



**Ready Defense #7: Tactics**  
**Aug 27, 2017 | Will Galkin | Gospel Grace Church**

**Session Intro:**

Being ready to defend your faith is more than just a set of organized arguments. It is much deeper than that. Greg Koukl, in his book *Tactics* has done a wonderful job of helping the Christian come up with thoughtful questions to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ. He calls his strategy of using questions the Colombo Tactic.

**Christians are Ambassadors for Christ.**

*2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

**Decisionism or aiming to “close the deal” comes with some liabilities.**

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*1 Cor. 3:6–7 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.*

**Understand the reasons people reject Christianity.**

- **Rational reasons:**
- **Emotional reasons:**
- **Prejudicial reasons:**
- **Thick-headed reasons:**

*Col. 4:5–6 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*

Be smart and thoughtful with your engagements. Go a bit slower and think about how you want to approach this situation. Don't blunder into it. Some people are tender hearted while others are thick skinned. We need to be sensitive to that. We need to ask questions to properly understand those that we are sharing Christ with.

### What are the areas of skill that are necessary to be an ambassador for Christ?

- **Knowledge** is an accurately informed mind. An ambassador must know the central message of God's kingdom and something about how to respond to the obstacles they'll encounter on their diplomatic mission. Knowledge of the questions and knowledge of the answers.
- **Wisdom** is an artful method. Our knowledge must be tempered with the kind of wisdom that makes our message clear and persuasive. This requires the tools of a diplomat, not the weapons of a warrior, tactical skill rather than brute force.
- **Character** is an attractive manner. Knowledge and wisdom are packaged in a person, so to speak. If that person does not embody the virtues of the kingdom he serves, he will undermine his message and handicap his efforts.

### Learn to Ask Questions: The Columbo Tactic.

#### There are 3 basic ways to use the Columbo Tactic:

- 1) To gain information
- 2) To reverse the burden of proof
- 3) To lead the other person in the direction you want the conversation to go

#### Ask Questions: To Gain Information

- The Model question is, **"What do you mean by that?"**
  - It immediately engages the other person in an interactive way.
  - It forces someone to be precise in their meaning.
    - It might be the first time they have had to articulate what they mean.
  - Helps you understand what they mean.
    - Avoids you misrepresenting their view (straw man fallacy).
    - Avoids you giving a refutation to a view that they don't hold.
- Examples of "What do you mean by that?"
  - "There is no God!"
  - "All religions are basically the same!"
  - "The Bible has been translated and retranslated so many times over the years it is completely unreliable!"
  - "Everything is relative! There are no absolutes!"
  - "You shouldn't be pushing your morality on me!"
  - "Jesus can't be the only way!"
  - "There is no God because bad things happen to good people!"
  - "Christians are bigots!"
  - "The Bible has myths or the Bible is a myth!"

#### Ask Questions: To Reverse the Burden of Proof.

- The **"Burden of Proof"** is the responsibility someone has to defend or give evidence for his view. It is not your duty to prove your critic wrong. It is his duty to prove himself right. He must give evidence or reasons to make his assertion an argument.

- **Assertion** – just a claim. The moon is made of green cheese.
- **Argument** – For this reason and this reason is why the moon is made of green cheese.
- **Common Mistake** – When a person raises an objection, makes a claim or offers a view contrary to our, they often simply fold their arms and wait for you to refute them (Mic Drop).
- **Model Question: “How did you come to that conclusion?”**
  - The first question, “**What do you mean by that?**” gives us more information. The second question gives us the rationale. Some variations would include:
    - Why do you say that?
    - What are your reasons for holding that view?
    - What makes you think that’s the right way to see it?
  - This is a gracious question that assumes the person has actually arrived at a conclusion and has good reasons for it.
  - Often, the person is just asserting or emoting on the subject.
  - Perhaps, most of their conversations on this topic were in an “echo chamber.”

**Ask Questions: To Lead the Other Person in the Direction You want the Conversation to Go.**

- The first two uses of the Columbo Tactic are ways of exposing a flaw in someone’s point of view. You can exploit a flaw by using more questions. The third use of the Columbo is to make a point. This point could be to inform, persuade, set up the terms, or refute.
- Remember to use Columbo, you’ve got to know something about the point you’re making with your questions. (Areas of skill of the Ambassador: Knowledge, Wisdom and Character)
- You can ask a series of questions that you know will get a favorable response. By getting approvals for each successive link in the process of reason, you move the conversation in the direction you have in mind. In that way, you carefully guide the other person to your conclusion.

**Conclusion:**

Remember you are an ambassador for Jesus Christ. Seek to represent the King. Use every opportunity to put another pebble in the shoe of the one that is questioning the gospel. Also, don’t forget that questions are the best way to understand somebody’s point of view and share the truth of the Bible.

## **Resources and Tools:**

### **Acts 17:11**

*Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.*

**1 Thessalonians 5:21** *But test everything; hold fast what is good.*

**1 John 4:1** *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

### **Websites with Helps for Engaging People with the Gospel:**

<https://www.str.org/>

<http://www.apologetics315.com/>

<https://carm.org/>

### **Great Books for Christians Engaging People with the Gospel:**

Koukl, Gregory. *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing your Christian Convictions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.

Wilson, Douglas. *Persuasions: a dream of reason meeting unbelief*. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2007.

### **Great Books for Christians to read with Seekers:**

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.

Sire, James W. *Beginning with God: a basic introduction to the Christian faith*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2017.

Keller, Timothy. *The reason for God: belief in an age of skepticism*. New York: Penguin, 2016.