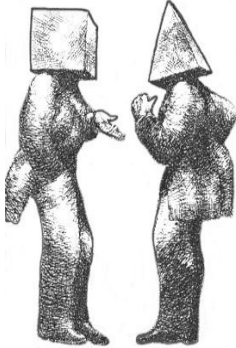


Frontline Apologetics

How To Respond to Spiritual Seekers, Religious Skeptics, and Argumentative Contrarians

Introduction **Evangelphobia.**

- Why most Christians never share the Gospel message with a non-believer:



The Scriptural Mandate.

- I Peter 3:15.
- Colossians 4:5-6.
- II Timothy 2:23-25.
- Acts 17:1-4.
- Proverbs 26:4-5.

Two Basic Orientations:

- (1)The polemical.
- (2)The philosophical.

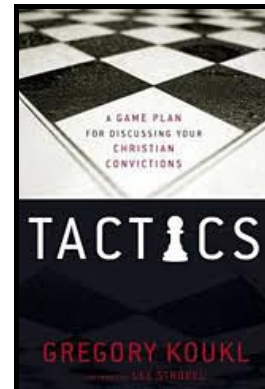
Gregory Koukl’s “Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions”

Two Keys:

- (1)Ask
- (2)Acquire as much as possible.

Chapter 1: Diplomacy or D-Day?

- Theme: “I’m going to teach you how to navigate in conversations so that you stay in control.” [20]
- What we need to be effective ambassadors for Christ:
 - (1)
 - Prov. 19:2 – “It is not good to have zeal without knowledge.”
 - Theology is knowledge of
 - Apologetics is knowledge of
 - (2)
 - The art of argument: How to share effectively what we believe and why we believe it.
 - (3)
 - Check your at the door.
 - Be sincere, humble, inquisitive, and focused.



- The goal: “My goal... is to find [effective] ways to [expose] someone’s bad thinking for the purpose of guiding him/her to the truth, yet remain gracious and charitable.” [28]
- Our advantage: “..... and are on our side. Most people, even the smart ones, don’t give much; thought to their opposition to Christianity.” [28]
- The pay-off: “If you learn the tactics in this book... I promise that you will get better at presenting the truth clearly.” [28]

Chapter 2: Reservations.

- The Greatest Commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength... and love others as you love yourself.” [Matt. 22:37-39]
- What does it mean to “love?”
 - Scott Peck: “Love is the to oneself for the purpose of nurturing one’s own or another’s”
- An argument is a statement of belief supported by,,, or
- Argumentaphobia:
 - (1) Arguments cause among Christians.
 - (2) Arguments are
 - GK: “We must learn to argue in a principled way – fairly, reasonably, and graciously.” [34]
- Is argument Biblical?
 - The example of Jesus.
 - The example of Peter.
 - The example of Paul.
 - GK: “Simply put, you *can* argue someone into the kingdom. It happens all the time. On the other hand: “You cannot *love* someone into the kingdom.... “Without the work of the Spirit, no argument – no matter how persuasive – will be effective. But neither will any act of love.... Add the Spirit, though, and the equation changes dramatically.... “Our job is to communicate the gospel as clearly, graciously, and persuasively as possible. God’s job is to take it from there.” [35ff]
- A modest goal.

Chapter 3: The Colombo Tactic.

- ***“It’s not rational to believe in God. There is no proof.”***
 - Q1: “What do you mean by God?”
 - Q2: “What specifically is irrational about believing in God?”
 - Q3: “Exactly what kind of evidence would you need to believe in God?”
- ***“Christianity is basically the same as all other religions. They’re all about love. We don’t have any right to tell others how to live or what to believe.”***
 - Q1: “How extensively have you studied other religions?”
 - Q2: “Why would the similarities in different religions be more important than their differences?”
 - Q3: “What was Jesus’ attitude about sharing the truth with others?”
 - Q4: “Isn’t telling someone that they need to love just another example of telling them what they should believe and how they should live?”



- ***“You can’t take the Bible too seriously because it was only written by men, and men make mistakes.”***
 - Q1:
 - Q2:
- ***“It’s wrong to force your views on other people. You can’t legislate morality, and Christians shouldn’t bring their beliefs into politics. It violates separation of church and state.”***
 - Q1: “When you vote for someone, do you expect them to pass laws reflecting your own point of view? Wouldn’t that be ‘forcing your views’ on others?”
 - Q2: “Is it your opinion that only non-Christians should be allowed to vote or participate in politics?”
 - Q3: “Where in the Constitution are religious people excluded from participating in government?”
 - Q4: “Can you give me an example of a law that does not have a moral element to it?
 - In fact, morality is the only thing we *can* legislate!
 - Q5: “In fact, we cannot force our views on someone else. People can accept or reject what we believe. We can only try to influence others using facts and reason.
- The key to the Colombo tactic:
 - GK: “Never make a when a will do the job.” [47]
- Hugh Hewitt: In every conversation, ask at least 6 questions.
- The genius of questions:
 - GK: “Asking simple leading questions is an almost effortless way to introduce spiritual topics to a conversation without seeming abrupt, rude, or pushy.” [48]
 - Questions are interactive and engaging.
 - Questions shift the burden of the argument onto the other person.
 - Questions force the other person to think about his/her assertions.
 - Questions provide insight into the other person’s beliefs and character.
 - Once you learn to guide a conversation, you control it.
 - Jesus used this method frequently – especially when facing hostile crowds.
- Cool questions:
 - “Have you ever thought about...?” (or, “Have you ever considered...?”).
 - “Can you help me understand this?” (or, “Can you help me think through this?”).

Key Questions – and Responses

Basic Question: What do you mean by that?” (or “Why do you believe that?”)

- Dennis Prager’s first rule of dialogue: Seek rather than

Follow-up Question: “Why do you believe that?”

- “How do you know that’s true?”
- “How did you come to that conclusion?”
- “Can you explain that to me?”
- Focus on the reasons for what he/she believes.
 - What and/or support his/her view?
- When caught unprepared: “That’s something I haven’t thought about. Let me think about it and get back with you.”
- If they offer no plausible reason for what they believe: “Why would you want to believe something when you have no reason to think it’s true?”

Validate Their Truth.

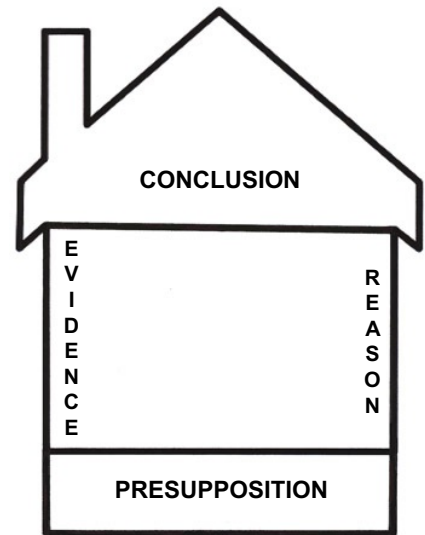
- “I think you’re right about that. That’s a good point.”

Expose Their Fallacies.

- Probing questions expose weaknesses and fallacies.
- Some things simply cannot be true because they are...
 - (1) ; and/or
 - (2)
- Remember: In many cases, the Gospel is before it’s

A Good Argument.

- Reminder: In philosophy and apologetics, an argument is a statement of belief supported by,, or
- Two principles of a good argument:
 - (1) ; and
 - (2)
- Arguments are like houses.
 - Do the walls hold up the roof?
- There are and/or errors in every anti-Christian argument.



Problematical Encounters

The Professor’s Ploy.

- Basic principle: “Never make a frontal assault on a superior force in an entrenched position.” [66]
- The person behind the lectern (or the microphone) is in a superior position.

Defending Controversial Beliefs.

- A prudent preface.

Dealing With Absurd Arguments.

- (1) Concede the point – accept the premise.
- (2) Take the argument to its logical conclusion (*reductio ad absurdum*).
 - “If what you say is true, what are the consequences?”

Dealing With “Steamrollers.”

- When engaging an aggressive opponent:
 - Shift from to
- The personality profile of a “steamroller.”
- Three steps to dealing with steamrollers:
 - (1) Gently stop him and negotiate an agreement:
 - “Please hold on and let me finish.”
 - “Can I take a few moments to answer your question?”
 - Show grace and peace under fire.
 - (2) Be more direct and assertive.
 - “Do you really want me to answer your question?”
 - “I’m trying to answer your question, but you keep interrupting.”
 - (3) Disengage.
 - Jesus: Don’t feed what’s precious to dogs – Matt. 7:6.



