

Is it logical to be illogical?



Some questions are strange. “If you put bread in a toaster, do you put toast in a bread maker?” I thought of that one yesterday. I guess it’s just how my brain works or doesn’t work. And then there’s another creation of mine, “How would you rate the number 7 on a scale of 1-10?” Or, “What’s the difference between a duck with one leg?” I never pose these questions expecting anyone to think they are hilarious; I’m simply hoping to get a reaction, such as a smirk or even a rolling of the eyes. If I accomplish that, my work is done!

Then young people pose some questions so innocently that you can’t help but smile while also being stumped as to how to answer. When she was five, my daughter Tori asked a cute, challenging question. We were driving to church in the winter, and each week it was getting colder and colder.

We had been noting the temperature reading on the dashboard in the car in prior weeks; 15°, 7°, and finally, it hit 0°. On that last day, Tori asked, “Does that mean there’s no temperature outside?”

And then some questions, while being a bit strange, do make you think a bit. Try this one on for size. “If your knees bent the other way, what would a chair look like?” Sorry about that one. It’s going to distract you for the rest of the day. I can’t take credit for that one (or responsibility). I heard it from a comedian over 40 years ago. Why do I still remember it? The world may never know or care. You just might not want to make eye contact with me.

Then some statements make your head tilt in confusion. “There’s no such thing as logic!” Does anyone see any problems with that statement?

First, logic would have to exist to make the claim that something is either logical or not. The person making the claim would also have to be using logic to come to that conclusion. They must also use logic when conveying their message to others; otherwise, the hearers would not understand what they are saying. What if they said, “Over cross up the thing no.”? That’s not only nonsensical; it would be very irrational of them to make that statement to convey the idea that logic doesn’t exist.

Another point about logic is people can have an illogical response to something logical and a logical response to something illogical. For instance, someone might be extremely worried their best friend will forget to bring the tickets when they meet each other at the stadium for the Super Bowl. You suggest they text or call their friend in advance, just as a reminder, but they say, “No, I don’t want to do that. I just hope they bring the tickets.” That would certainly seem like a very illogical response to a logical suggestion.

Next, I’ll share a logical response to an illogical claim. I showed my wife the back of a package of M&Ms and said, “See, it lists the Nutritional Facts. If it didn’t have nutrition, they couldn’t have

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nutritional facts!” She didn’t buy it, but it was worth a shot. In this case, her response was logical, and my claim, as much as I’d like to think otherwise, was illogical (but funny).

Alright, I’m all over the board on this one so far. Let’s bring it home. People often respond to Christianity in a way that seems illogical to us, but in reality, it’s a very logical response given how they perceive the Christian faith. As a child in grade school, I remember standing in a circle of classmates outside during recess. Somehow, the topic of church came up, and I mentioned that I went three times a week (Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening). My classmates were shocked and expressed how awful they thought that would be. They couldn’t imagine going that often. I was very surprised at their reaction. I actually loved going to church. I saw a lot of friends there, learned a lot about the Bible in an interesting way, and often went out to lunch at Burger Chef or Ponderosa with my family afterward (which was a big draw, as well). Do you remember those restaurants? If you do, you’re older than dirt, like me!

Why were their reactions so adverse? I found out later when I attended one of the types of churches they were used to! I think going there once a year would be a bit much for me, quite honestly. Very cold, sterile, ritualistic, and lacking relevance or meaning. When it was over, there was no real social fellowship; everyone just headed for the doors as fast as humanly possible.

My main point is that the skeptic’s reaction to “Christianity” might seem very illogical to us, but given their perception of the Christian faith, it makes a lot of sense. When seeing their rejection of what we share, we often double down and throw more and more at them, trying to strongarm them into submitting and agreeing with us. That never really works and often produces false converts, which is dangerous. We need to spend more time finding out what they think Christianity is all about before we waste time defending something totally different from what they have in mind. I remember “arguing” (in a fun way) with a guy I was supposed to meet at Starbucks. He was late, so I called and asked, “Are you here yet?” He said, “Yes, I’ve been here for 10 minutes. I’m standing right inside the front door.” I said, “So am I. I don’t see you! Starbucks on Maple Avenue, right?”. “Yes,” he said, “On Maple Avenue.” We went back and forth until we realized there were two Starbucks on Maple Avenue about a mile apart! And I don’t even like coffee! We were talking about two completely different things.

So, I encourage you never to assume the person you are witnessing to truly understands Christianity. They may have very “logical” arguments, even though they seem illogical to you, given the assumptions you are making.

If you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don’t hesitate to [contact us!](#)