

The Logic of Love

Chapter 12: A Few Words to the Faithful

*Those heading in the same direction
have no need to cross paths.*

Developing an understanding of how faith in God is a logical extension of love provides a valuable spiritual resource for those who already have faith. It can be of benefit in three ways. First, inasmuch as we are all imperfect, our faith is motivated by a combination of love and selfishness. In order for our spiritual lives to progress, we must be vigilant in nurturing our selfless motivations. An intellectual appreciation of faith as an extension of love helps reinforce this connection. Second, because logical reasoning can be explained to others, faith held as a logical extension of is defensible when others criticize this choice. It can also be offered to others for their consideration. Third, by appealing to love as the reason for faith and boiling down the essence of faith in God to its barest essentials, we create an opportunity to be progressively, spiritually unified. We are less likely to feel divided by theological doctrines and ecclesiastical authorities when we approach faith as an outgrowth of love.

For the Love of Logic

Faith is motivated by the desire to selflessly serve and by the selfish desire for salvation. The distinction, however, between love-motivated faith and selfishly motivated faith is not an either/or thing. As imperfect beings, our faith is a mixture of motivations. The question is not whether our faith is black or white, selfless or selfish, but what shade of gray, and even more importantly, whether our particular shade of gray is getting darker or lighter. Though imperfect, we still have the ability to improve, to move toward perfection. Each new day provides a new opportunity to nurture faith as a love-motivated response to life.

The selfish motivation for faith can come from a variety of places. For example, fear of death, fear of eternal damnation, the desire for salvation, or the fear of being shunned can result in the perpetuation of selfish motivations for faith. Sometimes the anxiety of a personal crisis can push us toward faith. Even a miracle of healing can become a fear-based if the awe of the power to heal overshadows gratitude for the willingness to heal. (This is not a comment on whether or why God heals. The issue is that *if* someone believes that they have been healed, then their response can go in either or both directions- awe and gratitude.) It is my hope that by focusing on how this world can be appreciated as the creation of a loving God, the selfish motivations will eventually atrophy and the selfless motivations will become stronger.

Intuitive Faith versus Logical Faith

There are two common forces that foster an intuitive, rather than a logical, approach to faith. First, some spiritual leaders and religious traditions teach that approaching God through logic is not only futile but spiritually arrogant. Difficult questions are portrayed as the obstacles that must be let go of in order for faith to be whole-hearted and pure. With this approach, giving up on logic is portrayed as a *necessary* part of having faith. Secondly, not everyone is inclined to sit around and philosophize if it is not necessary. We do not have to be electricians to turn on the lights. Similarly, the use and enjoyment of faith does not require an explanation, only a willing attitude.

Even though logic may not be able to justify something as subjective as love, this does not mean that logic cannot justify faith once the subjective value of love has been accepted. Logic is a talent and a blessing that can be applied to the issue of faith in God. Even though intuition as well as logic

can lead to faith, logic can help us ennoble and communicate the value of this insight. Most of all, learning to apply logic to spirituality helps us provide our children with a better response to their spiritual inquiries than "just because."

Being A League Player

Although some progress has been made toward inter-religious tolerance, there is still an enormous amount of work to be done. When the status of spiritual identity is based on a particular religion rather than on our individual relationship with God, our ability to become spiritually unified is in jeopardy.

Little League was created as a place for children to play, just as religion was created as a place to pray. We were not born to serve religion any more than children were born to serve Little League. If all the houses of worship sit empty, if all the sacred texts get burned, if all the rituals are forgotten, we would be no less the children of God. When, as religionists, we look at ourselves as being in the same league, we can honorably try to create the best team and have proper respect for those playing on other teams (religions). Choosing between the various teams is beyond our scope. The focus here is on being a player in God's league.

[Go to Part III: Transcending Obstacles to Faith](#)

[Go to Table of Contents](#)

[Back to Top](#)

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