

# Thinking

- *Study to show yourself approved unto God a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15*

# Beating Temptation with BATS: The Biblical Alternative Thinking Skills

## Lesson 1 Thinking and Logic

# Thinking

- "Beware lest anyone take you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

# Thinking

- It has been said that some people make things happen, others watch things happen, and some wonder, after everything is said and done, just what happened.
- There are too many Christians that make up these last two categories.
- So many succumb to temptation today because of default.
- Christians either do not realize there is a battle or, when they do, they are not prepared to Resist.

# Thinking

- *Thinking Christianly*, a definition formulated by Os Guinness
- “Thinking Christianly is not simply thinking by Christians, nor is it thinking by Christians about Christian topics, nor is it thinking by Christians about or in order to develop a ‘Christian line.’”

# Thinking

- “Thinking Christianly is thinking by Christians about anything at all in a profoundly Christian way.
- Where their minds are so informed and influenced by the truth of God in terms of their principles, perspectives, and presuppositions that they begin to see as God sees, though it will be in an imperfect way.”

# Thinking

- Or, as Dr. Steven Garber puts it, *our minds must be steeped in the Scriptures*, like tea is steeped in hot water, until the word of God permeates our minds, our hearts, our imaginations, our very consciousness.

# Thinking

- The blessed person, the psalmist tells us, not only avoids the pattern of the world (1:1), but delights in God's law, and meditates on it day and night (1:2).
- The wise believer, then, the woman or man who desires to be blessed of God will seek to think the Scriptures.

# Thinking

- The relationship of God's word to the renewed mind is so central that it can be stated simply: regular and serious Bible study is foundational to significant and sustained growth in Christian discernment.
- John R. W. Stott defines a "Christian mind" as "a mind which has firmly grasped the basic presuppositions of Scripture and is thoroughly informed with biblical truth."

# Thinking

- **R. C. Sproul:**
- I could plead with you to study the Bible for personal edification; I could try the art of persuasion to stimulate your quest for happiness. I could say that the study of the Bible would probably be the most fulfilling and rewarding educational experience of your life. I could cite numerous reasons why you would benefit from a serious study of Scripture.

# Thinking

- **R. C. Sproul:**
- But ultimately the main reason why we should study the Bible is because it is our duty. If the Bible were the most boring book in the world, dull, uninteresting and seemingly irrelevant, it would still be our duty to study it.

# Thinking

- If its literary style were awkward and confusing, the duty would remain. We live as human beings under an obligation by divine mandate to study diligently God's Word. He is our Sovereign, it is his Word and he commands that we study it. A duty is not an option. If you have not yet begun to respond to that duty, then you need to ask God to forgive you and to resolve to do your duty from this day forth." R.C. Sproul

# Thinking

- "Guard what has been committed to your trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings and contradictions by what is falsely called knowledge—by professing it, some have strayed concerning doctrine" (I Timothy 6:20,21).

# Thinking

- Logic and reason are far from being incompatible with biblical Christianity. Rather, they are essential.
- Without them it is impossible to deduce anything from the true propositions of the 66 books of Scripture, the Christian's final authority.

# Thinking & Logic

- Logic is the science of the relations between *propositions*.
- Logic can tell us what can be inferred from a given proposition, but it cannot tell us whether the given proposition is true in the first place.

# Thinking & Logic

- All philosophical systems rely on logical deductions from starting assumptions—*axioms*—which, by definition, cannot be proven from prior assumption.
- For our axioms, it is rational to accept the propositions revealed by the infallible God in the 66 books of the Bible.
- *Loving God with all your mind: logic and creation by Jonathan D. Sarfat*

# Thinking & Logic

- Martin Luther correctly distinguished between the magisterial and ministerial use of reason.
- The magisterial use of reason occurs when reason stands over Scripture like a magistrate and judges it.
- Such 'reasoning' is bound to be flawed, because it starts with axioms invented by fallible humans and not revealed by the infallible God.

# Thinking & Logic

- But this is the chief characteristic of liberal 'Christianity'. It is refuted by Scriptural passages such as Isaiah 55:8–9
- 8 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord.
- 9 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.'

# Thinking & Logic

- Note that this does not say 'My logic is higher than your logic'.
- If so, then if we believed  $2+2=4$ , God could believe  $2+2=5$ .
- What it does mean is that God knows every true proposition, while we know only a part.

# Thinking & Logic

- Another passage is Romans 9:19–21
- 19 One of you will say to me: ‘Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?’
- 20 But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’
- 21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

# Thinking & Logic

- The ministerial use of reason occurs when reason submits to Scripture.
- This means that all things necessary for our faith and life are either expressly set down in Scripture or may be deduced by good and necessary consequence from Scripture.

# Thinking & Logic

- Many Scriptural passages show that Christians are not supposed to check in their brains at the church door, but to use their God-given minds in subjection to God's Word, e.g. Isaiah 1:18
- 18 'Come now, let us reason together,' says the Lord. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.'

# Thinking & Logic

- Matthew 22:36–38
- 36 ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’
- 37 Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’
- 38 This is the first and greatest commandment.’

# Thinking & Logic

- Romans 12:2
- 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

# Thinking & Logic

- 1 Corinthians 2:16
- 16 'For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?' But we have the mind [noema - thinking] of Christ.

# Thinking & Repentance

- *“From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 4:17*
- *“John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” Mark 1:4*

# Thinking & Repentance

- The Apostle Paul said, *“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”* Acts 17:30,31

# Thinking & Repentance

- *“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:37,38*

# Thinking & Repentance

- Repent:
  - Metanoeo: change your thinking.
  - Metamellomai: change your emotion.
- metanoeo and the Hebrew nacham are transitive verbs, both must have a subject and object either stated or implied. Therefore, the subject changes his mind about the object.
- In Salvation the sinner is the subject and Christ is the object.
- After salvation, the believer is the subject and Bible Doctrine is the object.
- All salvation verses refer to the object as Christ, not sins.

# Thinking & Repentance

- The verses where metanoeo is used in salvation, Mk.1:15; Mt.12:24,41; Lk.13:3,5; 15:7,10; 16:30,31; Act.17:30; 20:21; 26:20; Heb.12:17; 2Pet.3:9.
- Metanoeo is used with believer's in the following areas:
- Human good; dead works, Heb.6:1.
- Reversion recovery, Rev.2:5,16,22; 3:19; 2Cor.12:20.
- Recovery from carnality, 2Cor.12:21.
- .The word metamellomai is mistranslated "repent", but means "regret", Mt.21:29,32; 27:3; 2Cor.7:8; Heb.7:21; Rom.11:29.
- Regretting has NO spiritual benefits for the believer or unbeliever.

# Thinking & Faith

- Much confusion arises when some people disparage 'head knowledge'.
- For example, Geoff Smith, who was Pastor of the large Auckland Bible Church (New Zealand), has pointed out that in some churches, anything that has to do with rational thinking is suspect and strongly discouraged.

# Thinking & Faith

- Rational thinking is branded as something coming from the flesh.
- People of the Spirit won't try to understand what's happening—they will simply accept the 'blessing'.
- The catch words are unmistakable: 'Don't try to understand this', 'Don't try to analyze this', 'Don't try to figure this out with your mind', etc.

# Thinking & Faith

- In such thinking there is no real understanding that faith is always built on *knowledge*. The prophet Isaiah asks repeatedly ‘Do you not know, have you not heard?’ (Isaiah 40:21,28).
- Jesus repeatedly asks: ‘Have you not read ...?’ and tells the Sadducees that they are in error because they ‘do not know the Scriptures or the power of God’ (Matt. 22:29).

# Thinking & Faith

- In his letters Paul constantly shows that true, functional faith is always built on knowledge. Conversely, deficient faith is traced back to its unmistakable cause—deficient knowledge. Paul repeatedly asks the question ‘Don’t you know ...?’ (Rom. 6:3, 16; 11:2; 1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Cor. 5:6; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19; 1 Cor. 9:13, 27). Notice also the same question being asked by James (James 4:4). Philip asked the Ethiopian eunuch: ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ (Acts 8:30).

# Thinking & Faith

- Part of the confusion lies in the misunderstanding of the word 'heart' in the Bible.
- Some people make a false contrast between 'head-knowledge' and 'heart-trust'.
- When interpreting Scripture, it is important to work out what the authors meant by the term.
- In this case, one should work out what 'heart' meant to ancient Semites, not what it means in Hollywood pop-psychology.

# Thinking & Faith

- In the Bible, the word 'heart' is used to mean the action part of the soul or consciousness.
- Genesis 6:5: The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.
- Psalm 14:1: The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.

# Thinking & Faith

- The New Testament concept of faith is compatible with reason.
- The Greek word for 'faith' is *pistis* which is related to the verb *pisteuo* meaning 'believe'.
- It never has the connotation of 'believing six impossible things before breakfast', but 'is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.' (Heb. 11:1).
- Many non-Christians have a misconception of biblical faith, and unfortunately some Christians have accepted this.

# Thinking & Faith

- 1 Peter 3:15
- 15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.
- The Greek word translated 'answer' in 1 Peter 3:15 is in fact *απολογία* (*apologia*).
- This term is derived from the Greek words meaning 'out of logic/reason', so refers to a reasoned defense that would be given in a court of law.

# Thinking & Faith

- The classic example is Plato's **Apology**, Socrates' defense against the charges of atheism and corrupting the youth.
- The word also appears in the negative in Rom. 1:20: unbelievers are *anapologetos* (*anapologetos*) (without excuse / defense / apology) for rejecting the revelation of God in creation.
- The word for 'reason' above is *logos* (*logos*), in this context meaning evidence that provides rational justification for one's belief.

# Thinking

- Christ's half-brother, Jude, commanded in verse 3 of his epistle:
- '... earnestly contend for the faith [doctrine] which was once delivered unto the saints.'
- This implies a real intellectual battle to convince people of something righteous and true.

# Thinking

- Paul elaborated on this in 2 Corinthians 10:4–5:
- 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.
- 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.
- Of course, The World, The Flesh and The Devil are the anti-God forces, so we must make great efforts to demolish their thought invasions.

# Thinking

- Accurate Definitions of Words
- It is impossible to have a logical discussion with people if there is no agreement on meanings of words, or with those who are dishonest with their terminology.
- Socrates, in Plato's **Phaedo**, stated succinctly, 'To use words wrongly and indefinitely is not merely an error in itself, it also creates evil in the soul.'

# Thinking

- Many cults, including liberal ‘Christianity’, often use biblical terminology, but invest the words with entirely new meanings.
- They resemble Humpty-Dumpty who replied scornfully to Alice’s ignorance of what he meant, ‘When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.’

# Thinking

- Some prize examples of semantic gymnastics can be found in the ramblings of liberal 'Christians'.
- Since they are being paid to teach doctrines they don't believe, they redefine them instead.
- That way, they can pretend they are not violating their ordination vows.

# Thinking

- For them, God is not the Creator, but the ‘ultimate concern’;
- ‘Jesus is Risen’ means that His influence continued after His death;
- ‘Christian faith’ need not consist of holding any doctrines, although the NT states that those who forsake orthodox Christian doctrine have departed from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1, 5:8, 12:2, 2 Tim. 3:8; cf Eph. 4:5).

# Thinking & Reasoned Arguments

- In logic, an argument is defined as a sequence of statements comprising premises that are claimed to support a conclusion.
- Scripture teaches that Christians are to argue in this sense.
- This is not the same as being argumentative, or arguing just for the sake of arguing.