

## Do we have it backward?

When the leaves move on the trees, that's what causes the wind! I bet you never knew that. Think about it, every time it's windy out, you see the leaves moving, right? This reasoning is obviously backward.

We have all had times in our own lives where we've gotten things backward. Perhaps at some point, you prayed, "God, if you would just bless me and answer this prayer, I will trust you and commit my life to you." The proper order would be to trust God and commit your life to Him. And then God will bless you and will answer all your prayers (in accordance with His Sovereign will).



Last month's question was "Are they overwhelming the system?" You can reread the question [here](#). In it, I referred to an entire list of issues we are currently forced to deal with:

- Transgenderism
- LGBTQ
- Gay marriage
- Cancel Culture
- Infringement on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendments
- Media bias
- Social media filtering/censorship
- Racism
- Election fraud
- The Green New Deal
- The Great Reset
- Climate change
- Illegal immigration
- COVID-19 pandemic
- Vaccines
- Settled-science

This month's question will also deal with these issues but from another important angle. Specifically, we will discuss how to address these concerns or any others that may confront us.

I once knew someone who, consciously or not, whenever we disagreed, would pull me into a level of argumentation that was very unhealthy and extremely difficult to escape. The frustrating pattern looked like this. We would begin discussing an important issue, the tension would rise, and halfway into the discussion, I would realize this conversation was not going to end well (i.e., successfully). Inevitably, I would be thinking, "How did this happen again?"

Effective apologetics involves many components, one of which is “controlling the conversation.” I realize this phrase generally has negative connotations. For example, sometimes, one person controls the dialogue by engaging in “the machine gun effect,” (this is the circumstance I found myself in in the example above). They throw so many questions at the other person it is overwhelming and impossible to address them all properly. You see, if you DO try to tackle all of them, you can’t possibly be adequately effective. On the other hand, if you DON’T address them all, even if you are fairly effective concerning the ones you do address, they will say, “But you didn’t even answer my question about such-and-such!”

However, the technique of “controlling the conversation” can also be used positively. Simply put, we can use this technique to turn the focus from the apparent issue (i.e., one of the issues on our list) to the **root cause** of the issue. You’ve probably heard it said, “The issue is almost never really the issue.”

Finally, here’s the central focus of this article. **The issues (listed above) are not wrong because they are problematic. They are problematic because they are wrong!** First, here’s a crucial point of clarification. When I say these issues are “wrong,” I mean the typical position taken by secular media and society, in general, is not consistent with biblical principles. For example, it makes no sense to say, “Climate change is **wrong**.” Climate change is simply climate change! The climate has always changed and always will. If it didn’t change, people would be up in arms as well, claiming climate’s consistency was bad. The real questions are related to the root cause:

1. Is the change truly bad? and
2. If so, are humans a significant factor in causing the change?

Here’s another example. We can get pulled into a “vortex” when others say things like:

- “People have a right to love who they want!”
- “Society has evolved, and values are different now.”
- “You can’t say there are just two genders. That’s bigoted and old-fashioned!”

We make the mistake of spending too much time arguing against these statements when they are not really the root cause but are merely symptoms of a much deeper problem. When you have a headache, it’s not because your body is lacking ibuprofen. Taking one of these pills can help alleviate the symptom (i.e., the headache), but it often does nothing to remedy the root cause, which, in this case, could be stress, dehydration, lack of sleep, or something else. (I am not against short-term remedies, but they really are band-aids and will not help long-term. They also do not work towards actually solving the underlying problem.)

Similarly, when we focus too much effort or argumentation directed at specific issues (i.e., symptoms) and avoid the ultimate root cause behind all these issues. We are putting a band-aid on the problem, not solving it. So, what is the “ultimate root cause?” It’s a person’s view of the authority of God’s Word.

# Question of the Month

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I think you would agree that if someone had a proper understanding of and reverence for Scripture, these issues would largely take care of themselves. I don't have time to expound on this right now, but I would separate these issues into two larger categories. The first category would be those issues with direct, unambiguous answers in the Bible (such as gay marriage and racism). A second category would be for those where we find general principles in Scripture, but there's much room for debate regarding what our proper response should entail (e.g., climate change and vaccines).

So, here's my advice. When someone brings up one of these issues, particularly the ones about morality, our first response should be to control the conversation by focusing on the root cause. You can do this by saying, "Hold on a second, let me see what God's Word has to say about that." It should not be our philosophy against theirs. Who are we that the whole world should care what we personally think? It is simply our job to help others better understand what Scripture says about whatever issue they raise.

Oh, but they will certainly say, "You can't bring your religion into this!" And this is where Christians often make a big mistake. One that will likely remove all possibility of having a successful conversation. If you agree to this demand (to leave the Bible out of it), you have just given up the foundation of your entire worldview and the only effective weapon you have! (Hebrews 4:12) You are toast at this point!

What you should do is point out that while they want you to give up your belief (that the Bible is the inspired Word of God), they are not giving up theirs (that the Bible is NOT the inspired Word of God). Instead, you should say, "Let's be honest and admit what our core beliefs are because that drives everything else, and then we'll proceed from there."

At the end of the day, if they have a problem with what you are saying, it's not really with you; it's with God's Word. Some day they will be accountable for their choice to reject it. It's just your job to help them better understand what Scripture actually says. And as I always point out, you want to do this out of love for them, not out of anger or to "win" an argument. You don't "win" by temporarily forcing someone to conform to Christian standards in their outward conversation and actions. You "win" by introducing them to Jesus Christ, who will transform them from the inside out!

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