

## ***The Logic of Love***

### **Chapter 20: The Nature of Faith as a Choice**

*If I bet my life on the Chicago Bulls[6]  
Just for argument's sake  
The problem is not with choosing the Bulls  
But with how much I put at stake*

*On the other hand, if I go with God  
I must wager just the same  
But at least I don't just sit and watch  
I get to play the game.*

Note 6: The Chicago Bulls won six national championships between 1991 and 1998. (Perhaps "you had to be there.")

The degree to which one's spiritual faith begins with a mix of selfish and selfless motivations is not important. All faith starts out less than perfect, and on most days life does not test faith very severely. Nonetheless, just because faith is not being immediately tested does not mean that it is not whole-hearted. Though not every moment tests our ability to faithfully sail the stormy winds of adversity, every moment does bring an opportunity for renewed faith, a sincere rededication of idealistic intention. Re-affirmation of faith is not really any different than the first affirmation of faith, except for one progressively important factor: *experience*. The first step is always the hardest and should be respected as such.

Part I, *Defining Love, Logic, Freewill, and God*, worked to develop an understanding of how the Freewill Love Factor requires initial protection from a full revelation of God in order to safeguard our freewill and provide us an opportunity to experience the reality of our own love. Part II, *Faith*, explained how humanity's commonly claimed experiences of the divine are consistent with a theistic paradigm; by living faithfully, we can transcend the Freewill Love Factor. Additionally, the relationship between belief and knowledge in a spiritual context and issues relating to the emotional dynamics of spiritual faith were explored. That section showed how spiritual faith is a process of continual re-affirmation, rather than a single decision made for a lifetime.

By the force of freewill, faith forms the foundation of our relationship to each other and holds the hope of experiencing the love of God. But the fulfillment of faith comes from constant commitment. If our hands are not steadied by sincerity, we risk cutting ourselves on the serrated edge of a life lived with dubious direction. If faith is anything less than a lifetime of re-affirmed intention, then it is nothing.

Nonetheless, the journey of faith does begin somewhere. Since the first step of faith redefines who we are, it is hardly surprising that such a step is sometimes referred to as a rebirth. The first step is a lulu because it is a paradigm shift. The experience is referred to as being *reborn* for a reason; the transition is as dynamic as leaving the womb. This is why sincere and critical thinking is crucial. Specifically, we need to appreciate that just because we may view theism as an internally consistent paradigm, that does not necessarily make it the best choice. Again, an analogy to the geometric models can be helpful.

The plane geometry model is the easiest one to understand. It is intuitively satisfying for the same reason that people initially thought the world was flat; it is the geometry of proximate experience.

Additionally, this model is inviting because it provides answers to certain kinds of questions with less information than do the other models. For instance, if you know two angles of a triangle, then you can figure out the third angle by subtracting the sum of the first two from  $180^\circ$ . There are other examples that also demonstrate how plane geometry has user-friendly qualities that are lacking in the other models. This does not mean, however, that we ought to always use plane geometry or believe that it reflects objective reality. In order to justify such a position, there would have to be a lifelong application, one overriding purpose.

The quality of being internally consistent only makes an option plausible; it only opens up a choice. Whether one choice is better than another is a separate question. The theistic paradigm must also best support love if it is to lead us to the conclusion that we ought to have faith. Just as with the geometric models where appropriate choice is determined by the specific application, with the gnostic paradigms, the decision should be based on which choice best supports our highest value—love. It is not enough to simply *want* to have faith in God; there must also be a reason why we *ought* to have faith in God.

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