

Defend Your Hope

A biblical approach to engaging others about your faith

By Ryan Tolan

Lesson Objectives

- **PMLO:** To equip saints to the unity of faith, knowledge of Christ and maturity demonstrated through building the church in love (Eph. 4:12-16)
- **CLOs:**
 - Embrace God as a necessary precondition for existence (Gen. 1:1)
 - Examine the logic that shows up in our conversations (2 Cor. 5:10)
 - Develop a biblical strategy for hard conversations (1 Pet. 3:15)

Introduction

- This class considers elements that pertain to quality everyday conversations with those who challenge your faith
- Trouble defending your faith?
- Haven't presented your faith in years? Decades?
- Faith needs fortification?
- Tired of stumbling over reasons for believing?
- The apologetics class helps you:
 - Make bold claims
 - Stand on truth
 - Win people, not just arguments

Topics

- God Logic
- Apologetics
- Mind Tactics
- Logical Fallacies
- Application Scenarios

God Logic

God Logic

Sub Topics

- Start with God
- The Truth Problem
- The Neutrality Fallacy

Start with God

- God
 - He has an unique identity
 - He maintains His attributes harmoniously
 - You can know Him, others want substitution
 - He is the justification for your existence (creator)
- Sin → exchange this truth for lies (Romans 1:25)
 - Everyone knows God exists
 - Evidence has been clearly revealed since creation (Romans 1:20)
 - You will encounter truth suppressors (unbelievers)
- Rejecting God = faulty presupposition

God and Knowledge

- The fear of the LORD is the beginning of **knowledge**; Fools despise wisdom and instruction - **Proverbs 1:7**
 - God is the foundation of knowledge
 - Knowledge is made possible because of God
- The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the **knowledge** of the Holy One is understanding - **Proverbs 9:10**
 - Knowing God leads to understanding
 - We have clarity and justification for knowledge

Two Requirements for Knowledge

- Omniscience – Have all knowledge
 - You know truth from falsehood
- Know someone with omniscience
 - God can reveal truth for our understanding
 - We know God like others do – revelation
 - God's revelation is sufficient for all
 - God confirms His own truth
 - The Holy Spirit/Jesus

God and Truth

- God is the foundation of truth
 - Truth claims presuppose God's existence
- We make sense of truth through Jesus
 - "Jesus *said to him, "***I am*** the way, and ***the truth***, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." - ***John 14:6***
- Truth is displayed, but not always accepted...
 - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who ***suppress the truth*** in unrighteousness" - ***Romans 1:18***
 - Suppress the truth → You're without excuse
 - Ungodliness is a normal/sinful human condition
 - God has revealed truth already

God and Truth 2

- The gospel is true with its implications
 - "In Him, you also, after listening to the ***message of truth***, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise" - ***Ephesians 1:13***
 - The gospel comes with a package deal
 - Believe the gospel and its implications
 - "3 For I delivered to you as of ***first importance*** what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" - ***1 Corinthians 15:3-4***
 - The gospel is priority teaching

Marketers say,
"Truth is in the eye
of the beholder."
But, God demands
truth correspond to
His character

Irrational Man

- **Ephesians 4:17-18** - 17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their **mind**, 18 being darkened in their **understanding**, excluded from the life of God because of the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the hardness of their **heart**
 - Same evidence, different conclusions
 - Conclusions are filtered through presuppositions
- Sinners are committed to independence from God
- Fools declare God doesn't exist (see **Psalm 14:1, 53:1**)
 - We represent God, not just a god

Circular Reasoning

- | Virtuous | Vicious |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ● Based on an ultimate authority | ● Invalid, lacks proof |
| ● Prevents an infinite regress | ● Begs the question |
| ● A necessary precondition | ● Unjustifiably circular |

Who Is The Judge?

- Who do you give evidence to?
- How is on trial?
- When you give evidence, who's on trial?
- When you give evidence, who's the judge?
- God should be judge hearing the case
- God does not belong on trial

How to Answer a Fool



Rational God, Rational People

- **Ephesians 4:20-21; 23-24**
 - 20 But you did not **learn** Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been **taught** in Him, just as **truth** is in Jesus
 - 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your **mind**, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the **truth**
- People do not reason to God
 - People cannot reason without God
- We use God as a standard of knowledge
 - Including unbelievers who make knowledge claims
- God uses our reason to impart understanding

Believers vs. Suppressers Tendencies

Believers

- Confirms God exists
- God is ultimate authority
- Reason from God
- Trust God everyday
- God as foundation of reason

Suppressers

- Suppresses God's existence
- Have insufficient authority
- Lack justification without God
- Distrust God with suppressers
- Self as foundation for reason

The Neutrality Fallacy

- **Matthew 12:30** (cf. **Luke 11:23**) - "He who is ***not with Me is against Me***; and he who does ***not gather with Me scatters.***"
- One choice, two options, no middle ground
 - "No choice" is a choice
 - Observe the same evidence, but conclude differently?
 - People use evidence to justify their presuppositions (confirmation bias)

There Is No Neutrality

- It's impossible and absurd
- It's immoral
- It's unnecessary and uncalled for
- It's ungrounded
- "All knowledge, even the knowledge possessed by the unbeliever in unrighteousness, must be founded upon the accepted truth about God. Therefore, both the unbeliever's knowledge and God's common grace should be used, not to encourage ***neutrality***, but to press home the demands of God at every point." - Greg Bahnsen, "Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith", 40.

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Topics

- Preconditions and Presuppositions
- Implications
- Applications

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Introduction

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- Can you handle difficult objections to Christianity?
- What objections to Christianity do you have?
- Are there questions impossible to answer?
- What if you can't answer a question?

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us, but be useful

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Preconditions and
Presuppositions

- Apologetics vs. Evangelism
- Success
- Commitments

Apologetics vs. Evangelism

Apologetics	Evangelism
Is the process of defending one's faith	Is the process of proclaiming the truth of one's faith in the gospel
Consists of studying biblical truth	Consists of sharing the biblical gospel gained from studying it
Is a defensive approach that presents biblical reason for belief	Is an offensive approach that demands belief with biblical reason
Is a biblical act of preparing to present the gospel	Is a biblical act of presenting the gospel

Christian Pre-Commitments

- Two Necessities:
 - Know God (relationship)
 - Serve God (take action and defend)

Successful Precondition

- You must have faith in Jesus
- You must demonstrate repentance
- Healthy relationship with Christ should precede apologetics
 - **1 Peter 3:15** – “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence”
- Success starts before you defend

Apologetic Presuppositions and Justice κρίσιμα

- **1 Peter 3:18** - For Christ also died for sins once for all, the **just** for the **unjust**, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit
 - Jesus paid His price, let's pay ours
 - Our suffering for good is worth justice
- **John 5:30** – I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I **judge**; and My **judgment** is **just**, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
 - God determines what is just
 - Justice is a matter of authority/initiative

Apologetics

Implications

- Comparisons
- Self-defense
- Gospel defense

Implications of Apologetics

True Implications	False Implications
The gospel is worth defending	The gospel "needs" no defending
Defending your hope in Christ is best done with confession that Jesus is Lord	Defending your hope in Christ is a mere logical debate
Conversations may include providing evidence for God	Conversations demand proof that God exists
Seek to ultimately win the person	Seek to ultimately win the argument

Defense in the Bible

- A reasoned verbal defense/support
 - Self-defense (Acts 22:1; Acts 25:16; 1 Cor. 9:3; 2 Cor. 7:11; 2 Tim. 4:16)
 - Gospel defense (Php. 1:7; Php 1:16; 1 Pet. 3:15)

Self-Defense (Acts 22:1)

- "1 Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now offer to you."
 - Paul defends himself after being detained (Acts 21:28-30)
 - Paul shares his testimony, which includes Christ

Self-Defense (Acts 25:16)

- “16 I answered them that it is not the custom of the Romans to hand over any man before the accused meets his accusers face to face and has an opportunity to make his defense against the charges.”
 - Defense against allegations to promote the gospel

Self-Defense (1 Cor. 9:3)

- “3 My defense to those who examine me is this:”
 - Paul addresses his freedoms as an apostle
 - Free to:
 - Marry
 - Receive benefits from church work
 - Paul was free to give up freedoms
 - Paul's defense clarifies apostolic expectations

Self-Defense (2 Cor. 7:11)

- “11 For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.”
 - Godly sorrow can revitalize a Christian's reputation
 - Repentance comes with no regret, but benefit
 - Your mindset may vary
 - Worldly sorry leads to death

Self-Defense (2 Tim. 4:16)

- “16 At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. 17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth.”
 - Your help comes from the Lord
 - Seize opportunities to proclaim the gospel

Gospel Defense (Php. 1:7)

- “7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the **defense** and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.”
 - You should defend the gospel
 - Don’t let the gospel be overshadowed/forgotten
 - Participate with believers in defending the gospel

Gospel Defense (Php. 1:16)

- “16 the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the **defense** of the gospel”
 - Paul addresses good and bad preaching motives
 - You should defend the gospel
 - Use good will to support gospel ministry
 - Envy and strife are not gospel approved

Gospel Defense (1 Pet. 3:15)

- Meant to support/guard one’s faith (**1 Pet. 3:15; cf. Isa. 8:13**)
 - **1 Pet. 3:15** “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a **defense** to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence”
 - **Isa. 8:13** “It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, And He shall be your dread.”

Apologetics

Applications

- Paul in Athens (Acts 17)
- Applications

Words of Caution

- **2 Timothy 2:14:** "...not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers."
 - Avoid heresy
 - Avoid meaningless debates (about words)
- **1 Thessalonians 2:3-5**
 - Avoid error (leads astray, false)
 - Avoid impurity (diluted, syncretistical)
 - Avoid deceit (fraudulent decoy, trickery, intentionally deceptive)
 - Avoid seeking to please men (agreeable)
 - Avoid flattering speech (manipulative)
 - Avoid greed (selfish)

Give Reasons for the Faith (John 20)

- **John 20:27-28** – 27 Then He *said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." 28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God! 29 Jesus *said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? ***Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.***
 - Faith doesn't come only through seeing evidence
 - Evidence bolsters existing faith
 - We are not saved by evidence

Application of apologetics

1. Evidential: Give reasons for the faith (**John 14:11; 20:27-28**)
2. Defensive: Protect against objections (**Proverbs 26:4, 1 Peter 5:18-19**)
3. Offensive: Exposes suppression of truth (**Romans 1:18**)

Give Reasons for the Faith (Futility, John 14)

- **John 14:11** – 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.
 - If only people believed because of works
 - If evidence was enough, people would believe
 - People suppress truth despite evidence

Give Reasons for the Faith (Futility, Luke 16)

- **Luke 16:27-29** - 27 And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house--28 for I have five brothers--in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'29 But Abraham *said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'
 - Dead famous Scripture writers should be convincing
 - Risen dead people don't convince like God (Scriptures)

Protect Against Objections (Prov. 26)

- **Proverbs 26:4-5** - "4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Or you will also be like him. 5 Answer a fool as his folly deserves, That he not be wise in his own eyes."
 - Don't give credence to foolishness
 - Giving credence to foolishness turns you fool
 - Highlight folly to save the other person

Protect Against Objections (1 Peter 5)

- 8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world."
 - Your experiences are the same as others'
 - Your resistance distinguishes you from the world

Exposes Suppression of Truth (Rom. 1)

- "17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith.' 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness"
 - God's wrath and righteousness are both revealed
 - Faith is revealed from faith
 - God reveals His own wrath to suppressers
 - You either have faith or suppress truth

The gospel is the power of salvation (Romans 1:16)

Tell the Truth

- Judge
 - **1 Corinthians 5:13** - "remove the wicked man from among..."
 - **Matthew 18:15-20** - perform church discipline
 - **Luke 17:3-6** - Rebuke, Repent, Forgive, Repeat
- Power
 - **Romans 1:16** - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."
- Confront
 - **Proverbs 26:4-5** - "4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Or you will also be like him. 5 Answer a fool as his folly deserves, That he not be wise in his own eyes."

Repeat After Me

- That's not what the Bible says
- How does your worldview justify truth?
 - What is truth?
 - Is that true?
 - Where do you get truth without God?

Denying God Implications

- Reject the basis for truth and reason
- Cannot justify their reason without God
 - Depend on God while denying Him (ridiculous)
- Arguments are reduced to absurdity
 - Where do you get truth without God?
 - What's your foundation for assessing my answers?

Knowledge Claims

- "Could you be wrong about everything you claim to know?"
 - If yes, they cannot know anything
 - If no, how do you justify knowledge?
 - Do you use reason to justify reasoning?
 - Circular fallacy, must stop infinite regress
 - Believers have God as basis for reason
 - We start with God, not to Him
 - God explains, not lets us escape questions
- Bible studies with unbelievers who deny God?
 - Don't bolster unbelief with off-topic topics
 - Bring people to their need for God

Mind Tactics

Mind Tactics

- Employ your mind
- Application

Sound Mind

- Some exchange thoughtfulness for emotional guidance
- Right mind, sound mind, sensible
 - Mark 5:15 (Luke 8:35)
 - 2 Corinthians 5:13-14
 - 2 Corinthians 10:5
 - Ephesians 4:17-19
 - Romans 2:14-15
 - Philippians 2:2-3
 - Colossians 3:2
 - Titus 1:15
 - Titus 2:6

Employ Your Mind (Mark 5)

- **Mark 5:15 (Luke 8:35)** - "They *came to Jesus and *observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and *in his right mind*, the very man who had had the 'legion'; and they became frightened."
 - Exorcision resulted in a sound mind
 - Clear thinking can be compromised without God
 - A redeemed mind is recognizable (see frightened response)

Employ Your Mind (2 Corinthians 5)

- **2 Corinthians 5:13-14** - 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound *mind*, it is for you. 14 For the *love of Christ controls* us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died
 - Think clearly for the sake of others
 - You love Christ? Be of sound mind
 - Conclude Jesus died for all
 - Let His love control you

Employ Your Mind (2 Corinthians 10)

- **2 Corinthians 10:5** - "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are *taking every thought captive* to the obedience of Christ"
 - Our thinking is subjected to Christ
 - We root out our thoughts against Christ
 - Christ is foundational to our reasoning
 - We cannot reason to another authority (irrational)

Employ Your Mind (Ephesians 4)

- **Ephesians 4:17-19** - "17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the *futility of their mind*,¹⁸ being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;¹⁹ and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness."
 - The mind itself produces no benefit
 - Benefits should please God
 - In sin, God is not pleased

Employ Your Mind (Romans 2)

- **Romans 2:14-15** - "14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, ***their conscience bearing witness*** and ***their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them***"
 - God gave a truth foundation to all
 - Unbelievers reveal God's existence with knowledge claims
 - Unbelievers reveal God's existence with moral claims

Employ Your Mind (Colossians 3)

- **Colossians 3:2** - "***Set your mind*** on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."
 - You're mindful of lasting effects
 - No one mediates between you and Christ
 - Christ is not hidden from believers

Employ Your Mind (Philippians 2)

- **Philippians 2:2-3** - "2 make my joy complete by being of the ***same mind***, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with ***humility of mind*** regard one another as more important than yourselves"
 - Think like other believers
 - Think humbly: treat others as more important
 - With a humble mind, take action

Employ Your Mind (Titus 1)

- **Titus 1:15** - "To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their ***mind and their conscience are defiled.***"
 - Thinking and awareness are corrupted by sin
 - Reasoning without God is subject to impurity

Employ Your Mind (Titus 2)

- **Titus 2:6** - "Likewise urge the young men to be sensible"
 - Young men should exercise self control
 - Be sober mindedness lets you act wisely
 - Pattern of good works
 - Incorrupt doctrine
 - Worthy of respect
 - Sound speech not to be condemned

Logical Fallacies

Logical Fallacies

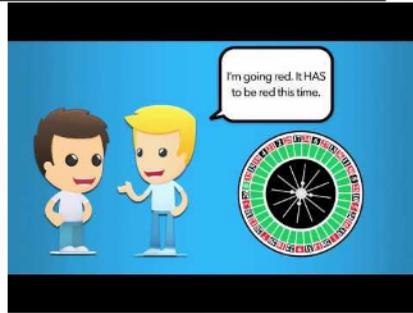
- Explanation
- Examples

Logical Fallacies

- Inconsistencies in reasoning
- Commonplace
 - Political debates, classrooms, dinners
- Often accepted, although illogical
- Several fallacies have been named

Logical Fallacy Types

- Inconsistencies in reasoning
- Very common examples:
 1. Straw Man
 2. Red Herring
 3. Ad Hominem
 4. Tu Quoque
 5. Appeal to Popularity
 6. Begging the Question
 7. Confusing Cause and Effect
 8. False Dilemma
 9. Hasty Generalization
 10. Motte and Bailey



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Straw Man Fallacy

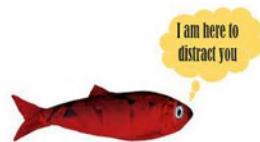
- **Idea:** Reframed claim attacked although not original
- **Form:**
 - A claims X
 - B challenges Y as if X
- **Problem:** Attacking the wrong claim
- **Example:**
 - A: "That's why we remember 3 minutes songs better"
 - B: "I still don't see how they are better songs"
 - A: "That wasn't my point"



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Red Herring Fallacy

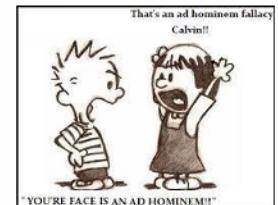
- **Idea:** Secondary claim distracts from original claim
- **Form:**
 - A claims X
 - B mentions Y as a distraction from X
- **Problem:** The original claim is no longer argued
- **Example:**
 - A: "Inflation is increasing"
 - B: "But, many cryptocurrencies are increasing too"
 - A: "Let's stay on topic though..."



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Ad Hominem Fallacy

- **Idea:** Attacking the person instead of the argument
- **Form:**
 - A claims X
 - B challenges A, not X
 - Therefore, X is wrong
- **Problem:** Attacking the person still leaves the claim to be argued against
- **Example:**
 - A: "We need better fiscal policy"
 - B: "You can't even budget your own finances, what do you know!?"



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Tu Quoque Fallacy

- **Idea:** Hypocrisy used to defeat claim
- **Form:**
 - A claims X
 - B claims A is guilty of X
 - Therefore, A is fallacious in claiming X
- **Problem:** Claiming hypocrisy doesn't necessarily prove a claim
- **Example:**
 - A: "You shouldn't put your shoes there"
 - B: "You did that last week!"
 - A: "That doesn't mean you can"



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Appeal to Popularity Fallacy

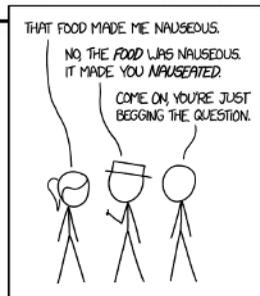
- AKA, "Bandwagon fallacy"
- **Idea:** The popular choice is considered correct
- **Form:**
 - Many people seemingly believe X (have favorable emotions towards X).
 - Therefore X is true.
- **Problem:** People's opinions may persuade, but do not constitute what is true.
- **Example:** "Majority of us disagree with you, so you're wrong"



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Begging the Question Fallacy

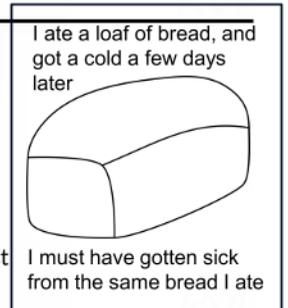
- Consider "Circular Reasoning"
- **Idea:** Claim presumed true in premise
- **Form:**
 - A claims X based on at least part of X
 - Therefore X is true.
- **Problem:** There is no appeal to the ultimate authority to stop the infinite regress
- **Example:**
 - A: "Abortion is the right choice because it makes sense that it's right"
 - B: "But, how do you know it's right?"



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Confusing Cause and Effect

- **Idea:** Requires that there is not, in fact, a common cause that actually causes both A and B.
- **Form:**
 - A makes claim vs. B
 - B claims A is guilty of the same claim
 - Therefore, A is wrong
- **Problem:** "Correlation does not equal causation." One does not cause the other just because they have commonalities



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False Dilemma Fallacy

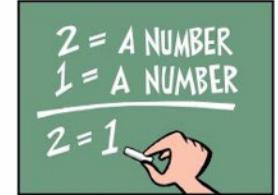
- **Idea:** Each proposed claim could be false, and it cannot, therefore, be inferred that one is true because another is false.
- **Form:**
 - A claims proposes options as the only options
 - Therefore, one of the options are true
- **Problem:** the proposed options may not be the only options, just the only proposed
- In cases in which the proposed options are, in fact, the only options, this line of reasoning is not fallacious.



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Hasty Generalization Fallacy

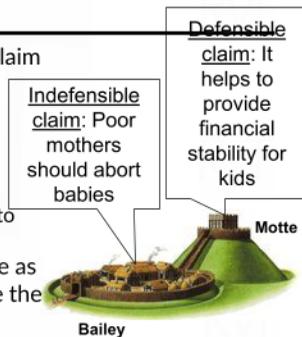
- AKA, "Jumping to Conclusions"
- **Idea:** Premise lacks sufficient support for a claim
- **Form:**
 - A claims X is true without sufficient evidence
- **Problem:** A claim may be false despite the exaggeration; exaggeration can make a true claim false
- **Example (Hyperbole):**
 - "This is the most boring class ever!"
 - "I *always* get in trouble!"
 - "I *never* get to say what I feel!"



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Motte and Bailey Fallacy

- **Idea:** A person retreats to a less arguable claim after being confronted on the initial claim; reframes claim to sound stronger
- **Form:**
 - A claims X
 - B confronts claim X
 - A makes the more easier to prove claim Y to show that claim X is true
- **Problem:** The obvious claim is not the same as the controversial claim, and does not make the controversial claim true



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Question?

Takeaways

- Start with God
- Stand for your rights (see Paul in [Acts 22:22-29](#))
- Watch your tongue! ([James 3:1-12](#))
- Be wise, not just smart ([James 3:13-18](#))
- Choosing the truth
- Stop giving into lies
- Understand what and why before repeating
- Study to the point of gaining discernment

Defend Your Hope

A biblical approach to engaging others about your faith

By Ryan Tolan
