

Tactics 4 & 5 (Summary)

Introduction.

- A. John 4 talks about gardeners and harvesters.
 - 1. There are more gardeners than harvesters.
 - 2. Most of us are gardeners, not harvesters.
 - 3. The job of the gardener is to “put a stone in their shoe.”
 - 4. We tend to be nervous about witnessing because we are trying to be harvesters.
- B. Using the Columbo questions.
 - 1. What do you mean by that?
 - 2. How did you come to that conclusion?
 - 3. Use questions to make a point.
 - a. Advance your own view.
 - b. Find a flaw in the other person’s view.
- C. Improving your Columbo skills.
 - 1. Anticipate objections and think of answers in advance.
 - 2. Reflect on questions you may be asked.
 - 3. Practice new questions and answers, preferably aloud.

I. Suicide Tactic.

- A. Recognizing when a challenge defeats itself.
- B. Violates the most fundamental rule of logic.
 - 1. Law of non-contradiction: $A \neq \text{not } A$.
 - 2. Two different claims at odds with each other.
- C. Some are obvious.
 - 1. Peanuts (from now on my answer to every question is No).
 - 2. You can’t know anything for sure.
 - 3. There are no absolute truths.
 - 4. Let me tell you about my vow of silence.
 - 5. I never tell the truth.
 - 6. My brother is an only child.
 - 7. I used to believe in reincarnation, but that was in another life.
- D. Some are more subtle.
 - 1. The world is an illusion (Hindu *maya*).
 - 2. You shouldn’t be correcting Christian teachers on the radio.
 - 3. You shouldn’t be forcing your morality on other people.
 - 4. Conversation with Gil (page 80).
 - 5. Theistic evolution.

E. Sibling rivalry (you can't have it both ways).

1. Example from two weeks ago.

(Jesus is historical, he taught love and kindness, he would be horrified that his followers deified him. He is not God because the idea of God is a myth. He was not influenced by the devil because the idea of the devil is a myth.)

2. The problem of evil.

3. Conversation with the Hindu (page 86).

II. Taking off the roof.

A. We are made in the image of God and must live in the world he made.

1. Any non-theist must live with the contradiction between what he believes and what is actually true.

2. To protect himself from the tension this creates, he must put a roof of deception over his head to keep out the sunlight of truth.

3. Francis Schaeffer quote from *The God Who is There* (page 98).

4. Everyone who rejects Christianity must believe something else, so why is that belief more reasonable than Christianity?

B. Overview of the tactic.

1. Adopt the person's point of view for the sake of argument.

2. Take it for test drive.

3. Press it to the logical, absurd consequences.

4. Also known as *reduction ad absurdum*.

a. It proves too much.

b. It leads to an absurd conclusion.

C. Examples.

1. Born with the natural tendency to _____. (Koukl uses homosexuality as the example.)

a. If it's natural, it's moral.

b. In which case, if it's natural for me to beat up those who disagree with me (including you), that would be moral.

c. The point of morality is to curb natural impulses.

d. Principled morality is what we call civilization.

e. Thomas Hobbes quote (page 116).

2. Minimalist ethics.

a. If it doesn't hurt anyone....

b. Many things are wrong even if they hurt no one (Peeping Tom, necrophilia, the dentist in Florida who groped his patient while she was under anesthesia.)

3. Morals are relative; just personal preferences.
 - a. Then it would be moral to kill a hungry child rather than feed it. Either choice is morally acceptable.
 - b. Unborn child is just a part of the mother's body, but if so, if she's carrying a boy, she has both female body parts (her own) and male body parts (the unborn male child).
4. Other Koukl examples.
 - a. Atheistic evolution.
 - 1) Man is no more than an animal.
 - 2) Survival of the fittest.
 - 3) Genocide is completely moral and acceptable.
 - b. Modified pro-choice.
 - c. Capital punishment (Mother Teresa: God would forgive).
 - d. Polarity of good and evil (Hindu idea that good and evil must be in balance).
 - e. The unborn child is not human.

(Were you ever an unborn child? No one refers to himself as a former egg or former sperm. But does it make sense to talk about yourself before you were born? Of course. You turned in your mother's womb, you kicked, you sucked your thumb. Were those your experiences or someone else's? It was you. So, if your mother had aborted you, she would not have been killing a potential you, a possible you, a future you. She would have been killing *you*.)

- f. Trotting out the toddler.
 - 1) A seven-inch journey down the birth canal doesn't turn a non-human tissue mass into a valuable human being.
 - 2) Abortion arguments could be used to justify killing a two-year old toddler.
 - 3). A woman has the right to choose. Then she has the right to choose to kill her two-year old toddler.

III. Homework.

- A. Be alert to points of view that commit suicide or lead to absurd conclusions.
- B. Remember: our goal is not to win arguments but to point people to the truth. If that happens, we have won, haven't we.

Other common points to ponder.

You shouldn't be a missionary because it's wrong to try change other people's religious beliefs.

All religions are equally true and valid. (All religions lead to God.)

(The blind men and the elephant.)

You can only know what has been proven by science.

It's wrong to condemn anybody for anything.

Everyone's view is a product of his own prejudices. (Freud and Marx argued that all thoughts are tainted.)

There is no such thing as free-will. We are pre-determined to think and act the way we do.

The Bible could not be inspired by God because men wrote it, and men make mistakes.

God doesn't take sides.

Abortion for rape victims.

Abortion for an unwanted child or one who will be born in poverty.

Caring for the kids whom we "force" to be born.

Disagreeing with someone is hating them.

Earth day for evolutionists.

Faith vs. Knowledge.