Thinking Well

Statistics tell us that 75% of Bible-believing young people who enter secular universities lose their faith in the first year**.** This is primarily because they do not know that there are valid arguments against the humanist propaganda espoused by the professors of these universities. Many of their arguments have been proven wrong or are logical fallacies and mere prejudice against the things of God. The problem is that many of them are accepted because they are common among those who are educated beyond their intelligence. A little logic can go a long way in securing the faith of these young people and refuting the lies of these so called intelligent men.

One of my frustrations in studying apologetics has been trying to master the overwhelming number of questions and challenges, on the one hand, and supporting evidences and reasons, on the other. Although it behooves us all to master some of these, it seems to me that it is just as important to learn how to think well.

Learning to think well, or logically, is important for Christians for several reasons.

1. It helps us put together the various pieces of our faith to form a cohesive whole.
2. It helps us make decisions in everyday life when the Bible doesn't speak directly to a particular issue.
3. We must learn to deduce true beliefs or proper courses of action from what we do know from Scripture.

Good, logical thinking is especially important for an apologist. On the one hand, it can help prevent us from putting together shoddy arguments for what we believe. On the other hand, it helps us evaluate the beliefs of those who challenge Christianity. Too often we stumble at criticisms which sound good, but which really stand on logically shaky legs.

Who can give me some examples from Ray Comfort??

Let's consider a few examples.

Here's a basic one. How do you respond to someone who says, "There's no such thing as absolute truth"? If the individual really thinks there is no absolute truth that is, truth that stands for all people at all times, that person at best can only say "In my opinion, there's no such thing as absolute truth." To say "There's no such thing as absolute truth" is to state an absolute; the statement refutes itself.

Here's another one. You've heard people say, "All religions really teach the same thing." Oh, really? Ours teaches that Jesus is God in flesh; other religions say that He isn't. A logical principle called the law of non-contradiction says that Jesus can't both be God and not be God. (Liar, Lunatic or Lord!)

Let's try one more. Some people say, "I can't believe in Christ. Look at all the terrible things Christians have done through the centuries." How would you answer this objection? While it is true that what Christians do influences non-Christians' responses to the gospel, such actions have nothing to do with whether Christianity itself is true. If part of the gospel message was that once a person becomes a Christian that person absolutely will never sin again, the objector would have grounds for questioning the truth of the faith. But the Bible doesn't say that. We can agree

that Christians shouldn't do terrible things to other people, but what people did in fourteenth-century Europe or do in twentieth-century America in the name of Jesus can't change the reality of the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ. The person making this argument may not like what Christians have done, but this complaint has no logical force against the truth of Christ.

When people present arguments against the faith, **we need to discern whether what they say is both factually true and logically sound**. Often the objections we hear are neither. Learning how to think logically ourselves will enable us to spot fallacies in others' thinking. Perhaps pointing these out (in a gentle way, if possible) will cause the person to rethink his or her position. At least it will defuse the attack on our faith.

Thinking logically can also allow us to form a response in the form of a logical equation, using an allegory or metaphor to help others think logically as well. In response to the objection above you may respond that one of the leading causes of death in the US is automobile accidents, if this is true and we follow the same reasoning, then automobiles and the designers and manufacturers of them are responsible for every driver who ever killed a person with an automobile. Is that true? This is an argument called a parallelism, comparing the same line of reasoning to a similar situation in order to demonstrate whether its rationale is acceptable

> I once spoke to a man who is a Jehovah's Witness. He said that he had formerly been a Baptist. This intrigued me so I asked him how he came to this decision to change his faith. He spoke of the disunity of the Church and the common bond of the Jehovah's Witnesses and how good it was to be a part of an organization the had such harmony, "I can go anywhere in the country or even the world and find someone who worships the same as I do and believes the same things." he said.
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> To this I answered, "Here is where our differences lie, I look for an objective standard of truth (the Bible) and I don't base my faith in that truth on whether or not you are able to live by that truth, but on the fact that it is truth. You base your truth on the fact that the so called scholars of your faith have twisted and distorted the original documents of the Scriptures without evidence that they should be changed, but that they live according to what they believe.
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> The question is not whether my living makes my truth true, but is it the truth that comes form God? Whether I live according to what I believe will definitely influence others, and I wish that more Christians lived the truths of Scripture, but my own failures to live according to the commands of Scripture do not negate the truths of Scripture. Truth is truth whether I believe it or live it or whether I do not.
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> 1. One of the primary false beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses it that they say Jesus is a created being, not God but a god. They insert an "a" into John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was **a** God. " There is not one Greek scholar in the world outside of the Jehovah's Witnesses who believes that the "a" should be in this verse.
> 2. Other Scriptures clearly refute this,
>   a. **Colossians 2:9** For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Here Paul is speaking of the essential and personal deity as belonging to Christ. "Not the divine attributes, but the divine nature." Marvin Vincent

b. **Titus 2:13** looking for the blessed hope, and the appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, *The terms ""God and Savior"" both refer to the same person, Jesus Christ. This is one of the clearest statements in the NT concerning the deity of Christ. The construction in Greek is known as the Granville Sharp rule, named after the English philanthropist-linguist who first clearly articulated the rule in 1798. Sharp pointed out that in the construction article-noun-*`kaiv`*-noun (where* `kaiv [kai]` *= ""and""), when two nouns are singular, personal, and common (i.e., not proper names), they always had the same referent. Illustrations such as ""the friend and brother,"" ""the God and Father,"" etc. abound in the NT to prove Sharp''s point.* - New English Translation Notes

So, we see again, logic does not support the argument of the Jehovah's witness. Unfortunately this was not enough to overcome his 30 years of indoctrination and as far as I know he is still in the deception of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Answering The Charge of Elitism

I've been talking about the importance of logical thinking in doing apologetics. Now I'd like to apply that in considering a charge currently being made against Christians, especially on college campuses.

In a video I recently saw, a young woman said the notion that Christians have the only truth is "elitist." She was saying that since there are so many different beliefs in the world, **how can any one group of people claim to have the only truth?** She, and many others like her, consider such thinking arrogant.

How can we respond to this charge? **First, notice the name-calling**. We are charged with "elitism." The real issue is passed over in favor of a put-down. This is just another example of how ideas and issues are dealt with in our society these days. **It is important, however, not to react in kind.** *Too often in our society the battles over issues and ideas are fought with name-calling and sloganeering. This is unbecoming to Christians and unprofitable in apologetics and evangelism.* **We need to deal with the ideas themselves.**

Second, Christians can acknowledge that non-Christians can know truth and that other religions can include some truth. If they didn't, they would find very few adherents. They fail, though, on such fundamental issues as the identity of Jesus and the way to be reconciled to God.

Third, notice the faulty logic in the argument. What does the reality of many points of view have to do with the truth-value of any of them? *This is like saying: "Some men think they should treat their wives with the same respect they desire; some ignore their wives; others think it's okay to beat them. Who's to say only one way can be right?"* The structure of the argument is the same, but it is obvious that the conclusion is wrong. A critic might understandably question our assurance that what we believe is the final truth given that there are so many people who disagree. **But it is faulty logic to conclude that no beliefs can claim final truth simply because there are so many of them.**

Fourth, since the criticism rests upon the idea that two or more conflicting beliefs can be

true, we must challenge this assumption. It can be shown to be incorrect by looking to everyday experience. If my wife says it is raining outside but my son says it isn't, do I take my umbrella or not? It can't be both raining and not raining at the same time. Likewise, if one person says Jesus is the only way to salvation and another says He isn't, no more than one of them can be correct.

Some people, of course, will challenge the notion that our knowledge of God is like knowing whether it is raining outside. God is not a part of nature; He is "wholly other."This issue is much too involved to develop here. But I believe that this thinking is fundamentally a prejudice against authoritative revelation. God has spoken, and He has given us evidence in this world to confirm what He has said. (We will deal with this in some detail in future lessons)

This challenge to Christianity and many others like it are not easy to deal with. But if defending the faith means responding to the challenges of our day, we must prepare ourselves, as difficult as it may be. Otherwise, we can't expect to be heard.

What is the first step in refuting the argument of a skeptic?

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Is it possible two for views that are not in agreement on a particular issue both to be true?

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Can some one have part of the truth without having all of it?

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Do multiple views on a particular subject remove the possibility of any of them being right?

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Question one, 1 Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.
JW's say flesh and blood cannot enter... claiming that our bodies do not go to heaven. This argument is refuted by a proper reading of the verse.