

Pastor-teacher Don Hargrove  
Faith Bible Church  
<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

LOGIC – Lesson 18  
Modus Ponens through 1 John

Logic is not some human invention that man projects onto reality. Christ as the Logos has embedded all of reality with logical structure. For any Christian to say that he does not use logic because he only uses the Bible, or for him to say that the Bible is first and logic is second, reveals his post-modern self-deception (ignorance). You can't read one passage or understand one doctrine without the use of logic, for examples: the laws of identity and non-contradiction. If a Christian told Jesus Christ that he is really "into" God and the Bible but not logic, I suspect Jesus Christ would bristle at the idea and commence to chewing out the believer, for among other things, implying that God or the Bible is irrational, absurd, and inane. Yet, that is exactly what many Christians "think" and in so doing depict God and the Bible in terms of asininity. Imagine what God must think of that!

In an effort to deal with this massive problem of postmodern irrationality that has infected Christianity, I am attempting to ground the believers of FBC in four areas of logic: modus ponens, modus tollens, the logical forms of propositions, and syllogisms. I am now going through 1 John with lessons on modus ponens.

One way of seeing how we are not superimposing some artificial logic on Scripture is to really think about what John is saying when he says in a classical modus ponens: "If P, then Q." He is saying that P is the sufficient condition for Q. He is not saying what the sufficient condition is for Q. And he is not saying what the sufficient condition is if there is no P (false modus tollens). The logic demands this and so does John. As a matter of fact if you take John's "if P produces Q" and turn it around and say that Q produces P, or that  $\neg P$  produces  $\neg Q$ , you are adding to the Word of God. You are saying something that John never said. See how important logic is? As doctrinal believers, surely we care about the integrity of Scripture enough to want to know what it really says.

In the following exercises, I would like for you to practice putting these verses in the form of symbolic logic. I included the answers on the first three examples. The goal is for you to be able to identify a true or false modus ponens. After you put them in the proper form, label them as VALID or INVALID. After a little practice, it will become second nature; this is what I am after.

(VALID modus ponens= affirm the antecedent = P)

(INVALID modus ponens= affirm the consequent = Q, in an effort to affirm P)

1. Construct INVALID modus ponens form using symbolic logic: *1 John 2:1, And if anyone sins (P), we have an Advocate with the Father (Q), Jesus Christ the righteous.*

P = if we sin (“we” would be in “anyone”)

Q = we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous

> = if (antecedent of P) . . . then (consequent of Q)

\* = stands for affirming

P>Q

\*Q

Therefore P = INVALID modus ponens. Don't we have Jesus as our Advocate (Q) even when we are not sinning (P)? In other words, having Jesus as our Advocate (Q) does not make us sinners (P). P>Q does not equal Q>P.

2. Construct VALID modus ponens form using symbolic logic: *1 John 2:3 And by this we know that we have come to know Him (Q), if we keep His commandments (P).* This one is a little tricky because John puts the conclusion first. You will be able to see this intuitively after learning how to put sentences in logical form.

P = if we keep His commandments

Q = we know that we have come to know Him

P>Q

\*P

Therefore, Q = VALID modus ponens. When we keep His commandments (walk with Him in fellowship), we will experientially come to know Him. It is important to remember that P stands for a sufficient condition, but not the only sufficient condition. Raining (P) is the sufficient condition for my lawn being wet (Q). However, it is not the only sufficient condition for my lawn being wet (e.g., sprinklers).

3. Put in INVALID modus ponens form using symbolic logic: *1 John 2:15, If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

P=if anyone loves the world,  
Q=the love of the Father is not in him.

P>Q

\*Q

Therefore, P = INVALID: One cannot affirm the antecedent (P) via affirming the consequent (Q). John is saying that P is a sufficient condition for Q; he is not saying that the opposite is true. One may be tempted to say that the believer who does not have the love of the Father in him, must love the world, but there could other causes for Q. What about the flesh? John mentions the three enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil. It could be that a person does not care anything about the world, and is only into the fulfillment of his or her flesh. The point is that one cannot affirm P by affirming Q. We cannot twist John's or God's words!

4. Put in VALID modus ponens form using symbolic logic: *1 John 2:19. . . if they had been of us (P), they would have remained with us (Q);*

5. Put in VALID modus ponens form using symbolic logic: *1 John 2:24 . . . if what you heard from the beginning abides in you (P), you also will abide in the Son and in the Father (Q).*

6. Put in INVALID modus ponens form using symbolic logic: *1 John 2:29 If you know that He is righteous (P), you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him (Q).*

7. Put in VALID modus ponens form using symbolic logic: *1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us (P), we have confidence before God (Q);*

8. Put in VALID modus ponens form with symbolic logic: *1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us (P), we also ought to love one another (Q).*

9. Put in VALID modus ponens form with symbolic logic: *1 John 4:12 if we love one another (P), God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us (Q).*

10. Put in INVALID modus ponens form using symbolic logic: *1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother (P), he is a liar (Q);*

Answers to 4-10 are on the next 2 pages

## Answers to 4-10

4. Put in VALID modus ponens form using symbolic logic: *1 John 2:19. . . if they had been of us (P), they would have remained with us (Q);*

p= if they had been of us

q= they would have remained with us

p>q

\*p

Therefore, Q = VALID. P is a sufficient condition for Q.

5. Put in VALID modus ponens form using symbolic logic: *1 John 2:24 . . . if what you heard from the beginning abides in you (P), you also will abide in the Son and in the Father (Q).*

p=if what you heard from the beginning abides in you

q=you also will abide in the Son and in the Father

p>q

\*p

Therefore Q = VALID. P is a sufficient condition for Q.

6. Put in INVALID modus ponens form using symbolic logic: *1 John 2:29 If you know that He is righteous (P), you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him (Q).*

p=if you know that He is righteous

q=you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him

p>q

\*q

Therefore P = INVALID. You cannot affirm P by affirming the consequent, Q. While it may be true, the point is that it does not have to be true based on logic, the structure of reality. It probably is the case that those who know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him will also know that Christ is righteous. It is hard to imagine any believer not knowing that Christ is righteous. But logic does not depend on ability to find cases of something not necessarily true. All John is saying is that P is the sufficient condition for Q. He is not saying the converse. Reality/logic is not about what we want. It is about what is real.

7. Put in VALID modus ponens form using symbolic logic: *1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us (P), we have confidence before God (Q);*

p=if our heart does not condemn us  
q=we have confidence before God.

p>q  
\*p

Therefore, Q = VALID. P is a sufficient condition for Q. There could be other sufficient conditions. All John is saying is that this P is sufficient for Q.

8. Put in VALID modus ponens form with symbolic logic: *1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us (P), we also ought to love one another (Q).*

p=if God so loved us  
q=we also ought to love one another

p>q  
\*p

Therefore, Q. VALID. Think about it: if P means Q, then if you have P then you will have Q. Logic and reality demands this—that is if you are a realist.

9. Put in VALID modus ponens form with symbolic logic: *1 John 4:12 if we love one another (P), God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us (Q).*

p=if we love one another  
q=God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us

p>q  
\*p

Therefore Q. VALID. Again if P means Q and you have P then you will have Q. Simple and undeniable!

10. Put in INVALID modus ponens form using symbolic logic: *1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother (P), he is a liar (Q);*

p=if someone says, "I love God" and hates his brother  
q=he is a liar

p>q  
\*q

Therefore P. INVALID: you cannot affirm P by affirming Q. P>Q is all about what P produces, namely Q. But other things may produce Q as well. In this example someone could be a liar and not say that he loves God while hating his brother. He may not say anything about loving God at all. He may be a liar for other reasons. There may be other Ps which resulted in him being a Q liar. Maybe he is a liar because he added to Scripture due to being ignorant about modus ponens and tollens.

Logic Matters!

*Advancing in the logos for the glory of the LOGOS,*

Pastor Don