



HIGHER GROUND
CALVARY CHAPEL

SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

APOLGETICS
CLASS 01
OVERVIEW

We have just completed our
Modular entitled:
THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH
In that Modular we discussed
what we believe

What do we believe concerning:
The Bible
The Nature of Jesus
The Nature of God
The Nature of The Holy Spirit
The Nature of Spirit Beings
The Nature of the Church

In this Modular we will now discuss WHY we believe as we do concerning several Bible Doctrines

It is not enough to believe God does not want blind faith He seeks informed believers

I Peter 3:15:

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: ”

We are expected to know what we believe.

We are expected to know why we believe the things that we do

We are expected to share this information

But notice how we are to share this information...

“...With meekness and fear”

This is not confrontational

We do not fight over it

We just respond, “This is why I believe what I believe.”

Now the approach that we have chosen for our classes is called “Evidence Based.”

We look for evidence

We test the evidence

We make our decision based on the evidence

I wanted to call this portion of the class: Thinking 101

It could also be called Deductive Reasoning

In the past, I referred to it as Decision-Making 101

I do not like shifting over into politics because in so many cases, politics is pure emotion and you cannot argue emotions

You must deal with why they feel the way they feel to change anything

But over the last several generations of students in schools, colleges and universities

The students have been taught WHAT to think and not HOW to think

I have spent over forty years in an industry that was based upon investigation, evidence, laws, negotiations and litigation

It is how I made my living for over forty years

You begin by asking questions:
What decision(s) do you need to make?
What information do you need to make your decision?
Where can you find this information?

How important is this decision you need to make?
When do you need to make this decision?
How can you know if you have made the right decision?

In my industry, the law set the deadlines for our decisions
There was an appeal process the parties could activate to see if the decision was the correct one
Our decisions affected people's entire lives

So it was important to make your decision quickly
It was important to make the correct decision
You needed to be able to support and prove your decision

So I have lived in an evidence-based world for many years.
Let me see if I can cover the basics for the rest of this class
These are just the basics
Decision-making is a skill
You need to practice your skills to get better at them

There needs to be a goal that you are trying to reach
It is important that your goal is clearly defined
“What do you hope to achieve?”
“What are you trying to do?”

My goal was to comply with the law for my industry
I needed to make the right decision so that I could take the correct action
Because it was a legal decision, it could not be based upon emotion

The first thing I would do is to go to my legal authority and see what the law required me to do
In this class, our legal authority is going to be the Bible
It is our final authority by which all decisions and actions are made

We ask our questions:
“How can I be saved?”
“What happens if I am not saved?”
“Can I lose my salvation?”
“What does God want me/need me to do?”

We collect the various opinions and answers...

We then put these to the test:

“Why should I chose one over another?”

“How can I tell which is right?”

As I mentioned before, you cannot argue with emotions

They are feelings

They become intense

When they become intense, logic and reason are no longer used

So each opinion or answer that is completely emotional will need to be discarded

There is nothing there to test

This means that you cannot make an intelligent decision based solely on feelings

We look for evidence...
This refers to something physical
Something you can examine
Something you can test
And you collect the evidence both for and against the decision

We approach this from a neutral position
We neither accept the position nor reject it
So we collect all the evidence
The next step is to “test the evidence”

Now the courts will use two tests regarding evidence:
1. Is it credible?
(Can you believe/trust it?)
2. Is it admissible?
(Did you follow proper procedure(s) in obtaining it?)

I am going to use variations of these two standards

“Is the evidence credible?”

In other words, “Why do you believe it?”

When it comes to matters concerning God, we refer to the Bible

Now I hate to put anyone off, but this modular is designed to test the evidence, and we will cover

1. Why the Bible?

2. Why Christianity?

In future classes

Tonight is just the overview

So throughout this Modular we will be asking our questions and testing our evidence

Now we are not in a court of law

But we are in the Court of Life

Our decision will affect our life

There are no set procedures laid down on HOW we obtain our evidence
But there is one law from the courts that can have important significance on our evidence

It comes from the case of Thomas versus Sports Chalet (42 CCC 625)
Yes this is an actual case
The judges involved set down the standard for HOW to do your research

“...It will be presumed that every word, phrase and provision was intended to have some meaning and perform some useful office, and a construction implying that words were used in vain, or that they were surplusage will be avoided...” (45 Cal. Jur. 2nd. Statutes Sec. 117.)”

What does this mean in everyday language?

1. You must consider all the evidence
2. You cannot manipulate the evidence to achieve the outcome you want
3. Everything is important

Now once you have collected and tested all of the evidence
You sort the evidence into two groups:

1. Evidence that is credible and admissible
2. Evidence that is not credible or admissible

You then make your decision based upon the evidence that is both credible and admissible
But what if there is evidence that is credible and admissible but opposed to the other evidence?

That means that you have not completed your investigation
Further investigation is needed before making your decision
If you do not have time for further investigation, you go with the evidence that is stronger than the rest

The Air Traffic Controllers have a training program to train air traffic controllers in their decision-making skills
When you have conflicting goals and they cannot all be reached, there are three options and only three options

Option 01:
You prioritize the decisions
If you must complete one task before you can complete the other, you complete the 1st task

Example: You must go to a meeting and you need gas:
Can you go to the meeting without getting gas?
Yes: go to the meeting first
No: Get the gas and be late for the meeting

Option 02:
You hand off one or more tasks to a different resource
You handle the most important task
Someone else handles the lesser important task

Example: You are a new driver and you are coming to a stop light:
You cannot look down to identify the brake or you are not watching the road
You use your sense of touch to find the brake with your foot

Option 03:

You let one task succeed and
the other task fail

You make your decision based
upon the cost of failure

This is purely a numbers or
dollars decision

Example: Two planes are
going down; you can only save
one

You make your decision based
upon how many people will die

You make the decision that will
save the most lives

These are harsh realities

[Also why I fly in large planes
filled with lots of people]

But this is the Court of Life

And none of this is theoretical

This is real life

And your decisions change your
life and the lives of others

In our case, we are dealing
with the Spiritual Court
This is the Court of God
You have two options:
1. The Bema Seat of Christ
2. The Great White Throne
There is no option #3

We are going to discuss not
only what we believe, but
WHY we believe it
It falls to the student to decide
what you believe based upon
the material and WHY you
believe it

No one is making the decision
for you
We will not tell you what to
think
But we do want you to think
We want you to think for
yourself

Now let me discuss two steps
in decision-making skills for my
profession

They were called “dispute
resolution” procedures

There was an informal process

There was a formal process

The informal process was
always used first

This is the process called
“Negotiations”

Here the two opposing parties
come together and present
their evidence and arguments
to each other

This way the opposing side tests
the evidence and arguments you
are using

You are doing the same for them

Are they convincing?

Did you miss something?

Are you right or are they?

The process goes something like this:

The party making the affirmative statement has the burden to prove that it is true

In criminal court the affirmative statement is “you broke the law”

If the prosecution cannot prove their point [case]; the other side does not have to do anything

They have no obligation until the position is convincing

I dealt in workers’ compensation

There were two groups of people I went up against:

1. Workers and their attorneys
2. Doctors and their billing people

Both were the affirmative party:

1. I was injured on the job
2. I should be paid for my services

In most cases the proof was obvious and benefits were paid about 80 – 90% of the time

When reasonable people consider the exact same evidence

Then they should come to the same conclusion

But if they could prove their point and we believed that there were still LEGAL reasons to not pay or provide benefits, the negotiation process would start

I would have to present my evidence and arguments as to why we should not pay
Once I had presented my evidence and arguments, the other side would respond

Was I relying on evidence that was not credible or admissible?
Did I fail to consider this or that?
Did I misapply a legal theory, law or decision of the courts?
I would consider their arguments and either change or hold to my opinion

This give-and-take, back-and-forth process would continue until one side or the other was convinced
This happened a lot of times in normal negotiations
That party would change their opinion and their action

But my specialty was fraud
Someone was lying
Someone was trying to get
something that they knew they
were not entitled to
In my negotiations, there was
always one final step...

The give-and-take negotiations
were always civil and
professional
Legal arguments were
presented
Evidence was offered or
challenged

It was a process we all knew
We would work through the
process
Emotions were not involved
It was tedious, but logical
But there was that moment
when one side would know
that they had won...

When other side got upset, threaten, attacked or made it personal was when I knew I had won

Why?

Because the other side had run out of arguments

They knew that they could not win

Their only hope now was intimidation

The formal resolution process was to turn the decision over to an impartial third-party:

The courts

A judge would consider the evidence from both parties

The judge would decide for us

Was the evidence credible?

Was the evidence admissible

Then the arguments would be allowed

And the judge would go with the most convincing position

Was it always the right decision?

No, but there was an appeal process available if you disagreed

But you could not appeal just because you did not like the answer

You would have to prove the decision was incorrect:

The evidence did not support that decision

The logic just was not there

There was fraud

The judge exceeded his/her authority

This is Decision-Making from a very basic process to a more complex and formal process

In our classes we are going to present evidence

We are going to test evidence

We are going to support our position

We will do this through several processes

We will introduce evidence

We will test the evidence

We will listen to arguments

We will follow the logic

We will make our decision

We will try to answer the following questions and address various doctrines:

1. What is Truth?

2. Why the Bible?

3. Is there a God?

4. Creation versus Evolution

5. Why Jesus/Christianity?

We hope that this will make sense to you

We pray God will open our eyes to the truth

We encourage you to put what you believe to the test

And we pray that you make the right decisions

The Bible wants us to think for ourselves
God/Jesus want informed believers –
Believers who know what they believe and why

The Bible gives us these instructions:
II Timothy 2:15:
“Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

We are required to study for ourselves
We need to know how to study
We need to know how to take the information we discover and how to use it to make the right decisions

When we do this, we will not be ashamed

We will make the right decisions the more we study and develop our Decision-Making skills

The end result will be that we have taken the problem apart and put it back correctly so that truth is revealed

And we make our decisions based on the truth

And not what someone tells us

We are dealing with the Spiritual Court

1. The Bema Seat is where you will be rewarded for making the right decision

2. The Great White Throne is where you are punished for making the wrong decision

We will appear in one court or the other; but not both
Unfortunately, the Decision-Making must be done in this court:
The Court of Life.

If we make the wrong decision, this will be made clear to us by God's Formal decision-making process
The Great White Throne Judgment
You do not want to appear in this court...

QUESTIONS


