

## The “Suicide” Tactic – Views that Self-Destruct<sup>1</sup>

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*The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

~ 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

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### Self-Destructing Views

- This tactic is based on the Law of Non-Contradiction (a rule of logic)
  - Contradictory statements cannot **both** be true at the same
- These ideas commit suicide by defeating **themselves**
  - Sometimes statements include themselves in what they refer to
  - Self-refuting statements fail to meet their own **criteria/standard** of validity
- Our goal is to **recognize** self-destructing statements, **expose** them, and **avoid** being caught off guard and taken in by them

### Formal Suicide Statements Encountered in Apologetics

**No one can know any truth about religion.**

**The Bible is flawed because people make mistakes.**

**Only science gives reliable truth.**

**God doesn't take sides.**

**Who are you to say...?**

### Practical Suicide

- Some self-refuting ideas are obvious, but others are **under the surface**
- These types of ideas do not necessarily involve a **logical** contradiction, but they fail the **pragmatic** test
  - They cannot work in **real-life**
  - You can **hold** the view, but you can't **promote** it
- This often happens when a person voices (or acts upon) a view and in turn contradicts his own **convictions**

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<sup>1</sup> Koukl, Greg. *Tactics: A game plan for discussing your Christian convictions*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

## Practical Suicide Statements Encountered in Apologetics

### You shouldn't force your morality on other people. (Moral Relativism)

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*Whenever you find a man who says he does not believe in a real Right and Wrong, you will find the same man going back on this a moment later. He may break his promise to you, but if you try breaking one to him he will be complaining 'It's no fair"...A nation may say treaties do not matter; but then, next minute, they spoil their case by saying that the particular treaty they want to break was an unfair one. But if...there is no such thing as Right and Wrong...what is the different between a fair treaty and an unfair one? – C.S. Lewis<sup>2</sup>*

*Therefore, any one of you[a] who judges is without excuse. For when you judge another, you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the same things. <sup>2</sup> We know that God's judgment on those who do such things is based on the truth. <sup>3</sup> Do you really think—anyone of you who judges those who do such things yet do the same—that you will escape God's judgment? – Romans 2:1-3*

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<sup>2</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 5.

Freedom is just an illusion. (Determinism)

## Sibling Rivalry

- When a person raises two objections that are **at odds** with each other
  - A pair of objections is voiced
  - However, they are logically **inconsistent** with each other
- Our task is to graciously point out the conflict, then ask which is the **real concern**
  - The person will either surrender **one or both** of the objections when they realize they have been unreasonable

## Sibling Rivalry Statements Encountered in Apologetics

**A good God wouldn't let that happen. A loving God would never send anyone to Hell.**

**Right and wrong is a private affair, who's to judge? How can God exist when there is so much evil in the world?**

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*Of course, I could have given up my idea of justice by saying it was nothing but a private idea of my own [relativism]. But if I did that, then my argument against God collapsed too – for the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my fancies. – C.S. Lewis<sup>3</sup>*

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**Homosexuality is acceptable because it is natural. Same-sex couples should be able to have children.**

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<sup>3</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 31.

## Infanticide

- Sometimes an objection (the "**child**") is dependent on a prior notion (the "**parent**")
  - The parent must exist first for the child statement to be made
- This type of suicide happens when a claim depends on a parent concept to be true, but **denies** that same concept
  - There is a **dependency** relationship between the two

## Infanticide Statements Encountered in Apologetics

**Evil is proof that God does not exist.**

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*My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I gotten this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call something crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. – C.S. Lewis<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 45.

**Atheists can still be moral.**

**Science is the only reliable method of knowing truth about the world.**