights or Saturdays from 8:00am – 5:00 p.m.

iii. Personal background
   1. Quick story of my life
   2. I am not a Christian because I want it to be true, I am one because I have discovered it is actually true.
   3. The best thing about Christianity is that the truth sets free and I can know the truth. I am not stuck behind or inside of the cloud of postmodernity. We have access!

iv. Jeremy received his Masters of Arts in Christian Apologetics from Biola University. Currently he co-hosts the Apologetics.com weekly a radio show on 99.5 fm KKL. With Apologetics.com (non-profit based in OC), Jeremy writes articles and speaks publicly on apologetics locally and internationally. Jeremy’s ministry experience includes serving Jesus in Uganda, Liberia, Chile, Australia, Mexico, and Canada where he be speaking at the 2012 Canada Apologetics Conference. He has several years of evangelistic & non-profit ministry experience working with various organizations such as Campus Crusade, Engineering Ministries International, Engineers Without Borders, Habitat for Humanity, Euroteam Designs, & Apologetics.com.

f. **Pray**
g. Icebreaker
   i. Everyone give their names, what you do for a living, what you do with your spare time, and favorite food.

h. Questions:
   i. A non-believer named Susan Swanny approaches you and asks you, “Why are you a Christian when everyone knows that evolution is true, the big bang happened, and all that exists is the physical stuff we see and touch?” – How would you respond to that?
   ii. A Christian brother named Joe Jackman comes to you and mentions that he is struggling with the faith. He says “it doesn’t seem reasonable to conclude that God, the soul, and heaven & hell exist.” He further goes on to say that he has had “strong and steadfast faith all his life but cannot intellectually maintain these irrationalities based in tradition and culture.” – How would you respond to that?
   iii. A friend of yours named Bobby Robert, says “philosophers disproved the existence of God long ago, why do you still believe in something everyone knows is unprovable?”
   iv. A non-believer named Mephibosheth asks you “Please give me the reasons why you believe the Bible is the Word of God and how it can be taken as a literal source document when there are so many inconsistencies and mythological stories.” – How would you respond to that?
   v. A relative of your named Aunt Jamima asks you to show her some evidence that Jesus really existed and rose from the dead and you can’t use the Bible. – How would you respond to that?

i. These questions are hard to respond to. Why? Why is it difficult to respond?
   i. Ever think that something is wrong with this picture? Why are we having trouble.
      1. What have we given up:
         a. Truth
         b. Knowledge
         c. Reality
d. Attraction of Jesus
e. A way to tell others that what we believe matters! – not just
   that we believe something.

2. What we have received:
   a. That Christians live in Fantasy & non-Christians live in
      Reality.
   b. That all we are is material and there is no other realm
      beyond the 5 senses.
   c. That everyone is intolerant if they speak against a
      damaging lifestyle or another’s religion.
   d. That the themes of the Lord of the Rings and the
      Chronicles of Narnia are just part of that world but not the
      world we find ourselves in.

ii. To begin the journey of recovering what we lost, we must stop and ask
    ourselves again:
    1. What is reality, beauty, and truth?
    2. How do we know it?
    3. What did Jesus have in mind when he began his revolution of reality,
       beauty, and truth?

iii. This will help us begin to feel comfortable in answering the questions and
     responding to the doubts.

2. **What is apologetics?**
   a. Not “apologizing”
      i. Apologetics comes from the Greek word “apologia” or “apologetikos”
         which can be translated as “From Reason” or “Suitable for Defense”
         1. Απο: Apo = From.
         2. Λογικός: Logikos = Reasonable.
      ii. Apologetics is the systematic and logical defense of Christianity against its
          detractors and unbelievers backed up by evidence showing its credibility.
iii. Apologetics seeks to show that Christianity is the most viable, compelling, and true way of living and experiencing reality.
   1. That is, it seeks to show that Christianity corresponds with reality better than any other worldview or set of beliefs.
   2. That the Christian worldview and religion is true.

iv. Apologetics is the study that seeks to provide intellectual reasons for belief in the truth claims of the Christian faith.

v. Apologetics asks the question, "Why and how do you believe what you believe?"

vi. Apologetics helps to strengthen, confirm, and re-affirm the faith of believers. Most of us have times when we question and doubt what we believe. Apologetics gives us a foundation and reinforcement to our faith so our doubts aren’t toxic but helpful.
   1. In this regard, apologetics is helpful in giving a renewed boldness to the believer.
   2. Our worship is enhanced, amplified, and supported.

vii. Apologetics responds to objections from those who are attempting move past obstacles to come to the faith.
   1. Many non-Christians do not become Christians because of the intellectual obstacles.

viii. Apologetics disarms hostile unbelievers who attack Christianity.
   1. A proper use of apologetics prevents the unbeliever from accusing Christianity of being intellectually foolish.

ix. Apologetics is “proof” and “persuasion.”
   1. A combined approach. To win over ourselves and others to the truth by means of artful, articulate, and winsome persuasion of truth.
   2. This persuasion is NOT selling a device we know is defective. That would be deceptive.
   3. We persuasively argue for reality that others may not understand well.
4. We also allow them to see for themselves where their own inconsistencies occur.

x. Apologetics is not merely about winning an argument. This is just the means to the end of winning souls.

xi. Apologetics allows one to have direct access to Jesus by removing intellectual barriers, bringing down the walls we have installed so we can see Jesus face to face.

xii. Apologetics is a tool that the Holy Spirit can use to disarm an unbeliever. Ultimately, he is the one who moves men’s hearts towards repentance, but he will not ask us to believe in the absurd or the false. He shows us the truth that will set us free.

b. Defense

i. Best offense is a good defense.

ii. In sports we must remember that it’s not just offense that is important but “Defense wins championships.”

iii. 1 Peter 3:15,

1. “But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear” (ASV)

2. “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” (NIV)

iv. There are several observations that we can make from this passage:

1. Christians are called to make a Defense.
   a. Throughout the ages, non-Christians have attempted to refute Christianity to end it and defeat the religion.
   b. We may not have been here as Christians if earlier attempts succeeded.

2. Notice the words in verse 15: “Always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you.”
3. The New Testament uses this term a number of times:
   a. Acts 22:1. "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now offer to you."
   b. Philippians 1:16 “…I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.”

4. We are to be in a state of Readiness.
   a. The time to go looking for answers to why you believe is not when you are challenged by a skeptic. You are to already be in a state of readiness.
   b. You would not be very impressed if the fire alarm rang for an emergency and the fire fighters rushed to open a book entitled, "Essentials of Fire Fighting." They are expected to be ready to respond immediately. Why: so that lives can be saved.
   c. In the same way, Christians are called to be ready to respond to anyone who asks us to give a reason for the hope that is within us.
   d. This verse calls for EVERY Christian to be ready on EVERY occasion to give an answer to EVERY person who asks for the reason of our hope.

5. The Bible addresses, not only our ability to respond, but also the attitude with which we are to respond. Verse 15 says that we are to respond "with gentleness and reverence." We are not called to hit people over the heads with the truth or to be obnoxious in any way. Instead, we are to be lights that attract people to us. We are to be examples of the love of Christ and the patience of God, even when we are wronged.
   a. We are to live the sort of lives that provide evidence of the power of the Gospel at work in us. Peter says to keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are
slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. (3:16).

b. No one should ever be able to point to our sinful behavior and say, "If that is what it means to be a Christian, then I want no part of it."

c. On the other hand, when we do sin, it becomes an opportunity for us to repent and to share with others the forgiveness that we have found at the cross. Being a Christian does not mean that you are perfect; rather it means that you are perfectly forgiven.

d. **We are simply beggars telling other beggars where we have found bread.**

e. **We are simply stumbling in the right direction.**

c. **Offense**

i. Apologetics is not only defensive in nature. Although Peter describes it here in terms of giving a defense of the faith, we ought to understand that apologetics also is offensive in nature – but not offensive (hurtful): it humbly upholds and gently persuades with caring passion as we fight for ourselves and the non-believer.

ii. 2 Corinthians 10:3-6, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. **We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ...**”

iii. We are involved in a battle. You are on the front lines of the conflict. The weapons that are wielded are not of the flesh, but they are nevertheless real and powerful. They are weapons of truth and faith that can bring down cultural fortresses of intellectual false knowledge preventing people from knowing their God.
iv. Acts 17:22-31, “And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, Ye men of Athens, in all things, I perceive that ye are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you.”

v. He goes onto show them with rational and compelling rhetoric that their understanding of this unknown God is faulty and that God is the creator of the world and gives the world life. So are we called to tear down false speculations of God. There are a lot of speculations about God and we are to be challenging them all to find the truth of God so we can know him correctly.

vi. In this sense, apologetics can be likened as follows: In the center of the field is a wonderful garden. The door to the garden is Jesus and the path to the door is the gospel. Apologetics involves pointing people to the path and removing all of the rocks, the thorns and the other obstacles along the way that prevent people from taking that path.

vii. The problem is that there are also false paths. They are the false religions, the cults and the other world views. Apologetics also involves informing people who are on those other paths that their’s is a dead-end. We want people to find the path (hear the gospel) by our apologetics so they can find door (Jesus) and enter the garden (kingdom of God).

viii. In order to be effective in showing people the path we must bring our “A” game. Mankind and the devil doesn’t want pervasive and persistant humanistic philosophies destroyed. So we must be diligent and earnest to help others as Jude says:

1. Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

ix. We must “contend”: be on offense as well as defense.
d. **Why study apologetics?**

i. 1st Why do Christians often disregard apologetics?

1. They feel theologically ill-equipped or socially insecure.
2. They feel fear or have discomfort in debate or confrontation.
3. They confuse arguments against a belief with attacks on a person.
4. They want to always think about the positive benefits of Christianity and not the challenges to it.
5. They believe apologetics is ineffective in knowing God better and evangelism.
6. They wrongly assume apologetics believe reasoning can save someone.
7. They believe that faith and reason are not compatible.
8. They are dismayed by the attitude of some that use apologetics.

ii. Because our society, culture, nation, world, need clear and precise thinking that will help alleviate pressures of modern secularism, humanism, materialism, intellectualism, and anti-intellectualism pushing out Christianity.

1. JP Moreland’s book *Love God with All Your Mind*

iii. Because there are so many false teachings, cultural clichés, cults, & world religions that vie for people's spiritual attention.

iv. Because Christianity is being attacked from the outside and the inside.

v. Because cultural change comes from thought.

1. That is, **IDEAS CHANGE CULTURE.**

vi. Because it’s one of the ways the Christian experiences spiritual formation & transformation of the soul (Romans 12:1-2).

vii. Because it serves as a useful tool in both evangelism as well as in pre-evangelism.

1. It is through the use of apologetics that people are sometimes brought to the point where they are able to believe. **This is necessary because the heart cannot trust what the mind does not affirm.**

viii. Because young Christians are letting go from the faith in Western cultures. It’s needed now more than ever!

1. Our young people need us to show why we believe what we believe and relate it to reality so they can also embrace the faith with intellectual and rational honesty, rigor, and certainty.
2. David Kinnaman (from the Barna Group) research: *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church and Rethinking Church.*

3. The national study of young adults focused on those who were regular church goers during their teen years and explored their reasons for disconnection from church life after age 15.

4. **Reason #1 – Churches seem overprotective.**
   
   a. A few of the defining characteristics of today's teens and young adults are their unprecedented access to ideas and worldviews as well as their prodigious consumption of popular culture. However, much of their experience of Christianity feels stifling, fear-based and risk-averse.

5. **Reason #2 – They wrestle with the exclusive nature of Christianity.**
   
   a. Younger Americans have been shaped by a culture that esteems open-mindedness, tolerance and acceptance.
   
   b. “churches are afraid of the beliefs of other faiths” (29%)
   
   c. “church is like a country club, only for insiders” (22%).

6. **Reason #3 – The church feels unfriendly to those who doubt.**
   
   a. Young adults with Christian experience say the church is not a place that allows them to express doubts. They do not feel safe admitting that sometimes Christianity does not make sense. In addition, many feel that the church’s response to doubt is trivial.
   
   b. “to ask my most pressing life questions in church” (36%)
   
   c. “significant intellectual doubts about my faith” (23%).

7. **Reason #4 – Churches come across as antagonistic to science.**
   
   a.Disconnected from church or from faith is the tension they feel between Christianity and science.
   
   b. “Christians are too confident they know all the answers” (35%).
   
   c. “churches are out of step with the scientific world we live in” (29%).
   
   d. “Christianity is anti-science” (25%).

8. **Reason #5 – Related to sexuality, young Christians experience church as simplistic or judgmental.**
9. **Reason #6 – Teens’ and twenty somethings’ experience of Christianity is shallow** (Something is lacking in their experience of church).

10. **Other interesting items to note:**

   a. Only 30% of young people who grow up with a Christian background stay faithful to church and to faith throughout their transitions from the teen years through their twenties.

   b. Today's teens and young adults are spiritually the most eclectic generation the nation has seen. They are also much less likely than prior generations to begin their religious explorations with Christianity. Moreover, their pervasive technology use is deepening the generation gap, allowing them to embrace new ways of learning about and connecting to the world.

   c. Kinnaman commented on this myth: "The significant spiritual and technological changes over the last 50 years makes the dropout problem more urgent. Young people are dropping out earlier, staying away longer, and if they come back are less likely to see the church as a long-term part of their life. Today's young adults who drop out of faith are continuing something the Boomers began as a generation of spiritual free agents. Yet, today's dropout phenomenon is a more intractable, complex problem."

   d. Reality: College certainly plays a role in young Christians' spiritual journeys, but it is not necessarily the 'faith killer' many assume. College experiences, particularly in public universities, can be neutral or even adversarial to faith. However, it is too simplistic to blame college for today's young church dropouts. Many are emotionally disconnected from church before their 16th birthday. Both college (various philosophies espoused on campus) and teen years (poor youth groups, etc.) play a significant role.

   e. "The problem arises from the inadequacy of preparing young Christians for life beyond youth group." Kinnaman pointed to research findings showing that "only a small minority of young Christians has
been taught to think about matters of faith, calling, and culture. Fewer than 1 out of 5 have any idea how the Bible ought to inform their scholastic and professional interests. And most lack adult mentors or meaningful friendships with older Christians who can guide them through the inevitable questions that arise during the course of their studies. In other words, the university setting does not usually cause the disconnect; it exposes the shallow-faith problem of many young disciples."

Youth have shallow meaning and are non-resourced.

ix. Because the Biblical characters used reason and evidences

1. Here we see that miracles are given so people would believe in Jesus or God: 1 Kings 18:20-40, Mark 16:20, Acts 1:3, Acts 2:22, Hebrews 2:3-4.

2. Here God uses reason to argue His case: Isaiah 1:18 *Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

3. Here Jesus uses reason: Matthew 22

4. Here it is shown that without evidence it is unreasonable to believe: Luke 24:39 *See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having.*

5. Here Peter and John protest their right to defend the gospel: Acts 4:19 *As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.*

6. Here Paul points to a fruitful creation giving evidence for God and his blessings and speaks against false religions: Acts 14:15-17

7. Here Paul uses reason to witness to the Greeks: Acts 17

8. Here Apollos uses reason to witness to the Jews: Acts 18:27 *For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.*

9. Here Paul even defended the gospel to Governors: Acts 24

10. Here God gave mankind evidence of his existence and character through creation: Romans 1:19-21 *since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world*
God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him...

11. Here Paul’s mission included defending the gospel: Phil 1:7 whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me.

x. Because the first Christians & later Christians continued to use apologetics.

1. Early Christians and church Fathers like Origen, Iranaeus, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Aristides, Tatian, Athanasius, Augustine, etc.
2. These men wrote hundreds of letters, books, etc. defending the faith even to Roman emperors.
3. Middle Age Philosophers & Theologians: Anselm, Aquinas, etc.
4. Reformers: Huss, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Melanchthon, Wesley, etc.

xi. Because we are all called to

1. It’s a biblical calling we all have.
2. We need to continue in our strong Christian heritage that has been passed on through the generations since the Apostles.
3. Pastors need to study apologetics too.
4. Many great Christian philosophers and theologians are also apologists.
   a. Current popular apologists:
      i. JP Moreland, William Lane Craig, RC Sproul, etc.
   b. Deceased popular apologists:
5. Mat 28:19-20 Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe
all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the world. Amen.

6. Here Christians are called to eliminate doubts in the minds of the skeptic and pull down walls preventing unbelief: 2 Co 10:4-5 For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, (5) pulling down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ;

7. 1 Ti 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life, to which you are also called and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.

8. 2 Ti 2:15 Study earnestly to present yourself approved to God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

9. 2 Ti 2:25 in meekness instructing those who oppose, if perhaps God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth,

10. 2 Ti 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

11. 2 Ti 4:2 preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

12. Here false doctrines and ideas should be addressed: Titus 1:9-11 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. 10 For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. 11 They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain.

13. Phi 1:7 even as it is righteous for me to think this of you all, because you have me in your heart, inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you are all partakers of my grace.

14. Phi 1:17 But these others preach in love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel.
15. Phi 2:16 holding forth the Word of Life, so that I may rejoice with you in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain nor labored in vain.

16. 1 Pe 3:15 but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason of the hope in you, with meekness and fear;

17. Col 4:6 Let your speech be always with grace, having been seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

18. Jam 5:20 know that he who turns back the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

19. Here Christians are to contend for the faith: Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

20. Jud 1:22-23 But pity some, making distinction. (23) But save others with fear, snatching them out of the fire; hating even the garment having been stained from the flesh.

e. How does one study apologetics?

i. By understanding Grace & Truth

1. John 1:17, “For the law was given to Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”
   a. Jesus brought with generosity the GRACE of God to the Jewish law.
   b. But upheld with power the TRUTH of God throughout his ministry despite mankind’s personal struggles.

2. See “How does one use apologetics?” below for matters of the heart.

ii. By understanding knowledge from “Authority” vs. knowledge from “Faith”

1. Way back in the 4th century, Theologian and Philosopher St. Augustine of Hippo believed based on awareness of God in a powerful conversion experience but also, he believed based on authority. So authority had a role to play in the faith process for Augustine. Augustine believed for 2 reasons: because the
authority of the Catholic church said that Christianity ought to be believed and his profound conversion experience. (Read Confessions to learn more)

2. Even 20th century Theologians Karl Barth and Cornelius Van Til have faith based on the authority of the Bible.

3. But authority and belief from any authority is vulnerable to criticism. Most non-Christians do not agree that Christianity is true just because the Bible and the church say so.

4. How does one know whether or not the other guy’s authority is more truthful or right? Apart from God revealing himself directly, we must use reason to figure out what the truth is.

iii. By understanding “Faith” and Reason

1. Dilemma:
   a. Knowledge ➔ Faith???
   b. Faith ➔ Knowledge???
   c. Faith = Knowledge???
   d. Faith ≠ Knowledge???
   e. Augustine said “Faith seeking understanding.” Crede, ut intelligas
      “Believe in order that you may understand” Or 1st believe, then 2nd seek to understand rationally.
   f. But there is a debate on which comes first, faith or reason.
   g. Later theologians argued “Understanding seeking Faith.”
   i. Campus Crusades Belief Train
      1. Fact ➔ then Faith ➔ then Feelings
   ii. When I was a child, my knowledge was given from authority, then I believed. But even here, it was a knowledge first then belief 2nd.
   iii. Those that have powerful conversion experience have the awareness of God or their guilt then faith comes. But that awareness is still inner knowledge 1st, then belief 2nd.
   h. This debate need not be necessary when we consider faith itself.
   i. So here we must back up and ask, “What is faith??
j. “Faith” has lost its original meaning and it seems that the word today doesn’t communicate anything significant to us. It’s kind of this spiritual coincidental thing that happens to us or it’s something we are unlucky enough to catch like a disease.

k. Today “faith” is a diluted word. People use it in all types of expressions.

l. Some people incorrectly say that “faith is HOW I know God is real or that God will provide.” - but faith is not something that produces knowledge. We cannot derive knowledge of God (or anything else) through the method of faith. This sounds like it’s an instrument we take out and read from, like a thermometer or barometer, to know the weather or something.

m. The original Biblical Greek word meant something like “active trust.” Hebrews 11 = certain and active trust in a reliable source – not saying “unknowable”…but just “not seen.”

   i. “Active trust in someone unseen whom I have a measure of certainty in” communicates what the Bible originally had in mind.

   ii. “I know that God is real or God will provide because I have active trust in someone unseen whom I have a measure of certainty in.”

   iii. This biblical expression of Faith that is compatible with knowledge.

n. So we ought to substitute “active trust” for faith when we hear it.

o. This is what we call Seeing Faith (Real Faith)

2. Seeing Faith (Real Faith)

   a. Seeing Faith is a trust or commitment in something I know to be true.

   b. Seeing faith is based in reality, the ultimate reality of God. So it is also called Real Faith (or Faith of the Reality).

   c. Seeing Faith is faith based in reason and evidence and awareness.
d. So this faith is compatible with knowledge but it is also more than knowledge because it adds trust to knowledge.

3. Blind Faith

a. Blind faith excludes real knowing or real knowledge
   i. i.e., if you know something, then you can’t have faith in it.

b. People think incorrectly that reason takes us so far and faith takes us the rest of the way.

c. Some people think that faith is actually opposed to knowledge: Mark Twain incorrectly thought, “Faith is the believing in what you know aint true.” This is extreme Blind Faith.
   i. This is saying you can only have faith in something you don’t know or in something irrational.

d. Blind faith is like Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade
   i. Walking out into the canyon: Leap of faith

e. Blind faith as we call it today is known as “Fideism for theologians.”
   i. Fide is Latin for faith.
   ii. Fideism holds that faith separate from knowledge is the kind of faith that saves us. That is, there is nothing rational, intellectual, or evidential about faith in God.

4. Blind Faith vs. Seeing Faith (Real Faith)

a. Blind Faith is not biblical or rational or beneficial.

b. Seeing Faith is biblical, rational, and beneficial.

c. Blind faith is not based in reality. It is more like wishing something will come true.

d. Seeing Faith is based in reality. It is more like knowing something will come true.

e. Blind Faith is believing something irrationally.

f. Seeing Faith is believing something rationally.

g. Blind faith and reasons are not friends; they had a falling out.
i. They are incompatible.

h. Seeing faith and reasons are friends; they get along and hang together.

i. They are compatible.

j. Blind Faith is like: coming to the fork in the road on a mountain road without knowing the way down. There are no indicators revealing the right path. This is choosing one way blindly which road to take and trust that this road will lead to safety.

k. Seeing Faith is more like: there are some indicators or some testimonies or pointers that reveal the way down. This is choosing one way with evidence showing that this road will lead to safety.

l. Blind Faith is faith not based in reason and evidence and awareness.

m. Seeing Faith is faith based in reason and evidence and awareness.

n. Blind Faith is a cultural phenomena that is pervasive in our churches that can be traced back 200-400 years in Europe.

n. Seeing Faith is Biblical.

5. Skepticism: the origination of Blind Faith

a. Enlightenment Rationalism

i. French Rene Descartes (1596 – 1650)

ii. Sought to defeat skepticism by trying to find some foundation for knowledge & build a system or skyscraper of knowledge based on that CERTAIN foundation.

iii. Descartes was using a philosophical method (rational method of skepticism) to defeat empirical skepticism

iv. So Rationalism became a big movement in western European history.

v. Rationalism asserts that the knowledge is obtained only through the reason of the mind.
vi. Descartes held that the material (animals included) world is one big machine of determinism.

vii. Descartes was a devout Catholic and wanted to defend the mind from being sucked into the mechanism of the alleged material only world of the empiricist philosophers.

viii. He was attempting to save the human soul from being understood as just body.

ix. So he had to figure out a way to show that there is a split between mind and matter (soul from body).

x. He used a method of skepticism asking “What can I know with absolute 100% certainty?” “What is undeniable?”

xi. He questioned everything and realized that he could doubt everything except the fact that he was doubting. But to doubt one must be thinking – since doubt is a thought. Thus we get the conclusion, “I think, therefore I am”

1. This is the most famous phrase in philosophy.

xii. So he proved that because he doubted everything, he existed. This was and is undeniable. This is a CERTAIN foundation.

xiii. This method of rational skepticism proved that mind is different than matter. Thus, the soul is not the body and the soul is saved from the mechanism of the material universe.

xiv. But the effects of Descartes successful method was actually detrimental to Christianity.

xv. So years later, after his death, philosophers took his work and used it to show that the mind (non-material soul) was not
scientific and not something that we can have factual knowledge of. We cannot do science experiments on the mind or soul so it is not important.

xvi. So this is the beginning of the unintentional split between mind and matter which leads us to our next step on the path to understand the split between faith and reason.

b. Enlightenment Skepticism

i. British David Hume (1711-1776)

1. Skeptic of Rationalism (Rationalism: finding knowledge through reason alone).

2. Hume thought that knowledge can only be obtained through experiment or experience (i.e., science).

3. This movement in philosophical thought is known as Empiricism.

4. Empiricism asserts that all ideas or knowledge is attained through experience or the 5 senses.
   a. Tasting
   b. Touching
   c. Smelling
   d. Seeing
   e. Hearing

5. For the empiricist, the mind is blank until it is filled with knowledge gained through experience in the world (or scientific experiments).

6. We cannot know anything in the world unless we have an empirical (sense experiment) impression of it on our mind.
MIND
(Spirit, Thought, Emotion, Will)

ACTUAL WORLD
(The actual world outside the mind)

7. The soul and God does not give us facts, they are simply entities that we cannot have a repeated experience of. So our knowledge of the soul and God fall short.

ii. German Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)
1. Kant read Hume and said that he was “awakened from his dogmatic slumber.”
2. Kant agreed with Hume saying that we can’t know things of God’s realm through reason AND we can’t know things of God’s realm through experiment or experience (i.e., science).
3. Because there was such a thrust of rationalism in western European philosophy and theology, Kant wanted to bring back “faith” into the picture of Christianity.
4. In his book, Critique of Pure Reason, Kant said that even though he believes God exists, he was skeptical about our ability to know that God exists. We have no ability to know God exists because God exists in the “noumenal” realm (the realm of essences) and we exist in the “phenomenal” realm (the realm of experiences). We can’t use the rationalism or the reasoning of cause and effect or even experiences or empirical sciences to know that God exists.
NOUMENAL
(The realm of essences: God, mind, colors, numbers)

PHENOMENAL
(The realm of experience: the world we sense perceive)

5. But, in his book, *Critique of Practical Reason*, he said, we must believe God exists, even though we can’t actually know it, to have a meaningful theory of ethics/morals or else we have a degenerating society.

6. Kant’s divide of the world into the realm that God exists in (the noumenal) and the world in which we live in (the phenomenal) was revolutionary in philosophical and cultural thought.

7. All we can know is our world (the phenomenal), because only our world can be known with empirical data and with reason.

8. We cannot bridge the gap between our realm and God’s realm. We can’t know anything about God.

9. If we make statements about God we can’t expect people to think we are talking about something we have knowledge of. Because there is no way of knowing God.

10. So all thoughts and statements about anything in the noumenal realm are blind. We can only have blind faith when it comes to God.
11. That since Kant’s contribution over 200 years ago, the thought has trickled down through culture, to us today…that we can’t know that God exists for certain.

12. So for us today, the Western world understands religion and Christianity is that which comes from faith (blind faith) without reason and without evidence.

13. So apologetics comes into focus. If Kant is right, we are in trouble.

14. But, at the end of his analysis, we know that Kant was not right. Not only can the Holy Spirit reveal himself to us in our realm but we can use reason and evidence enough to have “knowledge of God.”

c. Existential Skepticism: Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)
   i. Kierkegaard’s book, Fear and Trembling argued that “faith begins precisely where thought stops.” (pg 53) even though he says “As for me, I do not lack courage to think a complete thought.” (pg 30). There is no reason in faith for Kierkegaard.
   ii. This is a sort of existential Christian philosophy of faith. Where “Philosophy cannot and must not give faith.”
   iii. For Kierkegaard, faith is the “highest movement” of reality.
   iv. “The movement of faith must continually be made by virtue of the absurd.” (pg 37)
   v. He means that in spite of the evidence one believes and acts!
   vi. Infinite surrender is necessary before faith.
   vii. This is an existential thought although it came 100 years before the existential movement was at its peak.
   viii. Standing in the absurd & abyss is the only way to realize or actualize or practice true/real faith & one gets closer to God.
   ix. Salvation of the soul, the new creation is by virtue of the absurd – this he grasps by faith.
x. Strength, energy, & spiritual freedom → then infinite surrender
   → then faith → then receiving of everything.

xi. Through infinite surrender one becomes conscious of his own validity, and only then can speak of grasping existence (reality) by virtue of faith.

xii. For Kierkegaard, Faith is blind courage into the absurd.

xiii. For Kierkegaard, Faith first, no reason.

xiv. For Kierkegaard, Faith is looking with his whole heart and soul passionately at impossibility in the eye and believing in spite of the absurd.

FAITH
Believing the absurdity (absurd = against knowledge, reason, & evidence)

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KNOWLEDGE
Publicly Verifiable Truth

xv. In light of Abraham going to sacrifice Isaac as an act of faith, this courage and faith is something that Kierkegaard claimed he did not have.

xvi. Abraham “had faith by virtue of the absurd, for human calculation was out of the question...(it) ceased long ago” (pg 35-36).

xvii. “To exist in such a way that my contrast to existence constantly expresses itself as the most beautiful and secure harmony with it - this I cannot do.” (pg 50). In other words, to constantly exist contrary to impossibility, or faith in the midst of all the absurd, Kierkegaard could not do.

xviii. Kierk. is inspirational but not very biblical or helpful.

xix. Abraham had faith based in the person of God, from previous evidence, in spite of God’s command to sacrifice Isaac.
xx. So Kierkegaard is wrong and he has gotten many Christians in a lot of trouble from this.

xxi. Thus, we don’t advocate Blind Faith. We do advocate Seeing Faith (Real Faith): believing in evidence, for example, believing in our maker and sustainer to heal us and keep us because we have evidence that he is able.

xxii. Seeing Faith is far more powerful and victorious than Blind Faith.

xxiii. Seeing Faith is what moves mountains and changes the world because it is based in reality, the ultimate reality of God.

xxiv. Because of these thinkers and other streams of thought our generations is dealing with the separation of faith and values from facts.

VALUE & FAITH
Socially Constructed Meanings

FACT
Publicly Verifiable Truth

iv. By Understanding General Revelation vs. Special Revelation

a. General Revelation
   i. The awareness of God or knowledge of God obtained through looking around and making observations.
   ii. Consider the earth, sun, moon, stars, life, death.
   iii. This is also experience, experiment, and reason (Empiricism & Rationalism)
   iv. Romans 1

b. Special Revelation
i. The awareness of God or knowledge of God obtained through the direct experience of God.

ii. Vision, dream, prophecy, miracle, etc.

iii. Appearance of an Angel or Jesus.

iv. Hearing God’s voice.

v. Sensing God’s presence.

v. By Understanding “Properly Basic” knowledge and Special Revelation.

a. “Properly Basic” knowledge is also understood as “First Principles”

   i. This is just common sense awareness.

   ii. Sometimes called “Simple Seeing”

   iii. Truths that are “Self-Evident”

   iv. This is just basically understood ideas.

      1. Killing babies for the fun of it is morally wrong.

      2. 2 + 2 = 4.

      3. I am me and I am not you.

      4. I see the rock in front of me and I know it’s a rock and not a turtle.

b. On the one hand we can have assurance of the truth of Christianity in a “properly basic” way without evidence and reason.

c. On the other hand we also want to have experiences of God as a source of knowledge, because we want to not just know about him but know God personally.

d. As current Philosopher Alvin Plantiga & Philosopher William Lane Craig says, through the immediate witness of the Holy Spirit, we can have assurance of the truth of Christianity.

e. We can have a saving faith based in the Holy Spirit’s revealing himself to us.

f. Thus, this faith is the strongest form of seeing faith (real faith) since it’s based on the direct experience of the Holy Spirit confirming himself to us.
g. Through direct encounters, the Holy Spirit gives AWARENESS of himself which is also EVIDENCE. AWARENESS IS EVIDENCE.

h. This is an internal (sometimes referred to as subjective) awareness – which is hard to use as evidence in an argument (unless it’s objective-empirically-verifiable evidence).

i. Example: Someone accuses you of murder. But you were alone in a room by yourself at the time of the murder. So you know deep inside that you didn’t do it – because you had direct ‘properly basic’ common sense AWARENESS of yourself in the room. However, you would need to produce objective evidence to prove your innocence since your awareness is internal.

ii. Evidence of healing or the Holy Spirit speaking words of prophecy to you about someone else that can later be confirmed – these are objective evidences proving a subjective experience.

i. The direct encounters with the Holy Spirit and other forms of awareness are some of the best kinds of evidence because they’re “properly basic.”

j. One does not have to have a thorough review of all arguments to come to know the truth of Christianity when the Holy Spirit is revealing himself.

k. Someone can have basic seeing faith, that is reasonable and rational although it’s basic and become a Christian.

l. Thus, apart from reason and evidence, a Ph.D. or a child can have sound knowledge of God through basic awareness or common sense.

m. Philosopher Alvin Plantiga says that God exists and someone can know it with the evidence & argument or without the evidence & arguments.

n. All humans have a divine sense to perceive God.

o. The Holy Spirit witnesses and convicts us.
p. Direct encounters provide awareness which leads to knowing God and knowledge of him.

q. Our system of knowledge is more like a big empty lot with some random foundations scattered around and there are some haphazard bricks forming a smaller structure. It’s not a rigid organized system that can support a skyscraper of thoughts, rather, it’s more of a loose system of interconnected ideas that maintain a lot of smaller buildings.

r. So through our lives we pick up things here or there that stick and make sense and these smaller ideas form a loose interconnected system of thought.

s. There are many ways to know things: properly basic awareness, empirical data, rational arguments, etc.

t. How certain are we in knowing what we know? – we will cover as we learn how to use apologetics below.

f. **How does one use apologetics?**

   i. **Recognize that all of us can easily become prideful.**

      1. “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.” (1 Corinthians 8:1) & “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble and oppressed.” (James 4:6 - NIV)

      2. We must remember that God exalts the humble and humbles the exalted.

      3. Let’s not be that person that people are repelled by and the reason that people steer clear from the uptight, know-it-all Christian.

      4. On the contrary, we are called to be attractive people that yield the fruits of the spirit. People should enjoy being around us not lectured or condemned.

   ii. **Be a “Lifelong Learner”**

      1. Apologetics is a broad field of study and no one can be an expert in each branch.

      2. Be prepared to study apologetics the rest of your life.

      3. Be humble and know that we don’t know it all and will never come close.

      4. Do while learning.
5. Do not wait till you reached the end of the information because you won’t. There is an ocean of information out there but do while learning.

iii. Develop the inner life of the soul and mind for character formation

1. Emphasizing the important things in life: Keeping first things first, and second things second.
2. Becoming like Christ and serving him are both essential to the Christian life.
3. Who we become is just as important as what we do.
4. Both ought to be emphasized. We cannot just learn and do apologetics without developing the inner self through **DAILY** devotions and spiritual disciplines.
5. We must continually desire sanctification (becoming like Christ) and know that we are not whole till we reach heaven.
6. Our brokenness and dependence on Jesus is to be a **DAILY** reminder for the Christian and Christian apologist.

iv. Recognize that we all need encouragement and help.

1. Everyone (including ourselves) deals with spiritual (and often emotional) brokenness.
2. We must love them and respect them and what they are going through as people - even if they have a destructive worldview or walls preventing belief.
3. Love them where they are at.
4. Care for their soul while treating the issues in their mind.
5. We will only do this well when we have an utter dependence on Jesus for our own healthiness and growth.
6. Who we are will shine in the public square. Our character will come out whether we like it or not. People hear our “tone” more than we do.
7. When they hear us, let them hear the tone of grace and truth. John 1:17. Confronting the unbelief issues with truth and loving the person with grace.
v. **Stand up for what one believes in “The Public Square”**

1. The public square dates back to ancient civilizations and is a feature of our cities even today.
   a. Public buildings, City halls, temples, etc.

2. Throughout history, civilizations would naturally incorporate a public square in the center of the settlement.
   a. This is where all trades and transactions took place.
   b. It is also the marketplace of ideas.
   c. Ideas were put forth and exchanged here.
   d. Culture is shaped here.

3. Today “The Public Square” is a figure of speech that refers any setting or situation in our modern world where ideas are exchanged and culture is shaped.
   a. Online is a public square.
   b. Consider the world is flat concept and the need to be an international ambassador to the nations.

4. We must do apologetics with real people with real worldviews in the public square.

5. Gently and respectfully (like 1 Peter 3:15 says) with strength under control, provide rational and compelling reasons why other worldviews are flawed and do not best represent reality.

6. Either, 1 on 1 or in front of multiple people, we will be courageous as the Holy Spirit provides the boldness. He gives us power to stand up and speak to people.

7. Apologetics is not something that is done in the closet.

vi. **Find evidence or reason that can be used to argue a compelling (inductive) case for some aspect of apologetics so as to provide clear direction to truth.**

1. So for any public square, we need to be ready to be ambassadors and give an answer (1 Peter 3:15) that they need. If we don’t know, we need to tell them and come back to them later after we researched it.

2. It is best to know the basics in all branches of apologetics and perhaps specialize in a branch later on.
3. Apologetics is “proof” and “persuasion.”
   i. A combined approach. To win over ourselves and others to the truth by means of artful, articulate, and winsome persuasion of truth.
   ii. We persuasively argue towards reality that others may not understand well.
   iii. We also allow them to see for themselves where their own inconsistencies occur.

4. Apologetics is not merely about winning an argument. Arguments (rational arguments) are just means to the end of winning souls.

5. Apologetics allows one to have direct access to Jesus by removing intellectual barriers, bringing down the walls we have installed so we can see Jesus face to face.

6. Know the difference between inductive and deductive arguments.
   iv. Inductive: building a case based on indirect and direct evidence to conclude the cause from the effects or conclude the general rule from the particular data.
      1. Figuring out where the evidence point us to?
      2. Figuring out what I infer from the evidence?
      3. Figuring out what is the most plausible conclusion with the best explanatory power and scope.
      4. One can increase certainty based on the evidence.
      5. This is what we do with historical, philosophical, scientific arguments.
   v. Deductive: true premises constructed to show the most logical conclusion; if the logic is valid and the premises are true then the argument is sound and one can be 100% certain.
      1. We use this mostly in philosophical arguments but can be used elsewhere.
vii. **Know the “Burden of Persuasion”**

1. This is the level of proof required for one to justify his claim.
   
   a. If I make a claim, what level of certainty do I need to prove to in order to be justified?
   
   b. What is the level of proof required to justify a historical claim?
      
      1. (Jesus rose from the grave, the Bible reports facts of history, and people were miraculously healed)
   
   c. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment and Fourteenth Amendments to the federal constitution prohibit criminal defendants from being convicted on any (level) of evidence **less than proof beyond a reasonable doubt**.¹
   
   d. Convicting as guilty is very weighty (putting someone behind bars), so its level is high – this is true for criminal law.
   
   e. In a criminal law case, the burden of persuasion is fixed on the prosecution (government) side.
   
   f. It does not change during the entire trial, the burden of persuasion is proving the guilt of the defendant by the prosecution.
   
   g. The level of persuasion they must get to is “Beyond Reasonable Doubt” (the evidence must be so conclusive and complete that all reasonable doubts are removed).
   
   h. Casey Anthony trial of 2010 – found “not guilty” because the jury still had reasonable doubts.

2. This certainty list shows the level of certainty the jury or judge will have based on the argument presented.

3. The various levels of certainty for criminal law are:
   
   a. 0%-10% = Complete skepticism
      
      i. Absolutely unable to believe
   
   b. 10%-25% = Reasonable suspicion
      
      i. Cops can frisk you

c. 25%-50.0% = Probable cause
   i. Warrant out for my arrest

d. 50.1%-75% = Preponderance of the Evidence
   i. Civil Cases = “more probable than not” or majority

e. 75%-90% = Clear and Convincing Evidence
   i. Special Legal Circumstances – highly probability

f. 90%-99.9% = Beyond a Reasonable Doubt
   i. Criminal Law Standard

g. 100.0% - Beyond all doubt absolute
   i. Absolutely cannot deny, 100% certainty

4. In a civil law case, the prosecution and defense has a burden of persuasion, where they both must prove their thesis by the standard of the “Preponderance of the Evidence”: more probable than not.

5. If “Beyond Reasonable Doubt” is the required level for showing the existence of God and one’s need for a savior, this puts me in a position to argue for a lot of facts to a high level of persuasion. This would be a big undertaking - but doable with time.

6. But history is different than criminal law and more like civil law where the standard of certainty and the standards of knowledge required are at the 50.1% (more probable than not) level.
   a. Did Homer’s Iliad report a real Trojan war or was he reporting fiction?
   b. We have enough historical and archeological evidence to show that it is “more probable than not” that he did report an actual war.
   c. So we can have adequate certainty to say this actually happened because for historians this is all you need.

7. So for historical claims of the Christian faith (Jesus rose from the grave, the Bible reports facts of history, and people were miraculously healed) all we need to do is show enough evidence (literature, archeology, etc.) to persuade to the “more probable than not” level instead of the “beyond reasonable doubt” level because “more probable than not” is the standard of history.
8. The great news for us is that the historical evidence is compelling and our certainty can easily reach the 90% level, even though all we need to reach is the 50.1% level.

9. Apologetics: mastering making a case by putting the pieces of the puzzle together. How evidence is assembled makes a powerful case. Possible is not enough but “more probable than not” is.

10. The skeptic can’t create a false high standard of history for us to persuade to when we make historical claims about Jesus.
   a. If we all had to persuade to the level of “Beyond Reasonable Doubt”, no one can ever know anything about history with adequate certainty.
   b. Because for history, we only have some literature, archeology, and maybe some paintings.
   c. These merely show that it is more probable than not that Napoleon conquered such and such city, for example.
   d. The evidence merely persuades to a level that we can say it is more likely that this actually happened than not.

11. The Skeptic can’t argue that extraordinary evidence is required when one is making extraordinary claims.
   a. This goes back to Hume. He argued for this.
   b. This is an ungrounded arbitrary presupposition and cannot be adequately argued for from sound reasons.
   c. It does not follow that extraordinary evidence is required when one is making extraordinary claims.
   d. We can make extraordinary claims and easily persuade with ordinary evidence.
viii. **Know the “Burden of Proof”**

1. “Burden of Proof”: A duty placed upon a civil or criminal defendant to prove or disprove a disputed fact.²

2. The burden of proof is the responsibility someone has to defend or give evidence for his or her view. The burden of proof has one cardinal rule: Whoever makes the claim bears the burden. Don’t allow yourself to be thrust into a defensive position when the other person is making the claim. – Greg Koukl, Christian Apologist.

   i. Someone in the public square (any setting) says: “I believe that abortion is wrong but I am not willing to impose my belief on other people.”

   ii. This is an assertion.

   iii. Difference between assertions and arguments.

      1. Arguments are true premises that lead to a logical conclusion.

      2. Assertions are propositions regarding a belief or a state of affairs.

   iv. The abortion statement is not an argument. There is no argument presented for us to refute.

3. Greg Koukl’s book *Tactics*, presents great techniques and tools to use in debate, argument, and just casual conversation. We will cover his book in this section. Tactics includes using the Socratic method: asking questions.

4. Questions get you into the driver’s seat and you can control a conversation.

5. Questions are diplomatic and non-combative.

6. Questions are neutral - your views aren’t even revealed.

7. Questions are conversation starters.

8. Tactics are to be used to show a person their bad thinking not belittle them.

9. Tactics give you a game plan and helps you maneuver better in a conversation to maintain control.

a. **Columbo Tactic #1: What do you mean by that?**
   
i. Gather information about the persons view in a friendly cordial manner without having to defend your view at all.
   
ii. Have them spell exactly what they are saying.
   
iii. This first Tactic:
   
   1. Engages them.
   2. Flatters them.
   3. Forces them to think more carefully or precisely about what they mean.
   4. Helps you know what their position is. Listen to the information until you get absolute clarity.
   
iv. Use this question all day long and there is no pressure on you.
   
v. “All religions are basically the same.”
   
   1. What do you mean by that? How are they the same?
   
vii. “Everyone interprets the Bible differently and everyone’s is valid.”
   
   1. What do you mean by that? Am I right and are you also right?
   
    vii. “There is no way that God can exists when there is so much evil in the world.”
   
   1. What do you mean by that? What do you mean by evil? Where does it come from?
   
ix. “You’re intolerant.”
   
   1. What do you mean by that?
   

b. **Columbo Tactic #2: How did you get to that conclusion?**
   
i. Why do you say that?
   
ii. What are your reasons for holding that view?
   
iii. Why should I believe what you believe?
   
iv. What makes you think that’s the right way to see it? I’m curious.

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3 *Tactics* by Greg Koukl
v. Why would you say a thing like that?

vi. How did you get to the conclusion that I should trust that your organization the Mormon Church, Joseph Smith, the Watchtower speaks for God? How do you know?

vii. The person that makes the claim bears the burden of proof.

viii. Reverses the burden of proof to encourage the other person to give reasons for her own view. Shifting the burden of proof on them.

ix. Jesus went to India and reincarnation came from the Bible.
   1. How did you get to that conclusion.

x. You can never know anything for sure.
   1. How did you get to that conclusion.

xi. Morals are just invented by culture.
   1. How did you get to that conclusion.

xii. Christians wrote the Bible, so it’s bias.
   1. How did you get to that conclusion.

xiii. An alternative explanation is not a refutation – that is, a story about how things go does not supply evidence or good reasons. “Jesus didn’t rise from the grave, he merely awoke from the coma he was in.”

xiv. So we must ask 3 additional questions:
   1. Is it possible? Can such a thing occur?
   2. Is it plausible? Is it reasonable to think something like this might have taken place?
   3. Is it probable? Is it the best explanation, considering competing options? Why is their explanation better than mine?
   4. Where are the evidence and reasons?
   5. What about refuting my explanation before presenting yours?

xv. The two most important questions you can ever ask are, “What do you believe?” and “Why do you believe it?”

xvi. Some people say that they don’t have reasons for their view but they hold it anyway. You can say “How did you get to that conclusion?”
1. This will tempt them to give reasons for the view “I don’t need reasons.”
2. But don’t press them if they don’t want to go.
3. We don’t have to bring up Jesus if we think the conversation is going to die.
4. Sow a few seeds for others to harvest.
5. Put a stone in their shoe.

xvii. The burden of proof lies on the one making the claim.

xviii. Don’t take on a professor or someone in a power position in large debate because a frontal attack on a superior force will never win; the man with the microphone wins. Keep the burden of proof on the professor or the larger frontal force making the claim.

xix. It’s his duty to prove himself right and justified.

xx. If someone is trying to overpower or just throw out tons of mixed assertions; use #1 & #2 & say “Let me think about it” and then come back after doing the research.

c. Columbo Tactic #3: Leading the Way

i. This takes us on offense.

ii. Use these questions to expose a weakness or flaw.
   1. Find the fallacy, misstep, non-sequitur, etc.

iii. Use these questions to take the conversation where you want it to go.
   1. This tactic takes insight and listening to the answers in #1 & #2.
   2. If you lack the knowledge or they aren’t interested let the conversation die a natural death.

iv. Can you consider….?

v. Have you considered….?

vi. Can you clear this up for me?...

vii. Can you help me understand this?....
viii. Or even use a transitional statement: Let me suggest an alternative and tell me if you think it’s an improvement. If not, tell me why.

ix. Or: I wouldn’t characterize it that way. Here’s what I think would be a more accurate representation.

x. Or: I don’t think I agree with the way you put it. Think about this…

xi. Some may ask us leading questions to label us as ignorant, intolerant, fundamentalist, etc.
   1. But we can side-step these questions and offer our own.
   2. Or answer it differently than yes or no.

xii. Use the passive aggressive tolerance trick.
   1. We know everyone thinks their views are the correct one.
   2. When we are labeled intolerant we can simply ask them what they mean by that (#1) or ask them if they consider themselves to be tolerant & if they are judging me for holding that view. Another thing to do is ask them if they are confusing the definition of intolerance with un-acceptance. Another thing is to ask them that “even if I was intolerant, what does that have to do with the issue of concern?”

d. Perfecting Columbo:
   i. Defending against Columbo:
      1. If someone is using #1 & #2 on us, we just answer for our beliefs and give an appropriate representation of the facts.
      2. If someone proceeds with a leading question #3, we can side step it and make them answer for themselves.
      3. Don’t follow the bait - it’s a trap.
      4. Stay in complete control of your side of the conversation. Say, “My sense is that you are using questions to explain your own point. Can you express your view so that I don’t have to do it for you? And then I will go off and just give it some thought.”
      5. This is similar to #2 and puts the burden of proof back on them.
ii. When a question is loaded or is a challenge:
   1. What gives you the right….?
   2. Who are you to say…?
   3. Who’s to say…?
   4. Don’t follow the bait - it’s a trap.
   5. “What gives you the right….?” ⇒ really means:
      a. “No one is justified saying…”
   6. “Who are you to say…?” ⇒ really means:
      a. “One answer is just as good as another.”
      b. Or “No one can ever know the truth about…”
   7. “Who’s to say…?” ⇒ really means:
      a. “You are wrong for saying someone else is wrong.” =
         but this is a self-contradictory statement.
   8. If they turn it into a statement, their objection loses its luster.

e. Taking the Roof Off
   i. Strategy in argumentation. Jesus even used this type of reasoning. It
      has been around for a while. Scholars refer to this as Reductio ad
      Absurdum in Latin.
   ii. Take the roof off of the house of the argument, look inside the house
      and expose the real content of the argument.
   iii. This approach takes the argument to its logical conclusion.
   iv. If the logical conclusion of the argument is followed, absurdity would
      result.

f. Suicidal Statements or Self-Defeating Statements
   i. Every statement we say is about something.
   ii. Sometimes statements are actually about themselves.
   iii. Suicidal statements fail to satisfy their own standard or criteria of
       validity.

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iv. They cannot take their own advice.

v. It is suicidal if reasons used against your view also defeat the reasons themselves.

vi. Suicidal statements commit suicide because they are attempting to deny the law of non-contradiction: A statement cannot be both true and false at the same time and in the same sense. (“X” cannot both be “X” and “non-X” at the same time and in the same sense.)

vii. “There is no truth.”
If there is no truth this statement itself cannot be true. Therefore, truth exists. You cannot deny truth without affirming it. You might respond, "Is that true?" or "How can it be true that there is no truth?"

viii. “You can't know truth.”
If you can't know truth then you would never know that "you can't know truth." This person is claiming to know the truth that we can't know truth. You might respond, "Then how do you know that?"

ix. “No one has the truth.”
This person is claiming to have the truth that no one has the truth. If no one has the truth then the statement "no one has the truth" is false! You might respond, "Then how do you know that is true?"

x. “All truth is relative.”
Sometimes also stated as "Everything is relative." If all truth is relative then this statement itself would be relative and not objectively true. In other words, the person is claiming that it is objectively true that all truth is relative. You might respond, "Is that a relative truth?"

xi. “It's true for you but not for me.”
This statement is self-refuting because it claims that truth is relative to the individual and yet at the same time implies it is objectively true that something can be "true for you but not for me." You might respond, "Is that just true for you, or is it true for everybody?"

xii. “There are no absolutes.”
This statement is an absolute statement about reality that claims there
are no absolutes. You might respond, "Are you absolutely sure about that?"

xiii. “No one can know any truth about religion.”
This person is claiming to know the truth about religion and it is this: you can't know truth about religion. You might respond, "Then how did you come to know that truth about religion?"

xiv. “You can't know anything for sure.”
If you can't know anything for sure then you would never know it! This person is claiming to know with certainty that you can't know anything for sure. You might respond, "Then how do you know that for sure?"

xv. “You should doubt everything.”
If you should doubt everything then you should doubt the truth of the statement "you should doubt everything." You might respond, "Should I doubt that?" And remember: always doubt your doubts!

xvi. “Only science can give us truth.”
If only science can give us truth we could never know that "only science can give us truth" because this is not something science can tell you! That is because this statement is philosophical in nature rather than scientific. You might respond, "What science experiment taught you that?" or "What is your scientific evidence that only science can give us truth?"

xvii. “You shouldn't judge.”
The person who says this is making a judgment, namely, that it is wrong to judge! You might respond, "If it is wrong to judge, then why are you judging?"

xviii. “You shouldn't force your morality on people.”
This person is forcing their moral point of view that it is wrong to force a moral point of view. You might respond, "Then please don't force your morality that it is wrong to force morality."
xix. “You should live and let live.”
The person who tells you to "live and let live" isn't allowing you to
live how you want! They are prescribing behavior for you rather than
taking their own advice. You might respond, "If that's your
philosophy, why are you telling me how to live?"

xx. “God doesn't take sides.”
If God doesn't take sides then He does in fact take the side that doesn't
take sides. You might respond, "Does God take that side?"

xxi. “You shouldn't try to convert people.”
This person is trying to convert you to their position that it is wrong to
convert people! You might respond, "If it is wrong to convert, why are
you trying to convert me?"

xxii. “That's just your view.”
This statement is self-refuting if it treats an objective statement as if it
were subjective. The hidden assumption is that all views are relative
and a matter of personal choice. If that is the case, this statement is
itself relative and a matter of personal choice. You might respond,
"Well that's just your view that this is just my view."

xxiii. “You should be tolerant of all views.”
Most statements regarding tolerance are self-refuting if by "tolerance"
the person means "accepting all views as equally true and valid." If
that is the case, the person who says "You should be tolerant of all
views" isn't being tolerant of your view! You might respond, "Then
why don't you tolerate my view?"

xxiv. “It is arrogant to claim to have the truth.”
This person is claiming to have the truth that "it is arrogant to claim to
have the truth." Therefore, by his own standard, he is the arrogant one!
You might respond, "My that is awfully arrogant of you!"

END OF INTRODUCTION