

Introduction to Apologetics-Part II

Course modeled after Frank Turek and Norman Geisler's *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* curriculum, with additional materials from William Lane Craig, J.P. Moreland, Hugh Ross, Stephen Meyers, John Lennox, Douglas Groothuis, N.T. Wright, Ravi Zacharias, Andy Bannister, Paul Copan, and Rodney Stark.

Course Outline:

- I. ~~The Four Questions Everybody Needs to Ask of Their Belief System~~
- II. Can You Handle the Truth?
- III. The Big Bang of Science and Theology
- IV. Watchmaker, Watchmaker, Make Me a Watch
- V. The Herd and the Gut
- VI. All We Need is a Miracle
- VII. Can Somebody Give Me a Testimony?
- VIII. Books of Myth or Books of Truth?
- IX. Who is This Jesus Guy?
- X. The One Answer to the Four Questions

Can You Handle the Truth?

1. Truth about reality is knowable.
2. The opposite of true is false.
3. It is true that the theistic God exists.
4. If God exists, then miracles are possible.
5. Miracles can be used to confirm a message from God.
6. The New Testament is historically reliable.
7. The New Testament says Jesus claimed to be God.
8. Jesus' claim to be God was miraculously confirmed by His fulfillment of prophecies, His sinless life and miraculous deeds, and His prediction and accomplishment of His resurrection.
9. Therefore, Jesus is God.
10. Whatever Jesus (who is God) teaches is true.
11. Jesus taught that the Bible is the Word of God.
12. Therefore, it is true that the Bible is the Word of God (and anything opposed to it is false).

Everything in this 12-step argument is built on knowable truth. One of the primary tactics employed today by skeptics is the manipulation of the definition of truth. By utilizing the Southern Evangelical Seminary's "Road Runner" technique, you will be able quickly to erode the flimsy foundation on which the skeptic's argument is based. The point of utilizing this technique is not to diminish the person, but to put the topic being discussed on a firm and equal foundation so as to discern the real truth.

What is truth?

Truth can be defined as _____
or _____.

Five truths about truth

1. Truth is discovered, not invented. It exists independent of anyone's knowledge of it.
2. Truth is transcultural; if something is true, it is true for all people, in all people, at all times.
3. Truth is unchanging even though our beliefs about truth change.
4. Beliefs cannot change a fact.
5. All truth is absolute.

The Road Runner Tactic

The Road Runner Tactic is so named because of the famous cartoon shorts featuring Wile E. Coyote doing everything he can to outsmart and catch the Road Runner. Inevitably, he ends up a victim of his own design and device, and crashes down to earth when he realizes that he is foiled.

The truth relativist can fall victim to their own claims, similar to Wile E. Coyote. Remember what Ravi Zacharias said about the importance of "questioning the questioner?" Here is a great opportunity to do so. And the best way to learn how to do it is to do it!

Turn the statement back on itself with the Road Runner Tactic:

1. All truth is relative. _____
2. There is no absolute truth. _____
3. Truth cannot be known. _____
4. All religions are the same. _____
5. It may be true to you, but not to me. _____
6. You shouldn't judge me. _____

What we have done utilizing the Road Runner Tactic is to expose the statement's logical fallacy; or, better yet, its violation of the **Law of Non-Contradiction**. The Law of Non-Contradiction states that contradictory claims cannot both be true at the same time in the same sense. Making a claim that violates the Law on Non-Contradiction is to make a claim that is self-refuting and self-defeating.

Two philosophers whose philosophies can't handle the truth

1. David Hume has had an enormous impact on the rise of skepticism in this country. His work, *Of Miracles* (1749), which denies the existence of miracles, is still referenced by skeptics today.

Hume makes the claim that truth propositions are only meaningful if, and only if, they meet the two following conditions:

- A. The truth claim is abstract reasoning such as a mathematical equation or definition;
or
- B. The truth claim can be verified empirically through one or more of the five senses.

Utilizing the Road Runner Tactic, demonstrate the self-defeating claim Hume makes. _____

- 2. Immanuel Kant also continues to have tremendous influence on how our society engages in philosophy. His claim is that no one can know the truth of the real world, it is simply unknowable. Your mind through the senses simply interprets what it experiences; it does not grasp the full “knowability” of an object or idea.

Utilizing the Road Runner Tactic, demonstrate the self-defeating claim Kant makes. _____

Remember: The four questions everyone needs to ask of their belief system

Every worldview must give answers to these four questions:

- 1. Where did we come from (origin)?
- 2. Why are we here (purpose)?
- 3. How should we live (morality)?
- 4. What happens when we die (destiny)?

Why would someone reject the truth if it was shown that a particular worldview could substantively and comprehensively answer all four questions? _____

Terms you need to know

Define these terms:

- 1. Tolerance (old and new definitions)

- 2. Pluralism

3. Law of the Excluded Middle

4. Inductive Reasoning

5. Deductive Reasoning

How does Christianity differ from other religions' truth claims?

1. Jesus

2. Salvation

3. Creation

4. Sin

But I feel like...

It is essential to curb the use of the verb "to feel" when expressing your thoughts on a topic. In our current cultural climate, "I feel" is employed when "I think" or "It seems to me" would be a much better option. "I feel" is very relativist and denotes "it may not be true for you because I'm going by my emotions" connotation. Give stronger versions to the following statements:

1. I feel like Christianity is true.

2. I feel that everyone else is wrong about that issue.

3. I feel like this country is losing its direction.

Perception is not reality. Reality is reality.

"It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble.
It's what you know for sure that just ain't so."-Mark Twain

Let your “yes” be “yes,” and your “no” be “no.”

When dealing with the hard truths of Christianity don't beat around the bush and change the truth to relativism.

“Is it true that Christians believe that Christ is the only way to heaven?”

“Yes.”

“Is it true that God only loves those who believe in Him?”

“No.”

Blind men and the elephant

There is an old parable that is continually expressed by relativist as their demonstration of “multiple paths to God.”

Blind Men and the Elephant

poem by John Godfrey Saxe (1816–1887)

*It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant(Though all of
them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind*

*The First approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
“God bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!”*

*The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, “Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!”*

*The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:*

*“I see,” quoth he, “the Elephant
Is very like a snake!*

*The Fourth reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee.
“What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain,” quoth he;
” ‘Tis clear enough the Elephant Is very like a
tree!”*

*The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: “E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!”*

*The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
“I see,” quoth he, “the Elephant
Is very like a rope!”*

*And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!*

Moral
*So oft in theologic wars,
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!*

How would you refute the moral of the poem (use the Road Runner Tactic)?

*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.*