

1. How Do We Discuss Hot Topics?

January 8, 2023

A. Why even have discussions with people over hot topics?

1. There are lost people and they need someone to bring them the truth. (Romans 10:15)
2. We know that only the Holy Spirit can convince and call someone. This takes the pressure off us to argue someone into the Kingdom. (John 6:44; 10:27-28; Romans 8:29-30,10:14-15; 1 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 2:4-6,8-9)
3. Impact on American culture. (Genesis 45:9-12; Matthew 5:16; 1 Timothy 5:8)
4. God's word to teach, rebuke, correct, and train in righteousness. (II Timothy 3:16-17)
5. Change people's actions. (Micah 6:8; Romans 6:9,18; Romans 12:2; 1 Cor. 15:34, 12)
6. Persuade people to adopt a viewpoint. (Romans 12:2; 2 Cor. 10:5; Philippians 4:8; Col. 3:2)

B. Some of the various goals of discussions:

1. Sharing of the Gospel.
2. Discussing controversial subjects.
3. Persuading others to adopt a certain view or principle. (Acts 17:2-4)
4. Deepening a relationship.
5. Teaching.
6. Making a case/argument.

C. Challenges to having discussions:

1. Fear. (John 14:27)
2. Political polarization in America.
3. Emotions.
4. Distrust.
5. Retaliation.
6. Lack of knowledge.
7. Lack of willingness to have a civil or logical discussion.

D. Communication types:

1. Winsome.
2. Defensive.
3. Offensive.
4. Creative.
5. Persuasive.
6. Rhetorical/cut and run.

E. Some of the questions we need to ask ourselves:

1. Am I trusting God to work in this person? (John 6:44; 10:27-28; Romans 8:29-30;10:14-15; Ephesians 2:4-6,8-9)
2. Do I even want to have a discussion with this person over hot topics if they are going to be difficult, reject me, or retaliate? (1 Peter 2:17)
3. Do I have a relationship with this person such that he trusts me? (1 Cor. 9:19-23, 13)
4. Do I love this person enough to overcome my fear? (1 John 4:18)
5. Must I have a discussion because God requires it of me? (Jn. 9:31; Eph. 6:6; Hebrews 13:21)
6. Am I willing to receive persecution because I speak? (Acts 5:41)
7. Am I willing to learn more to help this person? (2 Timothy 4:2)

F. A few of the many Biblical references applicable to sharing our faith:

1. Be ready to defend verses
 - a. 1 Peter 3:15-17
 - b. 2 Timothy 4:2
 - c. Acts 4:18-20
 - d. 2 Timothy 2:23-26
2. Initiate or be on the offense:
 - a. Matthew 28:18-20
 - b. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5
 - c. Ephesians 5:6,11-13
 - d. Colossians 4:5-6

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G. How then are we to prepare for discussions with people over hot topics?

1. Think of ourselves as “ambassadors/diplomat” (book: *Tactics* by Gregory Koukl)
2. Ask questions and be creative. (Luke 7:41-42, 20:3-4; Matthew 16:13)
3. Avoid anger. (James 1:9)
4. Gain a relationship of trust. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)
5. Be ready and look for opportunities. (1 Peter 3:15-17)
6. Gain knowledge of the Word. (Proverbs 15:18, James 1:5, Philippians 1:9, 2 Peter 3:18)
7. Gain knowledge of the world. (Matthew 10:16)
8. Understand logical fallacies/issues. (1 Thessalonians 5:21)
9. Be willing to be rejected, persecuted, and maligned if that is God’s will. (Matt. 24:9-10; 1 Cor. 4:12-13)

H. Logical Fallacies:

- Why learn about fallacies? (Eph. 5:11-13; 1 Thess. 5:21-22; 2 Thess. 2:3; 2 Tim. 3:13)
- Different types of logical fallacies (see *Introduction to Logic* by Dr. Jason Lisle.)
 1. Gaslighting.
 2. Framing Bias.
 3. Equivocation.
 4. Reification.
 5. Hasty Generalization.
 6. Fallacy of False Cause.
 7. Begging the Question.
 8. Question-Begging Epithet.
 9. The Complex Question.
 10. The Bifurcation Fallacy.
 11. The True Scotsman Fallacy.
 12. Slippery Slope Fallacy.
 13. Ad Hominem.
 14. Faulty Appeal to Authority.
 15. Strawman Fallacy.
 16. Appeal to Force/Fear.
- Importance of fallacy detection.

I. Summary:

- We want that no one would perish for lack of knowing Christ. (Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Tim. 2:4-6; 2 Peter 3:9)
- We have a distinct advantage over unbelievers because we have a Christian worldview and more importantly, we have the Holy Spirit to teach and comfort us. (John 14:26)
- Our goal is to be creative, winsome, and loving unless the situation calls for speaking out no matter the cost. (Luke 10:27; John 13:35; Acts 4:18-20)
- Not all of us are gifted in the same way, so the extent we engage others may differ, but all of us can be “one beggar showing another beggar where to find food.” (John 4:36; 1 Cor. 3:6)

J. Resources Specific to This Class:

- Book on techniques and creative methods on how to discuss hot topics with others: *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions* by Gregory Koukl.
- *The Questions Christians Hope No One Will Ask: (With Answers)* by Mark Mittelberg and Lee Strobel. This book may have some theological issues, but the value of the book is the encouragement and information provided to answer people’s basic issues with Christianity.
- Two substantive books from Dr. Lisle are: *Introduction to Logic* and the other is *Ultimate Proof of Creation: Resolving the Origins Debate*. For a shorter treatment, I suggest Dr. Lisle’s *Logic & Faith*, which is only 94 pages.