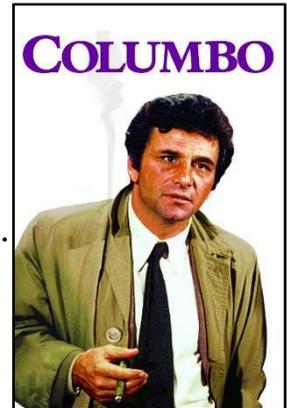
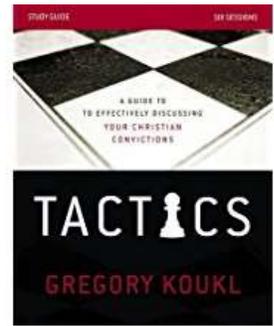


**Chardon Christian Fellowship
Home Fellowship Lessons
Tactics**
*Lesson 2: The Columbo Tactic and
‘The Burden of Proof’*



I. Review

- A. Restoring the missing piece (content to conversation)
- B. The tactical approach in general (skill of maneuvering in conversation) – knowledge, wisdom and character
- C. Reframe your thinking in evangelism – gardeners and harvesters. Modify the goal of your conversation to “putting a stone in their shoe.”
- D. Game plan to use in any conversation or situation – The Columbo Tactic of using questions.
- E. In our game plan, we first gather information – “*What do you mean by that?*”

II. Second Step in Columbo game Plan: Reversing the Burden of Proof.

- A. First Columbo question: “What is the burden of proof?”
 - Burden of Proof definition: “*Whoever makes the claim, bears the burden.*”
 - If you ask questions, you do not bear the burden of proof.
 - We want them to make the claim, and then have to “bear the burden of proof.”

Example of radio talk show and Big Bang.

Response of “you can say what you want” but where is the proof. It is the proponents job to support their theory.

Don’t confuse points-of-view with arguments. We want them to support their views with proof, and “bear the burden of proof.”

Watch the phrase “*I can explain that!*”. Be prepared for bedtime story !
Reverse it to have them “bear the burden of proof” for their bedtime story.

- B. Second Columbo question: “*How did you come to that conclusion?*”

Moves the “burden of proof” back onto the person making the claim.

Example: Man expresses an opinion that “*Jesus was just a man elevated to Son of God at Counsel of Nicea.*”

Columbo question: “*Why is it you think that was the way that it happened?*”

Example: Man says “*I was born a homosexual.*”

Columbo question: “*How do you know that?*” “*What do you mean by that?*”
(there is no evidence for constitutional homosexuality)

Example: *“The unborn may be a human being, but not a real person”*
Columbo question: *“How do you know that?” “What is the difference between a human being and person?”* They made the claim, therefore, they bear the “burden of proof.”

REVIEW: two most critical questions are:

- *“What do you believe?”*
- *“Why do you believe that” or “How did you come to that conclusion?”*

C. Professor’s Ploy

1. Many college professors are anti-Christian.
2. Many Christians make the mistake and try to “make a frontal assault on a superior force in an entrenched position.”
3. The person in superior position, or the head of the class usually wins:
 - a. Never attempt to “make a frontal assault on a superior force in an entrenched position.”
 - b. The professor always has the strategic advantage, and he knows it.
 - c. Don’t get into a power play with you are already out-gunned.
4. Better way – use your tactics. The professor says *“The Bible is just a bunch of fables.”*
 - a. *“Professor, what do you mean by that?”*
 - b. Next ask *“Professor, how did you reach that conclusion?”*
 - c. Make the Professor shoulder the “burden of proof.”
 - d. This approach enable you to stay engaged while avoiding a power struggle.
5. The Professor’s Ploy is an attempt for you to shoulder the “burden of proof” when he has made the claim.
 - a. He may deduce you are a Christian and call you out to explain your position.
 - b. Don’t fall into the trap of falling into his trap and having to defend what you believe. You have made no claims, so you do not have “burden of proof.” The Professor’s Ploy is to make a claim and have you prove him wrong.
 - c. Use a response like *“Professor ... I have not stated what I believe. My views don’t matter since I am the student and you are the professor leading the class. I am just trying to understand your statement and what facts you have to support your position.”*
 - d. End the engagement (as a gardener) with a *“thank you.”*

e. You don't need to be the expert on everything. All you need to know is: *"What do you believe?"* and *"How did you come to that conclusion?"*

D. Don't sweat it if you don't know where to go next.

1. If you are a gardener you don't have to do anything. All your purpose may be to "put a stone in their shoe."
2. If you don't have the resources to go further:
 - a. Let the conversation die a natural death.
 - b. Consider it a fruitful learning experience.
3. You don't have to hit home runs. You don't even have to get on base.
 - a. Sometimes getting up to bat is important.
 - b. The first two Columbo questions accomplish this.

E. The Columbo tactic can keep you out of the "hot seat."

1. You may fear they know more about the subject than you do.
2. We dread the possibility of getting in over our heads.
3. Columbo tactic helps you stay in control of the conversation when you fear of being overwhelmed.
4. When you feel overwhelmed – by time by switching to "fact finding mode."
 - a. Slow the pace with *"You seem to know a lot more about this than I do. I wonder if you can slow down since some of this information is new to me."*
 - b. Next *"I want to understand your point, so can you carefully tell me what you believe and why you believe it?"*
 - c. When you've hear them out, say *"Okay, now let me think about it."*
 - d. Now you are in control of the timing and conversation.

III. Review of main points covered in this session.

A. Reversing the "burden of proof"

1. The person making the claim bears the "burden of proof."
2. It is not enough to make a claim or alternate explanation.
3. To reverse the "burden of proof", you say *"How did you come to that conclusion?"*

B. The Professor's Ploy

1. Don't get caught in the ploy.

2. Refuse to shoulder the “burden of proof” when you have not made the claim.
- C. We do not have to force the conversation
1. We don’t have to hit a home run. We only need to get into the batter’s box.
 2. The first two Columbo questions help us get into the game.
- D. How to stay out of the “hot seat”.
1. When overwhelmed, shift from argument mode to fact finding mode.
 2. Ask probing clarifying questions.
 3. Work on the issue later.

DISCUSSION

1. What is meant by “burden of proof?” and “What is the ‘burden of proof’ rule?”
2. What is the first Columbo question?
3. What is the second Columbo question?
4. In your own words, explain or give an example of the Professors Ploy.
5. You are engaged with a real aggressive individual who is moving beyond your factual comfort level. How do you get out of the “hot seat”?

This outline is provided to accompany the current version of the Tactics video by Gregory Koukl. It is not intended to replace, supplant, or modify the teaching by Gregory Koukl, rather, it was created by following point-by-point the current video lessons and creating an outline that follows the video. The intent is so the viewer can easily follow the video presentation.

You are encouraged to purchase a copy of Gregory Koukl’s teaching materials on this subject of Tactics. The book and study guide and contain more information than shared on the video:

Tactics, by Gregory Koukl; Zondervan Press; ISBN 978-0-310-28292-1

Tactics video, by Gregory Koukl; Zondervan Press; ISBN 978-0-310-52907-1

Tactics Study Guide, by Gregory Koukl; Zondervan Press;
ISBN 978-0-310-52919-4