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<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

LOGIC – Lesson 23 Modus Tollens

Why do Christians need to understand the basics of logic? Why in the world would they need basic thinking skills for truth? Why can't they just trust what Bible teachers and pastors tell them? Wouldn't it be far easier for both the pastor and believers not to go through the tough mental work it takes to know the basics of logic? Why can't the pastor just tell believers what to believe and what to do, and they could just believe and do what he says? Isn't it easier to just trust the man who knows the original languages? Why should a pastor teach elementary principles of logic if he assumes that believers are too stupid to learn basic thinking skills that track reality/truth—can't they just trust his expertise? What would you think of a fellow believer who did not believe what you believed but only believed what he believed because his pastor taught it? Would you respect that believer? Would they respect you if the *only* reason you believed something was because your pastor believed it? In other words, your trust was in the pastor instead of it being personally and directly in what God's Word actually teaches? The Roman Catholic Church has a long tradition of treating their people like they are not smart enough to understand the Bible for themselves. This same evil is also perpetuated in parts of Protestantism.

What about Satan? You think he has a vested interest in you not knowing the basics of logic? After all, without being grounded in rudimentary principles of logic, you will by necessity have to trust a pastor regarding core truths about God and man. Without logic, you will distort the Word of God. Without logic, you will not be able to check the validity of doctrines you are taught. Without logic, your emotions will rule your life. Without logic, you have no clue how to objectively test any truth. I am not saying logic by itself is going to deliver spiritual truths, the Holy Spirit is vital to spiritual understanding. However, without logic you will live a fideistic life of uncertainty. And the attempt to find certainty in a pastor is not going to put you into direct contact with truth with apodictic certainty. I doubt you have a clue just how much anti-intellectualism has damaged the modern Christian mind. Satan loves it! How sad that believers cannot defend their positions because they really do not know their positions from direct, personal encounters with those truths. They just "know" these truths because someone else did their thinking for them and it sounds logical to them. The saddest thing is that believers have thrown away their minds, the image of God in them, and in so doing thrown away apodictic certainty in truth. They have become religious using all kinds of terms borrowed from other minds. They live off other minds. They are no longer people of truth. All we need to do is give them some new technique for spiritual "victory," and send them on their way—not that they can even evaluate the merits of those techniques; all they care about is if they "work" for them. God help us! God help Christians who claim to be people of truth, yet violate rational principles constantly in pursuit of some narcissistic "spiritual life truth." Most will admit that they can't even stay in fellowship for any extended period of time. They are slaves of sin even though Jesus specifically stated that those who abide in truth are not slaves of sin (John 8:31-34). Having lost rational powers to use with the Word of God under the filling of the Holy Spirit, their irrationality and emotions make them carnal basket cases. But who needs logic? Who needs to

handle the Word of God accurately? I will have to give credit where credit is due: Satan and his hordes have done a very good job of brainwashing the minds and emotions of modern Christians with “We do not *feel* the need for logic, what good is logic in thinking about God or the spiritual life or Bible doctrine?” Again, God help us!

This week we look at modus tollens. Modus tollens is the mode of denial in a hypothetical syllogism: if p then q, -q, therefore \neg p. Instead of focusing on the formula or thinking of examples, first think about the logic of what is being said. If a person says p leads to q, and there is no q (-q), then there can be no p. Again, if a person says p means q, then p means q. Therefore if you do not have a q then you do not have a p because you already said that p means q. I will cover the invalid modus tollens in the next lesson. Try to remember the basic logic of it and try to remember that the denial is always in the consequent (q). A valid modus tollens is always about denying what follows, the consequent (q): $p \supset q, \neg q, \text{ therefore } \neg p$.

Exercises on modus tollens.

1. Construct valid modus tollens using symbolic logic for “If the carburetor fails (p), the engine dies (q).”

p=if the carburetor fails
q=the engine dies

$p \supset q$ (if the carburetor fails, then the engine dies)
 $\neg q$ (the engine did not die)

Therefore $\neg p$ (the carburetor did not fail). **VALID.** If it is true that if the carburetor fails the car will die, and the car did not die, then by necessity the carburetor did not fail.

2. Construct a valid modus tollens using symbolic logic on “If anyone is born of God (p), then has the indwelling Holy Spirit (q).” [Rom. 8:9]

3. Construct a valid modus tollens using symbolic logic on “if I learn the basics of logic, then I will be able to think more clearly about God, the spiritual life, and the Word of God.”

4. Construct a valid modus tollens using symbolic logic on “if I confess my sins, God will cleanse me from all unrighteousness.”

Answers to 2-4

2. Construct a valid modus tollens using symbolic logic on “If anyone is born of God (p), then has the indwelling Holy Spirit (q).” See Romans 8:9.

p=if anyone is born of God
q=then he has the indwelling Holy Spirit

p>q
-q
Therefore \neg p. VALID

3. Construct valid modus tollens using symbolic logic on “if I learn the basics of logic, then I will be able to think more clearly about God, the spiritual life, and the Word of God.”

p=if I gain logical thinking skills
q=then I will be able to think more clearly about God, the spiritual life, and the Word of God

p>q
-q
Therefore \neg p. VALID. I am not able to think more clearly about God, therefore I did not gain logical thinking skills.

4. Construct valid modus tollens using symbolic logic on “if I confess my sins, God will cleanse me from all unrighteousness.”

p=if I confess my sins
q=God will cleanse me from all unrighteousness

p>q
-q
Therefore \neg p. VALID. If God did not cleanse me from all unrighteousness, it is because I did not confess my sins.

Logic Matters—because loving God with all of our minds matters!

Advancing in the LOGOS,

Pastor Don