

Christian Worldview and Apologetics

2- Tactics for Defending the Faith, Chapter 3

Introduction:

Matthew 10:16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves."

Our overall **strategy** for people is that they might bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), that they might be fully saved; there may be a number of **tactics** in which we engage in order to achieve our overall strategy.

These tactics are **not exhaustive**. There are other tactics that approach from different angles that we could study; but we would like to introduce these tactics and rehearse them throughout our Christian Worldview season **because they are good** tactics for defending the faith. So please **learn** them. **Practice** them. Have fun with them.

I. The Columbo Tactic

All of our tactics have this in common: we will execute our tactics by **asking questions**.

Illustrate by **Columbo**

What are some of the benefits of learning to ask questions well?

Proverbs 15:23 "A man has joy in an apt answer, And how delightful is a timely word!"

Quote **Hugh Hewitt**, page 49

Jesus often asked questions to advance his agenda:

Luke 20:22 "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"
23 But He detected their trickery and said to them, 24 "Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's." 25 And He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 26 And they were unable to catch Him in a saying in the presence of the people; and being amazed at His answer, they became silent.

Luke 20:2 and they spoke, saying to Him, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?" 3 Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask you a question, and you tell Me: 4 "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?" 5 They reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why did you not believe him?' 6 "But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." 7 So they answered that they did not know where *it came* from. 8 And Jesus said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

"Generally when I ask a question I have one of three goals: to gain information, to reverse the burden of proof or to exploit a weakness I see in another's view" (page 49).

1. To Gain Information: to Clarify

"What do you mean by that?" Pay careful attention to the answer so that you don't misrepresent it.

Read **examples** on page 50

Give some **examples** for practice:

2. To Reverse the Burden of Proof: to Learn their Reasons

Illustration: **Roof** and **walls**

“How did you come to that conclusion?” or “What are your reasons for believing that?”

If the unbeliever makes an assertion, she bears the burden of proof to support it.

You will find that people make assertions all the time that **they’ve never had to defend** or that they never thought about defending. Often their defense will be poorly thought out.

Give some **examples** for practice:

- “Evolution is a fact!”
- “Psychology has proven that God is merely a projection of our need for the perfect father.”
- “Capital punishment is immoral.”

3. To Exploit a Weakness

Now that you know **what** your friend believes and **why** he believes it by asking questions, you may ask more questions to exploit a discovered weakness in his beliefs.

Now we are going on the **offensive**. This step requires **insight**. It is **not** a **passive** question.

“Have you ever considered that....”

Read **examples** on page 54

II. The Suicide Tactic

A. Self-Refuting Claims

Illustration: **Charley Brown** and Lucy's new philosophy of "No!"

These are statements **that cannot satisfy their own standards**. These statements are irrational. **Not even God** can make a self-refuting statement true. God cannot make contradictions true.

Law of non-contradiction: 'A' cannot be 'A' and 'Not A' at the same time and in the same way.

Yogi Bear: "You should always go to other people's funerals or they will never go to yours"

Examples:

- "I cannot speak a word of English."
- "You can't know anything for sure."
- "My brother is an only child."
- "You should never push your morality on other people."
- "There are no moral absolutes."
- "The scientific method is the only way to discover truth."

B. Sibling Rivalry

Sometimes objections come in pairs and these pairs are logically inconsistent with one another. We can point out this contradiction and remove at least one of the objections.

Give some examples for the class:

- Natural selection got us here and made us into the amazing creatures that we are.... We shouldn't oppress other animals since they've got as much right to be here as we do.
- Moral law is based on the consensus of a given society.... The Germans were wrong to persecute the Jews.
- God doesn't exist because there is so much evil in the world.

III. The "Taking the Roof Off" Tactic

This is the **favorite tactic** of the presuppositionalist apologists like Greg Bahnsen, Cornelius Van Til, and apologist **Francis Schaffer**.

In this tactic, you adopt the person's viewpoint for the sake of argument. Then you press it to its logical conclusion which results in an absurdity. It is called the "**Reductio ad Absurdum**".

The thought behind this tactic is that since unbelievers live in God's world, their beliefs and philosophies about the world that are contrary to God's truth will lead to absurdities.

In other words, unbelievers have built **roofs** over their heads to relieve the tension of their false beliefs; and with this tactic, **we remove the roof** and expose the absurd consequence of the false belief.

Proverbs 26:4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Or you will also be like him. 5 Answer a fool as his folly *deserves*, That he not be wise in his own eyes.

A. Reduce the point of view to its basic premise or assertion or moral rule.

Give a summary statement to make sure that you got it right

Example: In an **argument about moral absolutes**, you appeal to God and the ground of moral law, but your friend asserts, "I believe that the **material** is all there is!" How could you reduce that point of view to its basic premise?

B. Give it a test drive: if this assertion is true, where will it take me if I follow it consistently?

Example: If I am merely **matter in motion**—and if all is merely matter in motion—what ethical significance can we learn from the random collisions of atoms?

C. Invite the person to consider the implications you just reflected on and the absurdity that follows from the Reductio.

Personal Example: Girl says, "My fiancé moved in with me because of finances; but I don't normally agree with living together before marriage and feel bad about it."

Vet, trying to comfort her, says laughing, "But the cohabitation laws of N.C. no longer apply and are not enforced."

Our response: Would you say that moral law receives its validity only from civil law? If so, then there is nothing morally wrong with your next-

door neighbor lying to you all the time since civil law doesn't apply to such cases.