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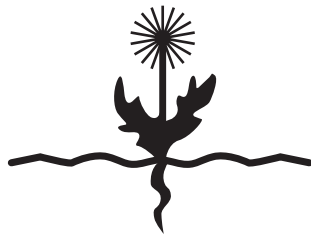
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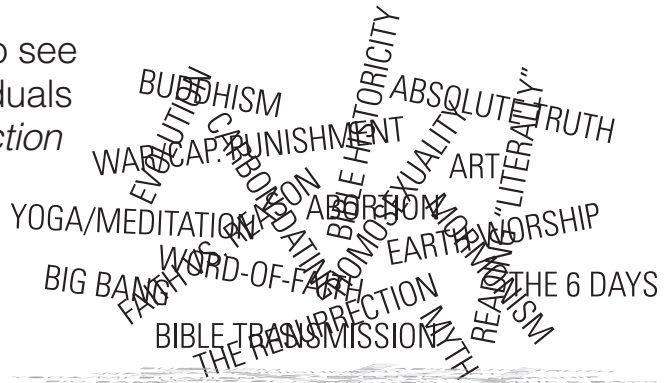


BUILDING YOUR **CURRICULUM**

Where Do I Start?

So you recognize the need to equip your group to engage the worldviews of the culture but you don't know where to start?

In my experience, leaders tend to see study topics the same way individuals see objections – *as a loose collection of unconnected ideas*. They try to tackle them in an arbitrary fashion without showing the commonalities or connections between them.



The result is that their group may learn a few good pieces of information, but they don't see how this information fits into the larger picture of their worldview.

The Meet-The-Skeptic approach emphasizes *understanding* over data – seeing the big picture/worldview behind a skeptic's objections rather than chasing down answers to every objection he raises.

A Framework

The same 4-Category approach for conversations with skeptics can be used to build a curriculum for studying worldviews. Just as the 4 Categories help organize one's thoughts for a conversation, they can help organize topics for a curriculum (*facing page diagram*).

Instead of a loose collection of individual studies in which participants glean bits and pieces of information, the 4 Categories provide a framework into which the studies fit.

Participants can see how the topics they are studying fit into a larger worldview.

Sample Curriculum

SPIRITUAL SKEPTICISM

1) Root Idea: Why is, “*Good works get you to heaven,*” the Root Idea?

- Define the worldview: *Spirituality*
- The similarities and differences between “religion” and “spirituality”
- Why be religious anyway?
- The Bible on salvation by grace through faith
- The inevitable result of a life governed by spirituality
- Why is, “*How good is good enough?*,” the Spiritual Probing Question?

2) Classic Objections

- Answering: “*Many paths lead to heaven;*” “*Meditation leads to enlightenment;*” “*Your words create your destiny,*” etc.
- Clarifying Red-Flag Words: “enlightened,” “karma,” “organized religion,” “holy,” etc.
- Who did Jesus claim to be?

3) Current Topics/Buzz

- Articles, blogs, YouTube, movie clips, etc. related to: the supernatural (ghost hunting, mediums, angels, etc.), heaven and hell, wellness, yoga, the Green movement, other religions

MORAL SKEPTICISM

1) Root Idea: Why is, “*People should people decide for themselves what is right or wrong,*” the Root Idea?

- Define the worldview: *Moral Relativism*
- Where do morals come from? (God, evolution, social constructs?)
- Does absolute moral truth exist?
- The inevitable result in a society governed by relativism
- Why is, “*What is your standard for right and wrong?*,” the Spiritual Probing Question?

2) Classic Objections

- Answering: “*All truth is relative;*” “*That’s true for you but not for me;*” “*God isn’t fair because...*,” etc. by:
- Clarifying Red-Flag Words: “intolerant,” “exclusive,” “hate,” “judging,” etc.

3) Current Topics/Buzz

- Articles, blogs, YouTube, movie clips, etc. related to: COEXIST, diversity, homosexuality, abortion, social justice, controversial art, capital punishment, war (justice of)

SCIENTIFIC SKEPTICISM

1) Root Idea: Why is, “*The natural world is all there is,*” the Root Idea?

- Define the worldview: *Naturalism*
- Reframing “faith vs. science” to “informed faith vs. blind faith”
- Observational science vs. historical (interpretive) science
- Why is, “*How much faith is required for that belief?*,” the Scientific Probing Question?

2) Classic Objections

- Answering: “*Evolution is a proven fact;*” “*The Big Bang created the universe;*” “*Faith is an irrational crutch,*” etc.
- Clarifying Red-Flag Words: “macro/micro-evolution,” “natural selection,” “mutation,” “information,” etc.
- What about the six days of creation (Gen. 1)?
- What about geological dating? distant starlight and time?
- Did scientists create life in the lab?

3) Current Topics/Buzz

- Articles, blogs, YouTube, movie clips, etc. related to: fossil findings, astronomy, intelligent design, teaching science in schools, debates between atheists and Christian thinkers

BIBLICAL SKEPTICISM

1) Root Idea: Why is, “*The Bible is man-made,*” the Root Idea?

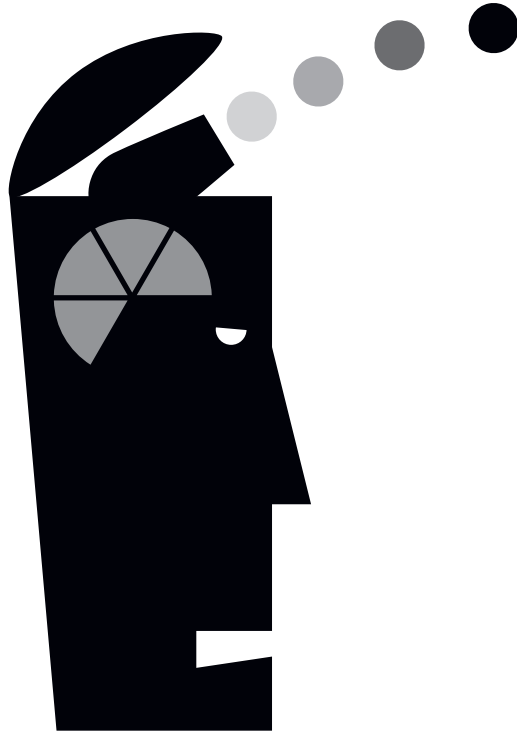
- Define the worldview: *Secularism*
- What is the Bible’s image among nonbelievers and why do they have it?
- Navigating the Bible
- What areas of the Bible are most likely to be attacked?
- How can the Bible be more authoritative than any other book?
- Why is, “*If God gave us a book, how would we really know it came from him?*,” the Biblical Probing Question?

2) Classic Objections

- Answering: “*The Bible is full of myths/errors;*” “*The Bible’s teachings are out of date;*” “*The Bible writers were biased,*” etc.
- Are the Bible manuscripts reliable?
- Clarifying Red-Flag Words: “legend/myth,” “literally,” (reading the Bible) “translations,” etc.

3) Current Topics/Buzz

- Articles, blogs, YouTube, movie clips, etc. related to: the “lost” books of the Bible, the Jesus Seminar, liberal believing and nonbelieving scholars



WHAT IS A **SKEPTIC**?



WHAT IS A SKEPTIC?

p. 7

someone who rejects the biblical worldview in favor of another way of seeing the world

WHY ARE PEOPLE SKEPTICS?

- 1) parents - overbearing believers or non-believing
- 2) false Christians (TV evangelists, Christian-like cults)
- 3) non-believing experts (teachers, professors)
- 4) material comfort - don't need God
- 5) "hypocrites"

Skepticism is an *opportunity!* It shows us where the need for truth is.

How Prepared Are You?

■ On a scale of 1-10, how prepared are you to answer the objections like the ones below?

<p>"C'MON, YOU DON'T REALLY BELIEVE IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH, DO YOU?"</p>	<p>(ready)</p> <p>10</p>
<p>"MODERN SCIENCE MAKES GOD UNNECESSARY."</p>	<p>9</p>
<p>"RELIGION IS THE CAUSE OF MOST OF THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS."</p>	<p>8</p>
<p>"THE BIBLE IS FULL OF MYTHS AND ERRORS."</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>"HOW CAN YOU SAY YOUR VALUES ARE BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE'S?"</p>	<p>6</p>
	<p>5</p>
	<p>4</p>
	<p>3</p>
	<p>2</p>
	<p>1</p>
	<p>(clueless)</p>

■ What kind of objections do you think are the most difficult to answer and why?

good opportunity for discussion here

What Should We Expect?

■ Read the verses below and answer the questions about what to expect when engaging skeptics:

Who will listen to me?
 Their ears are closed
 so they cannot hear.
 The word of the Lord
 is offensive to them;
 they find no pleasure in it.
 - Jer. 6: 10

When you tell them
 all this, they will
 not listen to you;
 when you call to them,
 they will not answer.
 - Jer. 7: 27

If God knew the people would respond this way, what did he gain by sending Jeremiah?

p. 13 God gained glory for himself when truth was proclaimed - truth deserves to be declared regardless of how it is received

³²When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject."
³⁴A few men became followers of Paul and believed.
 - Acts 17: 32,34

¹⁰As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.
 - Isa. 55:10-11

How do these verses affect your attitude toward engaging people with truth?

p. 11 we should have realistic expectations - the world is hostile to truth, so ridicule is expected; we should be happy when the truth is received even if only by a few; we should know that none of our words for the cause of Christ are wasted

²⁴At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane."

²⁵"I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable."

²⁸Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"
 - Acts 26:24-25, 28

p. 13 ■ From the conversation above and the other passages on this page, which *two* options below best describe what mindset we should have when talking to skeptics?

- We should try to *CONVINCE* skeptics.**
- We should *SUPPORT OUR CLAIMS* to skeptics.**
- We should *COMMUNICATE TRUTH* to skeptics.**
- We should rely on *INTELLECTUAL ARGUMENTS*.**

only the Holy Spirit can convince; intellectual arguments support the truth when the Holy Spirit opens people's eyes to see it

Game Plan

Without a plan, our conversations with skeptics are likely to become:

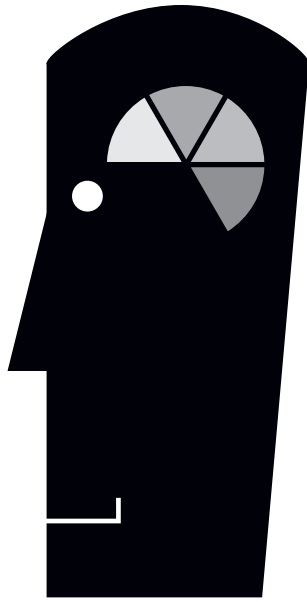
- A) **Games of fetch** in which the skeptic keeps the believer busy chasing down answers to his objections, pp. 7-8
or,
- B) **Ping-pong matches** that exchange superficial points until one side can beat the other with the sharpest response, or until both sides get frustrated and quit. p. 34

■ Have you experienced situations like these? Describe them:

[good opportunity for discussion here](#)

...But we'll learn a different approach that will help send conversations in a more meaningful direction. This approach has the following three steps that we'll discuss in the coming pages:

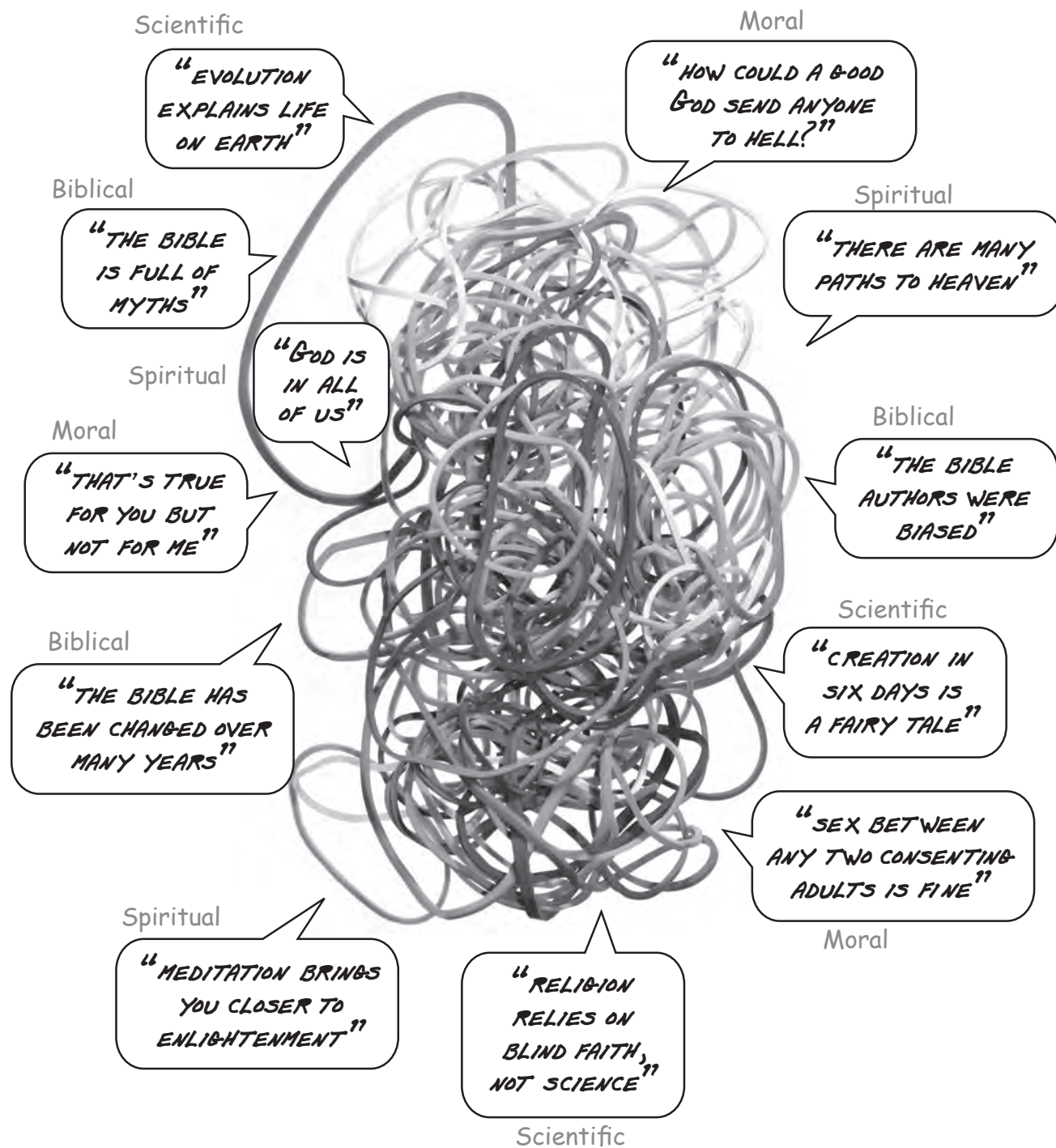
- 1) Think in 4 Categories
- 2) Clarify Words
- 3) Dig Up Root Ideas



THINK IN **4 CATEGORIES**

Don't Get Overwhelmed...

A skeptic's objections to the biblical worldview can seem like a tangled mess that is nearly impossible to unravel:











...Rethink It!

pp. 33-36

However, objections have something in common (see below) that allows us to put them into groups:

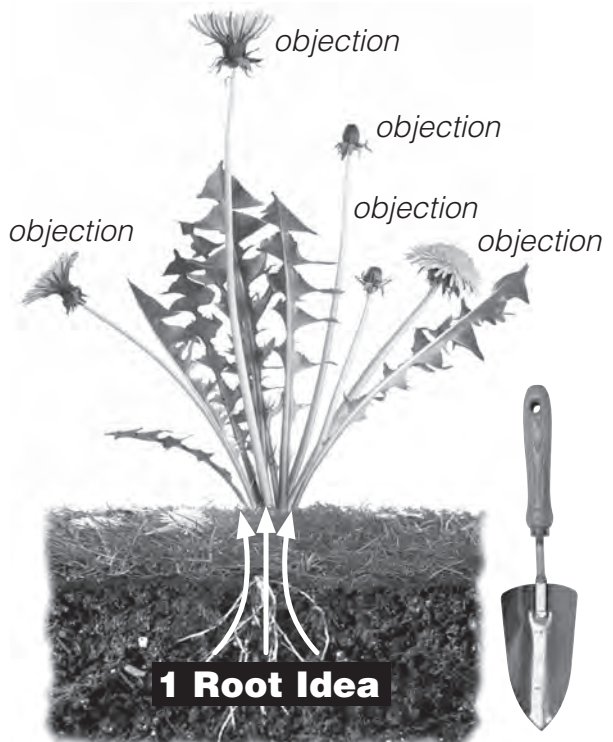
- To which category does each objection on the previous page sound like it belongs?

 SPIRITUAL SKEPTICISM 	 MORAL SKEPTICISM 
 SCIENTIFIC SKEPTICISM 	 BIBLICAL SKEPTICISM 

*Sometimes objections sound like they belong to one category but actually belong to another, so we need to clarify them - p.12.

Root Idea

- A Root Idea is the assumption or false premise** that feeds objections a skeptic raises. It is like a root that feeds weeds sprouting from it.
- There is a Root Idea behind each group of objections. *We don't have to debate every objection (pull up all the weeds) if we dig up the root.*
- The key is recognizing what kind of objection the skeptic is raising so we'll know what questions to ask. The goal is to get beyond surface-level debates.



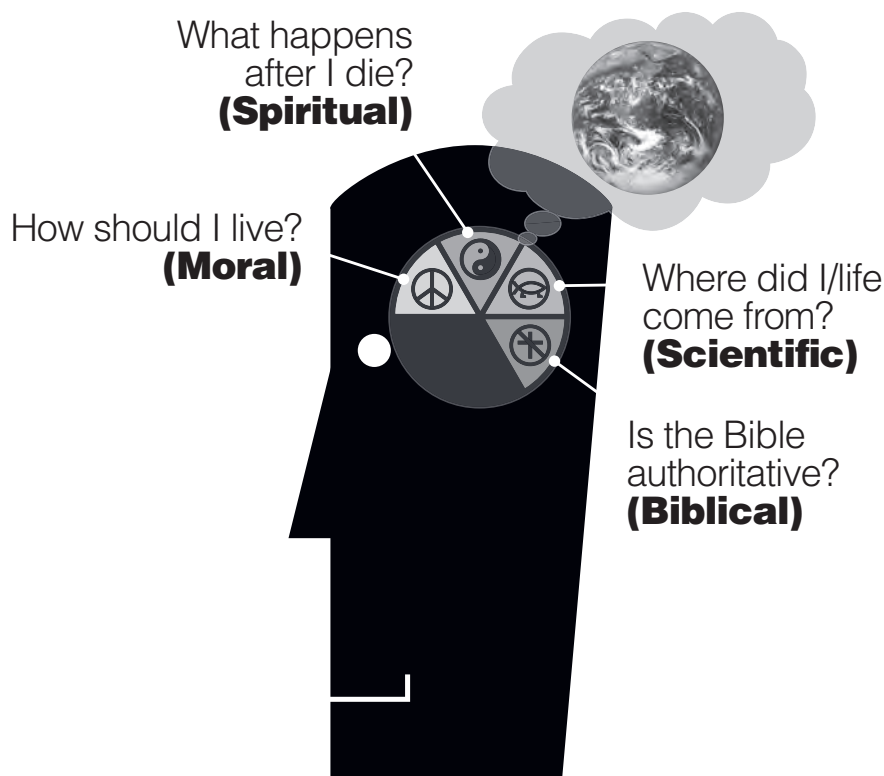
**or presupposition

4 Parts of a Worldview

p. 33

Together, ideas from the 4 CATEGORIES make up a person's total worldview, so when a skeptic raises an objection, we get a glimpse of how he sees the world.

Why four parts? Because eventually everyone asks life's big questions about the four subjects below:



■ How might a non-believer answer each one of these questions?

<p>How should I live?</p> <hr/> <p>by doing whatever makes me happy</p> <hr/> <p>by doing good things</p> <hr/>	<p>Where did I/life come from?</p> <hr/> <p>we evolved</p> <hr/>
<p>What happens after I die?</p> <hr/> <p>No one knows</p> <hr/> <p>I hope I'll go to Heaven</p> <hr/> <p>I'll just decay in the ground</p>	<p>Is the Bible authoritative?</p> <hr/> <p>Who knows? there are many books</p> <hr/> <p>that claim to be from God</p> <hr/>