

*Critical  
Thinking*  
*(from a biblical worldview)*  
**PART ONE**

by  
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# **CRITICAL THINKING**

**(from a biblical worldview)**

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the simplest processes for Critical Thinking is proposed by Mark Pennington:

Possible “schema”

**“The word schema comes from the Greek word (skema), which means a mental planning process. The schema that I propose is not original, by any means. It involves four simple steps: Observation, Interpretation, Application, and Revision. Observation is What do you see? Interpretation is What does it mean? Application is How can it be used? Revision is How can it be changed?”<sup>(19)</sup>**

From that we can derive the following list and pair each point with biblical references:

### ***Derived schema:***

*(With a few relevant verses.)*

**Observation - *What do you see?* (I Samuel 3:1; Prov 29:18)**

**Interpretation - *What does it mean?* (Nehemiah 8:8)**

**Application - *How can it be used?* (Matthew 28:20)**

**Revision - *How can it be changed?* (Acts 18:24-26)**

In the New Testament we see a command for New Testament Christians, both in the pulpit and in the pew, to use Critical Thinking and an explanation of the source of Old Testament truth (“the scripture”) about which they are to study critically along with the NT Scriptures.

**II Timothy 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”**

**II Peter 1:20-21 “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”**

### ***The responsibility of the pastor/teacher in the New Testament Church***

**Eph 4:7-16** Pastor/teachers are a gift to help the body to grow up (edifying) in the knowledge of Christ, no more children tossed about with every wind of doctrine, not in the vanity of their mind with their understanding darkened. They teach the body how to edify itself- in love - to offset the ignorance that is in them.

***This takes work, study, learned teachers teaching and the members of the body learning.***

It was suggested to me that we need to decide what we want to produce at Salt Lake Baptist College / Salt Lake Bible College, “Preachers or Scholars.” My contention is that we need to produce men and women who are both! I say this because the Bible demands that those who

preach and teach must do so in a scholarly manner. All who are true disciples must, biblically, be scholars of the Word of God, both the written Word, the Bible, and the living Word, Jesus Christ. We cannot produce one or the other, preachers or scholars, and do justice to our calling as teachers. We must produce graduates who embody the underlying strengths of both scholar and preacher; i.e., scholarly preachers. Nothing less will completely fulfill the conditions of our mandate from God. If we are to produce men and women for the ministry, and ministry is required of all who are called Christian, then we must produce scholarly ones. We especially must do this both for those who are called of God to be a preacher (**I Tim 2:7; II Tim 1:11**) and those who are called to be pastors (**Eph 4:11**). They must know how to **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (II Tim 2:15)**. They must also know how to seek understanding from God concerning His Word and be willing to receive teaching from His hand and meditate upon it. Teaching, to be of any purpose necessitates, of course, a learner who will not only hear but study what is heard. Only with such study will the learner then be willing to do what is taught them by the teacher. (**Psalm 119**) In addition, because there are many false teachers and false teachings in the world, we must also produce students who can discern between the right and the wrong and also discern the spirit of the ones who deem to teach them. (**I Tim 1:4-7; II Tim 4:1-4; I John 4:1**) Only then will they be able to carry out their job of teaching others to avoid the false and cling to the truth. (**Ezekiel 44:23**) Whether our student is a man or a woman makes no difference because we need to teach all Christians to be knowledgeable (scholarly) concerning what they teach others from the Word of God. (**Titus 2:1-8**) We must strive to teach all of them to be mature Christians, skillful in the Word of God; scholarly in it. (**Heb 5:12**) To do less than produce scholarly preachers and teachers would be to fail both them and our God who has called us to this ministry here in His school. In addition we will fail as a Church, because the school is a ministry of Bible Baptist Church. As was addressed earlier, in the first part of the Great Commission in Matthew that Christ has given to His Church, **“Go ye therefore and teach all nations...” (Matthew 28:19)**

**“teach”** Gk μαθητευσατε *math-ayt-yoo'-sa-tay* from μαθητευ *math-ayt-yoo'-o*  
*to disciple, that is, enrol as scholar: - be disciple, instruct, teach.*

If we do not send our graduates as disciples, that is to say “scholars” because they are one and the same, to make disciples/scholars of all to whom they go, then we are disobedient to God’s explicit command to do so. And if the pastors of our churches do not teach the members of the churches over which God has placed them to be scholarly in the Word of God, this is the practice known to us as discipleship, to make disciples (scholarly students) of those members, then those pastors have failed in the job that God has given to them as pastors over His churches.

***How do we carry out what we are commanded to do***

To carry out the command given to us in the Great Commission, we must teach the students/members to critically analyze their beliefs, with the Bible as the standard of judgment of right and wrong, truth and falsity. We will begin carrying out that responsibility by teaching Analytical/Critical Thinking methods so the disciples can learn the truths that God has given to them, their reasons for believing each of those truths, and how to logically defend those truths against falsity and the purveyors of false teachings.

We begin now!

## ANALYTICAL/CRITICAL THINKING DEFINED

Originally called Critical Thinking another title often given to it, albeit erroneously so, is Analytical Thinking. I say “erroneously so” because although the two, Analytical Thinking and Critical Thinking, are related, they are not the same thing. In some schools you will find them referred to as “critical analytical thinking” or, conversely, “analytical critical thinking.” For the purposes of this class we will refer to it as Analytical/Critical Thinking.

Unfortunately the term Critical Thinking has come to have a negative feel in the minds of many people because of the word Critical. Rest assured, in this current context “Critical” is not a negative word. One problem I have found is, because of the mindset that perceives Critical to automatically refer to something that is negative, some reject it outright for reasons we will address later. In spite of that misconception, and the fear it engenders in many, we still need to keep the word Critical in the title so that all who are knowledgeable about the true meaning of that title will know what this class is about. For brevity, from time to time we will refer to it as “**A/C (Analytical/Critical) Thinking**” or simply **A/C** as an abbreviation. We will study both Analytical and Critical Thinking but our focus will be mostly on Critical Thinking.

### *Brief definitions*

**Analytical Thinking** - analyzing a thing by dividing it into its individual parts, studying each part in order to understand it, then studying how the parts relate to one another, and then reassembling them into the whole in order to understand the whole.

**Critical Thinking** - we will define it further in a latter portion of this study but for now we can give it the brief definition of “**thinking about your thinking.**”

It is important that we understand that although these two styles of thinking, Analytical and Critical, are related, and intimately so, they are different processes in several important ways; mainly in the areas of process and purpose. Because they are both ways of organizing the thinking process to make it more efficient and accurate the similarities are many. We will be learning what each is, how and when to use each one, and how to utilize a combination of the two; thus, we will treat them as one, ways of affecting the organization of the thinking processes, while at the same time learning the important differences between them.

In this Introduction we will begin with a study of Scriptures concerning Analytical and Critical Thinking and then address some objections to, and sometimes the complete and adamant rejection of them (more so of Critical Thinking) by those in some religious circles. We will also dwell a bit on historical events that have led many to have mistaken perceptions of A/C; those misconception having then led them to the rejection of Critical thinking. And based on conversations with some in my own circle of experience, sometimes that rejection is a very adamant one.

The next section is in outline format to make it easier for the students to follow the lines of thinking and presentation of material.



## I. Scriptures Concerning Analytical Thinking and Critical Thinking.

All definitions of Bible words in this section are from Bagster's Analytical Greek Lexicon for Greek (NT) words, and/or Strong's Concordance and Dictionary for Greek and Hebrew words. (Bibliography listings 9 and 10.)

### A. Analytical/Critical thinking in the Bible.

#### 1. Old Testament

##### a. A/C is commanded. (Is 1:18)

**“Come let us reason together, saith the LORD...”**

**“reason together”** Heb יָכַח, *ya<sup>h</sup>kach*, *yaw-kak*

A primitive root; to *be right* (that is, correct); reciprocally to *argue*; causatively to *decide, justify* or *convict*: - appoint, argue, chasten, convince, correct (-ion), daysman, dispute, judge, maintain, plead, reason (together), rebuke, reprove (-r), surely, in any wise.

**“LORD”** Heb יְהוָה, *y<sup>e</sup>ho<sup>v</sup>a<sup>h</sup>*, *yeh-ho-vaw'*, Jehovah

Jehovah has given this command that we are to reason together with Him. To carry out that command demands that we use analytical/critical thinking concerning what is discussed. Our use of A/C thinking has to be to the extent and depth required to process the facts the LORD presented in detail in this section of Scripture. Without a detailed, critical analysis of what we are “reasoning together” with the Lord about, we cannot come to terms with the Lord as He has commanded us to do in this verse. In this whole chapter in Isaiah and the ones following it the Lord is giving detailed explanation concerning (1) what was happening to Israel, (2) what had happened to Israel, and (3) what was yet to come upon them. He analyzes at length the elements of cause and effect concerning the past, the present, and the future of Israel. Therefore, in order to obey His command we must critically analyze what is presented to us with at least the same scope and depth of detail as is present in the material that He, God, has presented to us.

As we examine what God has presented to us, we perceive that He is analytically and critically examining the Hebrew's dependence upon their feasts and sacrifices for forgiveness of their sins. Upon further examination, it is easy to see that God has rejected that errant dependence *in toto* and demands their obedience instead of their sacrifices. He instructed them to quit sinning instead of following their course of continued sinning followed by dependence on feast and sacrifice to pay for, or at least to cover, their sin. The sheer bulk and depth of the Analytical/Critical based presentation of historical fact, present consequences, and prediction presented by the Lord demands an equal processing of the information by us. Analytical and Critical Thinking on our part are supremely necessary if we are to find the truth, understand it, believe it, and then act accordingly. Only through an efficient use of these processes can we obey the clear command given to us by the LORD, Jehovah, to **“reason together”** with Him.

Since the things that happened to the Old Testament saints of Israel were examples for us (“ensamples” I Cor 10:1-11) then we are free to apply this command to Christians also. In fact, because of God’s statement in I Corinthians we are compelled to do so.

**b. A Warning. (Prov 14:15)**

If we do not utilize Analytical/Critical Thinking then, according to the Scriptures, we are foolish, silly, gullible, and easily seduced.

**Prov 14:15 “The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.”**

“*simple*” Heb אִתָּם יִתֵּן יָתֵן p<sup>ē</sup>thi<sup>ˆ</sup>y, pethi<sup>ˆ</sup>y p<sup>ē</sup>tha<sup>ˆ</sup>ʾı, *peth-ee'*, *peh'-thee*, *peth-aw-ee'* <sup>ˆ</sup>y - *silly* (that is, *seducible*): - *foolish, simple* (-city, one).

The simplicity against which God is cautioning the readers, of course, would have to include being seduced by false prophets speaking the Word of God in heresy instead of in truth.

“*prudent*” Heb אִוֶּרֶם *aw-room'*

*cunning* (usually in a bad sense): - *crafty, prudent, subtil*.

“*looketh well*” Heb בִּיָּן *bi<sup>ˆ</sup>yn, bene*

A primitive root; to *separate* mentally (or *distinguish*), that is, (generally) *understand*: - attend, consider, be cunning, diligently, direct, discern, eloquent, feel, inform, instruct, have intelligence, know, look well to, mark, perceive, be prudent, regard, (can) skill (-ful), teach, think, (cause, make to, get, give, have) understand (-ing), view, (deal) wise (-ly, man).

“*going*” Heb אֶשְׂרָה אֶשְׂרָה *aw-shoor'*, *ash-shoor'* in the sense of *going*; a *step*: - going, step.

From אֶשְׂרָה אֶשְׂרָה *aw-shar'*, *aw-share'* a primitive root; to *be straight* (used in the widest sense, especially to *be level, right, happy*); figuratively to *go forward, be honest, prosper*: - (call, be) *bless* (-ed, happy), go, guide, lead, relieve

It is obvious that more than a cursory examination is in view here in this verse in Proverbs. In fact, an in-depth examination is the only possible understanding of what is presented and even demanded by God to enable us to be “**prudent**” and avoid being “**simple**”. That is, to avoid being easily seduced.

This verse gives ample warning that we must process, critically and analytically, everything we hear to prevent being seduced into believing, and following, ungodly words and, thus, be “**prudent**” in our ways.

## 2. New Testament - Analytical Critical Thinking is Commended.

New Testament - more noble. (**Acts 17:11**)

**“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”**

**“searched”** *Gk*, ἀνακρίνω, anakrino, *an-ak-ree'-no*

Def. properly to **scrutinize**, that is, (by implication) *investigate, interrogate, determine*: - ask, question, discern, examine, judge.<sup>(9)</sup>

Specifically in Acts 17:11, , anacrithayn, *ana-kri-thayn*  
def. *to sift*<sup>(10)</sup>

**“sift”** Merriam-Webster Def. *to separate or remove (something) by using a sifter or sieve; to go through (something) very carefully in order to find something useful or valuable*<sup>(20)</sup>

**“noble”** ευγενεστεροι u-gen-es'-te-roi, well-born, generous, ingenuous, candid

**“ingenuous”** *free from reserve, restraint, or dissimulation; candid; sincere, artless; innocent; naive. Obsolete: honorable or noble.*

To say that the Bereans **“searched ( ) the scriptures daily”** plainly means that they were not just performing a cursory examination of the scriptures. Quite to the contrary. It means that they were undertaking serious and extended study of the scriptures; methodically going through them **“daily”**- inferring an extended and repetitive action- to find the truth of the matter. And they were doing so in a **“noble”** (*ingenuous*) straightforward, candid, sincere manner with no scheming or manipulatory twistings of the scriptures trying to make them say what they wanted them to say. Rather, they were carefully seeking for absolute biblical verification of the things that were taught to them by the Apostle Paul. Not quickly deciding to believe but reserving their decision concerning the truth or the falsehood, their acceptance or rejection, of what had been brought to them until each individual thing he brought had been thoroughly researched and analyzed. Once they had verified, biblically verified in detail, that everything that he taught was reasonable biblical fact, only then would they make up their minds to believe and act upon those beliefs. This is analytical/critical thinking at its best; being applied to the scriptures and is commended of God as **“more noble.”** That is, unreserved, candid, sincere, and unrestrained in their mental processing of the things received and, eventually, the things believed. As I said earlier, this is analytical/critical thinking at its best.

## 3. Biblical reason to use A/C Thinking.

To earnestly contend for the faith. (**Jude :3**)

**Jude :3 “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”**

To examine the phrase, “**earnestly contend for the faith...**”

**def.** επαγωνιζεσθαι (*ep-ag-o-nidz-es-thai*) to struggle, earnestly contend

To do this demands analytical/critical thinking because we must know **why** we believe **what** we believe, so that we can not only **contend** for the faith but **earnestly contend** for the faith.

Hubert Brooke in his classic book, “**Personal Consecration**” made the following statement,

**“It is only when we have to defend our possessions, that we come to define their real value, and to decide what can be discarded and what must be held fast at all costs.”** <sup>(8)</sup>

This is true beyond doubt. And in order to successfully “**defend our possessions,**” and “**decide what can be discarded and what must be held fast at all costs,**” applied in this case to our beliefs (**Jude :3 “earnestly contend for the faith”**), we must Critically Analyze the proofs of what we believe. And we must do this in an unfailingly proper manner. Our critical analysis of what we believe must be inseparably tied to the anchor of our faith, the Holy Bible. If we keep that tether fast then we truly can “**decide what can be discarded and what must be held fast at all costs.**” <sup>(op cit)</sup> Which is the bedrock purpose of Critical/Analytical Thinking. Analytically, to search out a truth in all of its parts, scrutinizing the relationships of those parts one to another in order to understand the whole by analyzing all of the component parts, taking into account both pros and cons. Then in a critical manner arrange our thinking about those facts in order to decide what is to be believed based strictly upon reasonable facts, biblical facts, and not, as is commonly done, basing our beliefs upon opinion, conjecture, and our own or our group’s preconceptions. Clearly and consciously differentiating between what is reasonable fact and what is mere opinion and only then make our decision concerning what we should believe. If we do that, then we will be truly able to “**earnestly contend for the faith**” as a “**noble**” Christian.

**B.** Analytical/Critical Thinking is inferred repeatedly in the Bible.

The inference is bound up in the idea of a “disciple.”

**1. Old Testament. (Isaiah 8:16)**

**“Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.”**

“**disciples**”, Heb דִּימְמוֹדֵי דִּמְמוֹדֵי limmu<sup>ˆ</sup>d, *lim-mood'*, instructed: accustomed, disciple, learned, taught, used

from דִּמְמוֹדֵי la<sup>ˆ</sup>mad *law-mad'* A primitive root; properly to *goad*, that is, (by implication) to *teach* (the rod being an Oriental *incentive*): - [un-] accustomed, X diligently, expert, instruct, learn, skillful, teach (-er, -ing).

The children of God in the Old Testament were encouraged to be disciples. And as such they were to be instructed in the law. They were to be learned in it, they were taught it, they were bound to it, they were sealed to it. And to be a disciple one has

to use disciplined thinking concerning the Law, the understanding of it, and the proper use of it.

## 2. New Testament. “disciple(s)” found 274 times in 257 verses

μαθήτρια mathe<sup>-</sup>tria, *math-ay'-tree-ah* - a female pupil, disciple

μαθητής mathe<sup>-</sup>te<sup>-</sup>s, *math-ay-tes'* - a learner, that is, pupil, disciple

The disciples of Jesus were not just followers, they were students, learners, pupils, that is, they were striving to be scholarly about the things of Christ. Learning from the master himself they were then expected to go out and teach what they had learned to others. And in multiple places in the New Testament believers are commanded to teach the unlearned. Overall, teach, teachers and teaching are mentioned 178 times in 170 verses in the Old and New Testaments.

As a final note, we have a command to go to the nations and make disciples of all; i.e., enrol them as scholars!

**Matthew 28:19-20** “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you *always, even unto the end of the world.*”

“**teach**” μαθητευσατε from μαθητεύω *math-ayt-yoo'-o*, intransitively to *become a pupil*; transitively to *disciple*, that is, enrol as scholar: - be disciple, instruct, teach.

This command, known commonly as The Great Commission, was the last given by Christ to the church that He started before He ascended to Heaven. It contained three parts, go, teach, and baptize. The second part, teach, literally meant that the members of His church are to go and make disciples, scholars, of the people of the world- “**all nations.**” It is an impossibility to teach to the depth commanded, to disciple them, without being methodical and detailed in our presentation of “**all things**” which were given to us from the Lord. It is eminently apparent that only through the use of critical and analytical thinking processes can we prepare and properly and truthfully present the knowledge we are commanded to teach to the world. Anything less would be a sinful, sloppy carrying out of our responsibilities to the Lord and to the world.

## II. The “Hijacking” of the Concept of Critical Thinking.

A. During the French Enlightenment (1650-1800) the agnostics and the atheists began manipulating facts of nature in contortionistic ways to try to eliminate the need for, and even the idea of, God and hiding those twistings and manipulations under a cloak of “Higher Criticism,” which is only somewhat analogous to “Critical Thinking.” Because of the few similarities those two have in common, many even today (2015) believe the

two are the same thing. Which they are not. However, we will pursue this portion of the study as if they are the same thing, lumping the two together as one, a way of thinking, because many do believe they are the same thing. Treating them as one and putting them side by side will enable us to discern the differences between them.

Beginning with the Enlightenment the atheists and agnostics began turning the minds of men toward a naturalistic explanation for all things and for all intents and purposes eliminating faith in God and His Word as an acceptable part of, and a necessary tool of, the Critical Thinking process.

No doubt much of this was a reaction to the Catholic Church's insistence on mindless obedience to their heretical doctrines and dogma down through the centuries. All of this leading up to the Enlightenment which was a reaction to the Church's torture and slaughter of dissenters which reached its peak in the inhumanity of the Inquisition which required torture and even death for any who would dare question the teachings of "The Church," meaning the Catholic Church. The Inquisition lasted from A.D. 1232 to the present year. The reason I give the date as lasting from A.D. 1232 to "the present year" is because the Inquisition may have been officially dissolved in Europe in the 1800's, but in some countries it has not been dissolved even to the present time, 2015. It may not be officially active in those countries, but it still does officially exist. And the effects can be felt in those countries, many of whom are still essentially controlled by the Catholic Church. In addition Rome, under Pope John Paul II officially reinstated the "Holy Inquisition," albeit under a new name. This practice of renaming it has been repetitive in occurrence down through the centuries.

**"At the time of Galileo, it was know as the Congregation of the Holy Office. Pope John Paul II gave it the name it bears today, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith."<sup>(16)</sup>**

Obviously, it is a matter of fact that the Inquisition still exists today (2015).

Bayle, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Diderot surfaced as some of the most famous proponents of this rebellion against the idea of "God" and especially God as "Creator" in the various areas of Skepticism, Atheism, and Toleration.<sup>(1)(2)</sup> And in the area of the human mind, charlatans like Freud began infusing Atheism into the counseling process, attempting to further eliminate God from the public consciousness, in this case in the area of God as the creator of the human mind. Freud and the others like him sought to eliminate God as a source of healing for the mind and the power and enabler for the rebuilding of shattered lives and shattered psyches just as the others mentioned were trying to eliminate Him from the creation of the natural universe and the care of the body.

It can be deduced that in the beginning, at least from the time of "The Enlightenment" the origin of this atheistic rebellion was most probably based upon their mistaken belief that "God, Religion, and Catholicism" were inseparable concepts. Catholicism's

stranglehold on religion had indoctrinated much of the world with that idea of unity of those three to the point that it was natural that anyone rebelling against Catholicism and its power and the exercise of it in the inhumanities perpetrated in the name of God would believe they had no choice but to throw off “God” and “Religion” when they decided to throw off “Catholicism.” To deny any one of those three would, in their minds, necessitate the throwing off of “the whole” because the three were believed to be inseparable “parts” of that whole. Because of the regimented indoctrination of the various people groups of the world over a period of several centuries through torture and even the use of lethal force, the thinking of the masses in general were incapable of separating “God” and “Religion” from “Catholicism.”

With the arrival of the Reformation, the Protestants perpetuated the same beliefs and practices that they brought out with them when they started their “Reformed” Catholic Churches and began their own persecutions in the name of God. As it was with their mother, the Catholic Church, the children known as the Protestant Churches began their own persecutions which also included imprisonment, confiscation of property, banishment, and death by various means, including drowning, which seemed to be one of their favorite methods.<sup>(3)</sup> This “like mother like child” continuation of atrocities perpetrated in the name of God further solidified the belief in the minds of the populace at large that God, Religion, and Church were one unified whole; and that to reject the “Reformed” Catholic Churches commonly known as Protestant Churches would of necessity, as it did in the rejection of the original Catholic Church, require the rejection of “God” and “Religion” as well. This joining of Catholicism and Protestantism in methods in the minds of the general populace further reinforced the belief that the rejection of either one of them would necessitate rejecting God also.

In summary, whether it concerned the rejection of the Catholic Church or the rejection of the Protestant Churches, to reject one part, whether it be Church or Religion in general, it being firmly entrenched in their minds that these were personified by the Catholic and the Protestant Churches, would to those seeking relief from physical and mental torture necessitate the rejection of the whole. And that would include that part of the whole known as God.

Obviously, then, this erroneous idea that a rejection of God is a necessary part of the practice of Critical Thinking, is based upon a totally false premise of unity concerning Church, Religion, and God.

#### **B. The results of the “Hijacking” of Critical Thinking.**

Beginning with The Enlightenment and the accelerating rise of atheism, the rise of and the practice of Critical Thinking/Higher Criticism began to have two results: (1) the rejection of God by the non-believers who thought such rejection to be necessary to the practice of Critical Thinking; and (2) the rejection of the idea of Critical Thinking by those who continued to believe in God.

There is, of course, a third group that should be briefly commented upon, who accept the practice of Critical Thinking without rejecting the idea of God and Religion. However, I will not dwell much on that third group because the conception they hold of God and Religion is not a biblical one. They attempt to fuse Humanism with Christianity to arrive at a bastard religion that owes no true connection to the God of the Bible as father of it nor to the Humanistic “god” of “self” as its father. I prefer to address, and will recognize, only biblical Christians as one group and the atheistic Humanists as the other group. Each of which, at least, is true to its own “family,” which the hermaphrodite third group is not. Therefore, I will concentrate only on the two true groups while recognizing the third group as existing but not relevant to our discussions.

### III. The Rejection of Analytical (Critical) Thinking by some religious leaders.

Although rejection of the practice of Analytical/Critical Thinking by believers is found in many Protestant and Catholic as well as in non-Protestant/non-Catholic Christian groups, because of my personal involvement I notice this rejection to be most prevalent among those who call themselves Independent Baptists. [Called “Independent” Baptists, or sometimes “non-denominational” Baptists, because they were never part of nor are they descended from either Catholicism or Protestantism as some better known denominational groups of Baptists erroneously claim themselves to be.<sup>(4)</sup> [See Salt Lake Bible College’s course “The Church” and the textbook written by Dr. VanBuskirk for a complete explanation of this view.]

There are several reasons for this rejection of A/C. We will now address a few of the more prominent ones.

- A. The belief that Analytical/Critical Thinking or, to give it its original name, Critical Thinking, is unbiblical and equates to an attack on the Bible is held by many. This belief comes from inaccurately equating “Critical Thinking” with “Higher criticism.” “Higher criticism,” also known as “historical criticism,” had its roots in:

**“Protestant reformation ideology, inasmuch as their approach to biblical studies was free from the influence of traditional interpretation. Where historical investigation was unavailable, historical criticism rested on philosophical and theological interpretation. With each passing century, historical criticism became refined into various methodologies used today: source criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism, tradition criticism, canonical criticism, and related methodologies.”<sup>(5)</sup>**

[For more information on this subject and the various “criticisms” mentioned, see the article “Historical Criticism” at:

**[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical\\_criticism#cite\\_note-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_criticism#cite_note-5)**

Specific references are given in that article.]

The term, higher criticism, though generally held to have begun with “**The Dutch**



**scholars Desiderius Erasmus (1466?–1536) and Benedict Spinoza (1632–1677)**”<sup>(op cit)</sup>, was, nevertheless, originally used in referring to the German “Tubingen School” of biblical scholars. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), David Friedrich Strauss (1808–74) and Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–72) are some of the better known critics carrying the torch through the 1700s and 1800s until the eventual advent of Radical Criticism toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This last school of criticism denied the authorship of the Pauline epistles and even **“projected the concept that Jesus never existed.”**<sup>(5)(6)</sup> and this radical criticism persists until this current time. (2015)

The dismissal of many beliefs traditionally accepted by Christians was a trademark of Higher Criticism, laboring to prove that many of these are not true, even though the biblical evidence of many was incontrovertible. The believers who held to the inspiration and preservation of the scriptures had no choice but to reject Higher Criticism as an attack not only on traditional beliefs, but an attack on the bible. This, unfortunately, was sometimes true and sometimes not; but the Christians rejected the whole on the basis of a few of the precepts proposed by the proponents of Higher Criticism. The attack on the authorship of the Pauline epistles by German pastor Hermann Detering, which effectively, if true, would completely negate many of the doctrines of the Bible, continues even today. Detering even goes so far as to associate Paul with the Samaritan sorcerer, Simon Magus, who opposed Peter. The final straw, however, must have been the attack on the actual existence of Jesus Christ proposed by Radical Criticism. Several of that school have attacked the historicity of Jesus Christ; but especially those of the group known as the Dutch Radical Critics. Such among the Dutch as W. G. Kümmel in his Introduction to the New Testament and others such as Van Manen and Van Eysinga.

**“The radical critic Van Manen in his investigations restricted himself only to establishing the inauthenticity of all the Pauline Epistles, without touching the historicity of Jesus, whereas his pupil Van den Bergh van Eysinga in his numerous publications always championed both theses.”**<sup>(7)</sup>

These attacks upon the very fundamentals of the faith, that are securely rooted in the belief in the inspiration and preservation of the Bible held by most groups of fundamental Christians, have caused those groups to reject the idea of Critical Thinking. Mistakenly associating it with the idea of Higher Criticism and its rejection of basic biblical doctrines based upon an inspired and inerrant Bible have resulted in many fundamental Christian pastors and teachers rejecting Analytical /Critical Thinking en toto as unbiblical. Ironically the very Bible they defend against Higher Criticism demands and commends, as I addressed earlier, both Critical and Analytical Thinking. Thus, making their rejection of those two types of thinking not only unbiblical but also sinful by omission. Unfortunately, the biblical mandate remains almost totally unknown to those who hold this rejectionist view. Therefore, they hold to their rejection of Critical and Analytical thinking through simple ignorance. Most refusing to even consider critically analyzing their rejection, which would be required to change their

beliefs, because to do so would necessitate their use of the very things they reject. In essence, their very rejection through ignorance makes rectifying that ignorance so they can receive, *fieri non potest*, impossible. However, **“The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” (Luke 18:27)** They may find it impossible to change their mind on their own but God can change their heart and that will change their mind for them.

**To deny truth does not negate truth  
It merely makes it unuseable to those who deny it.**

(Dr. Van)

### **B. Dictatorial style of leadership.**

A second reason why many fundamental preachers reject Analytical/Critical Thinking, either on a conscious or subconscious level, is because they have been taught a style of leadership that is dictatorial instead of pastoral.

This style of leadership is based upon the idea that the pastor is led of God to the ministry of being the Pastor and that He alone knows the will of God concerning how he is to carry out his calling and the running of the Church over which the Lord has made him pastor. The first half of the idea is biblical but the second half is not. There are several reasons why these types of leaders believe the way they do but along with this idea of exclusive knowledge also must go several logically necessary sub-ideas. We will address both of those categories, the why and the logical sub-ideas.

1. That God gives the God-called pastor a vision (to “see” that people are saved and a Church established in a certain place) and that he, the pastor, is then obligated to God because of his “calling” to impart that “vision” to the people of the congregation. This idea is often based upon a misunderstanding and a misapplication of Prov 29:18.
2. That the pastor/teacher is a gift from God to the people. This is a biblical precept. However, in many cases it is carried to an unbiblical extreme.
3. If the preceding are true, the pastor, then, obviously must believe that he alone knows better than the people what the will of God is. Therefore, he believes it is his sole responsibility to guide the people toward the accomplishment of the “vision” in the manner that he received it directly from God.
4. That the people are opposing God if they oppose the leadership of the pastor.

This, then, necessitates the belief that there is a curse upon those that oppose the pastor because they are, in essence, opposing God’s will expressed through the pastor.

5. The preceding, then, can lead any unwitting pastor into the belief that he is somehow infallible in his leadership of the congregation because he believes that his will is truly the will of God for the congregants and it is to be delivered to them through him alone.

6. Although he has now become a dictator, he does not consider himself one because he believes that he is leading the people in the will of God. In essence, he is, in his own mind, only the Viceroy of the Sovereign, God, who is leading him and who's will the pastor is bound to carry out. Including the responsibility to make sure that the people follow it also in every detail.

Thus, he does not consider himself a dictator because he believes he is only carrying out the will of God concerning his leadership of, which in actuality is dominion over, the congregants God has placed under him. This is predicated upon his conscious or subconscious belief that only he can know the will of God at that time and in that place and for the Church that he leads. Unwittingly he has fallen into the same trap as the Catholic Papacy.

Therefore, truly believing that he is answerable only to God, he believes he does not have to answer to the congregants, or anyone else, for any actions he performs as pastor and for any demands that he makes upon the congregants. This mindset often is extended out to the sincere belief that since God is leading him alone, then it follows that he knows how God is leading each member better than they do. What ministry they should be involved in, how they should serve in the Church, whether they should study for the pastorate, or whether they are called as missionaries. In essence, he knows how each member should serve God even if they don't. And he feels obligated to make sure they go in the direction he feels is God's will for them. Often the result is that what should be leading becomes driving and encouragement becomes coercion. And all of this is justifiable in his mind because he firmly believes in his heart that he is answerable only to God concerning how he leads the Church over which God has made him Pastor and that the methods he uses, no matter what they are, are approved of by the God that is leading him. Since it is, in his mind, the infallible God that is leading him, infallibly, then it follows that he, the pastor, is infallible as the leader of the congregation. Not only are his teachings always right as God's preacher in that place but his direction and methods are also always right as God's pastor (shepherd/leader) for that Church. Thus, the only counsel from any of the congregants acceptable to him is that counsel that agrees with or furthers his plans for the Church. Obviously then he either doesn't know about or is simply, or conveniently, forgetting the biblical admonition concerning counsel and safety.

**Prov 11:14 “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.”**

**Prov 15:22 “Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.”**

**Prov 24:6 “For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.”**

7. Sheep and the shepherd. The dictatorial type of pastor believes, correctly, that God considers Christ's followers in general, and specifically the congregants that he, the pastor, leads, to be “sheep” and the pastor considers himself to be the “shepherd.” Or,

as some express it, “the under-shepherd” with Christ as the Chief Shepherd. This is very good and very biblical. However, there is a problem. The dictatorial pastor forgets that he also is, as a believer, a “sheep” and subject to the same problems and failures as all of the other sheep. In addition he misunderstands the role of a shepherd, or, in his own case, the role of the under-shepherd. This type of pastor believes that the shepherd must control everything for the benefit of the sheep. And he doesn’t have to answer to anyone for that except Christ, who is the “Chief Shepherd.” Unfortunately this type of pastor believes that the shepherd’s job is to not only protect the sheep and lead them to still waters and green pastures to make sure they have food and water that are good for them, but he also believes that somehow the shepherd’s job is to control the way they eat the food, control how they digest it and then, somehow, control the way they grow thereby. This, of course, is impossible. These pastors somehow do not understand that once they have given the food and water to the sheep, meaning good and nourishing biblical food and the pure flowing water of the Word of God, there is nothing more they can do. The sheep must eat it on their own. The shepherd cannot force feed them food that they do not want to eat. He can encourage them to eat the spiritual food he has supplied for them but no amount of coercion by browbeating, condemning, frightening, or threatening, can he make them eat the food. Neither can he make them digest it, and grow properly from it. To attempt to do so is to obviate the biblical precept of free will.

At that point the pastor has crossed the line from encouraging leader to forceful dictator. Encouragement has become coercion and leadership has become control. He has become one who uses the Bible to coerce rather than to teach and encourage; using it as a club to force or frighten instead of as food for sustenance and growth. And any criticism of his teachings is viewed, as was stated earlier, as rebellion not only against himself personally but against the Sovereign God who is guiding him. Truly believing that he alone receives guidance from God for the Church, this pastor believes his only job is to “make sure” that the people follow “God’s” guidance which is given solely through him as the pastor to the Church. Analytical and Critical Thinking are feared by this type of pastor because in his mind, “the sheep” are not capable of doing anything on their own! And that includes inability to deeply and Analytically/Critically think about what they are being taught from God’s Word; i.e., to think for themselves. Any attempt at deep thinking on the part of “the sheep” this kind of pastor believes can only lead them astray. To him this is logical because, in his mind, sheep are not capable of thinking, only following. The question then, in this case becomes, who are the congregants really following? God or the pastor? God’s rules or the pastor’s perceptions of those rules? And in the last analysis, God or man?

These types of pastors have forgotten that no human being is infallible; that no human can know the perfect will of God at all times in all matters. No finite human mind, fallible and limited, nor any soul subject to the same limitations and imperfections, can know the perfect will of the infinite and infallible God. We can

know parts of His will, but not perfectly, and we can do so much of the time, but it is not possible to do so to an infallible extent at all times. That is why God has cautioned us to have counselors; and a multitude of them at that. If God leads people to join a particular Church and submit themselves to the leadership of the pastor that God has put over that Church, then for that pastor to not use the talents, knowledge, and spiritual discernment and not be willing to seek counsel from those whom God has placed there as members, is the height of human folly. The Church is a body and every member of that body has been placed there, by God, for a reason. Only when working together, each one fulfilling its purpose in the body, all working to compliment one another, only then can they function as a whole.

The inevitable result of dictatorial style leadership is that encouragement become coercion, preaching becomes a verbal vehicle for manipulation using carefully chosen Bible Scriptures as vindication. And in an attempt to control everything concerning the growth of members, long-suffering inevitably becomes enabling. Eventually, the Pastor-congregant relationship becomes a parent-child relationship carried to an abusive, need I say harmful, extent where the parent refuses to ever allow the child to grow to maturity. A relationship ruled by fear because the parent believes that the child is incapable of ever becoming self-sufficient. This, in the pastor/parent's mind, justifying continued total control of the life of the child from cradle to grave. Or in this case, control from the birth of the new baby Christian to their final homegoing to Heaven at death. The dictator's word becomes law instead of leadership and questions become forbidden. And if the questions continue because that pastor has failed to show the questioning one the scriptural proof of his stand on a particular issue or his insistence upon a particular direction for the congregant or the Church corporate, in a completely analytical and critical manner proving the issue and thus dispelling all doubts, then derision of the questioning one will ultimately begin and condemnation is impatiently waiting in the wings and will soon follow.

The pastor seeks to control everything about them; believing that he can "protect" them from themselves and their less "spiritual" beliefs and selves. This "daddy knows best" style of dictatorial leadership stifles and "smothers" spiritual growth rather than nurturing it. Much the same that an overbearing parent can "smother" the healthy growth of their child, stunting their ability to ever reach maturity in the natural realm.

Therefore, for this type of pastoral leadership, any idea of the use of Analytical/Critical Thinking by his followers is to be rejected immediately. No questioning by them can be allowed concerning anything he may do or teach. He cannot allow any disagreement and is quick to label it as "rebellion." Ever ready to give the scriptures concerning rebellion being "**as the sin of witchcraft**" (**I Samuel 15:23**) which God says is punishable by death. Not being able themselves to discern between "**verifiable reasons**" for cherished beliefs and "**opinions**" that they have been taught by their own mentors, the dictatorial pastor cannot allow Analytical/Critical Thinking

about those beliefs by those that he leads. Because of their own mindset this pastor has no other choice but to perceive such questioning as rebellion. As was said earlier, since these types of pastors truly believe that they alone know the will of God for the congregants under them, then for any of the church members to question the leadership of the pastor is, in essence, to question God Himself.

In answer to this type of mindset and the leadership that it fosters, there are several scriptures.

**Acts 10:34 “... God is no respecter of persons.”**

Applied to our current discussion, this shows that no pastor is above any one else in that Church.

The biblical justification and admonition that these pastors commonly use to coerce the congregants into agreeing with their leadership is from Hebrews.

**Heb 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”**

Yes we are to obey those that God has placed in authority over us. However, the authority they exercise is authority as a shepherd/leader and not as a dictatorial sovereign; or, as they perceive it, the unquestioned Viceroy of the Sovereign. Yes, they do have to “**give an account**”; but that is not only an account for how they watch for the souls of those that they lead but they also must give an account concerning themselves and how they lead those souls they pastor toward Christian maturity.

Are they leading the sheep to good water and good food so the sheep can eat and grow? Or are they trying to control the sheep in ways it is not possible for them to control them. Refusing to let them digest the food for themselves, refusing to let them assimilate the nutrients and grow from them; but rather stunting their growth by not allowing them to grow from the sustenance he has provided for them from the Word of God. By doing that they actually, though unwittingly, assume the role of the Holy Spirit who alone can help the sheep ingest, digest, and grow from the spiritual sustenance delivered to them by the pastor from God’s Word.

### C. Fear/Insecurity.

A third reason why many pastors reject Analytical/Critical Thinking, either on a conscious or subconscious level, is because of a more personal fear, many times brought on by insecurity or lack of confidence in their own abilities or education in the Word of God or personal general insecurity. Although this fear can be brought on by many factors, those who are cast into the pastorate or placed in teaching positions as novices are particularly susceptible.

This “fear group,” which is legion, fears that their Church members will become more knowledgeable than they in the Word of God. Not only more knowledgeable concerning

content but also more knowledgeable, and adept, in handling the Word and the defense of their beliefs in it. Also included in this would be the member becoming more knowledgeable in the application of it in their lives. If allowed to happen, which will happen if the members are taught the principles of Analytical/Critical Thinking and then begin to apply those principles toward their study of the Word of God, this causes these preachers to fear that the members who develop this knowledge in the Word of God would become better equipped than they to help the other members cope with the challenges of living the Christian life through better understanding of and application of the Word. This has to be threatening to the insecure pastor. He fears he might lose face; i.e., he fears his estimation in the eyes of the general membership would be lowered. The members might start looking to someone other than him for counsel; for leadership in certain areas of their life. He may start to fear that his job, his position as pastor, would be in jeopardy.

These fears on the part of this legion of pastors are predicated upon several misconceptions.

1. That the pastor must be high above all of the members in both his knowledge of the Word of God and his ability in its correct interpretation and application. In essence, perfect in Bible knowledge and the ability of leadership that comes from it.

Yes, we agree that he should be very knowledgeable in the Word of God, just as any teacher needs to be knowledgeable in the subject that they teach, but perfect in knowledge is, of course, unachievable nonsense. As was stated earlier, no one is perfect. Be it perfection in ability in a craft or in knowledge in any field, including the Word of God or in any other matter in this fallen creation, perfection of any kind is not possible. In fact, concerning the Word of God, perfection in knowledge in and of it is completely unattainable because no finite human mind can perfectly apprehend the knowledge that the infinite God has placed in His presentation of knowledge to human kind in the Bible. Although we can become very knowledgeable in the Word, having perfect knowledge in it is simply not possible with our finite human minds. Unfortunately this belief that the pastor has to be high above the rest of the congregation in his knowledge of the Word is taught, either outright or by implication, in many theological schools and also is promoted among many large groups of pastors, both Independent and Denominational. In addition to the schools that have been, and are, teaching this idea we must add the cronyism amongst the various groups of pastors and the group thinking that fosters cast division thinking. This cronyism and its cast thinking results in their believing there are two groups of Christians, the “clergy” and the “laity.” Which once again propagates the “high above” nonsense. When we look at these two, schools teaching the “high above” precept and the cronyism and the cast thinking it fosters, it is no wonder that proliferation of the idea and the infection of the “clergy” across group lines with this error has passed from generation to generation for centuries.

2. The second misconception, which is analogous to or at least derived from the first one, is that no one in the Church can be more knowledgeable in the Word of God than the pastor. A common assumption brought about by this belief would be that if there is

someone like that in the congregation they are not to be trusted by the pastor because they would start usurping his authority as leader/pastor/teacher.

3. Thirdly, it would be assumed that this person more knowledgeable in The Word would automatically try to usurp the position of pastor. Maybe “for the good of the congregation” because they would be able to mature them to a higher spiritual state because the more knowledgeable person would be able to better teach them and lead them in the precepts taught in God’s Word.
4. A fourth assumption would be that the congregation would prefer that person over the pastor and want them to be their pastor. Thus replacing the old pastor with this new more knowledgeable pastor.

Although these are definitely possibilities, it should not be assumed that they are destined to take place. Unfortunately the fearful pastor expects them to take place and reacts to them as to a present and unavoidable danger.

The assumptions listed, and the fearful pastors belief that they are certainties, could, and probably would, cause the pastor to become fearful of losing both his authority and, eventually, his position as Pastor. This fear, if allowed to grow, could easily cause the pastor to start an intentional or unintentional vendetta against the person to have them expelled from the Church. Probably citing the biblical justification that the person was “in rebellion” and needed to be removed to “protect” the Church members from becoming infected with the expelled one’s attitude of “rebellion.”

**D.** Lastly we must consider the problem of peer pressure.

The fear of being ostracized by peers is not limited to teens and schools. It is prevalent across nearly all, if not all, age groups and professions. And, Yes, serving God is a profession in that every ministry must be carried out in a professional manner in order to avoid chaos.

Applied to pastors, this fear is manifested in traditions and accepted practices in the mechanics of ministry as well as the translation and, more prevalently, the application of various scriptures. The result of this fear is that pastors will institute certain practices in their ministry or take certain theological stands without having scriptural vindication or even believing that it is necessary to give that vindication to the members. They fear that if they change things their peers will no longer think well of them. There is some basis for their fears because I have personally known pastors who not only began looking down upon, and began to verbally berate, those whom they had previously been close to, and others who actually have broken off fellowship with pastors whom they previously had fellowshiped with, over such things. Without ever giving reasonable scriptural vindication for their stands and their disagreement with the variant pastor. And when they do give scriptures, even a cursory examination of them reveals the overriding weight of tradition and the proliferation of misunderstanding, misapplication, and obvious sociocentricism in their choice and use of the scriptures. This fear of ostracization causes many pastors to run their churches a certain way and teach certain things, both of these without scriptural vindication,



or even a belief that they need such vindication. And any member who questions their actions will be quickly labeled as rebels and movement to have them expelled from the Church soon follows. Approval of their peers is elevated to a level of importance that outweighs their responsibility to the members of the Church over which the Lord has chosen them to lead. Once again, as we saw earlier, the pastor's leading style degenerates to that of dictatorial oppression.

All of these things, equating Critical Thinking with Higher Criticism, Dictatorial style of leadership, fear and insecurity of various kinds, have led many to completely reject the idea of Critical Thinking. Some will accept the idea of Analytical Thinking but only if it does not lead to abandonment by that thinking member of any of the pastor's teachings or a questioning by them of any of the teachings or methods used by the pastor. Complete agreement with the pastor by the member is required or the consequences will be forthcoming. Therefore, Analytical Thinking is only allowed on a superficial level and then only when led by the pastor and only when it agrees with or bolsters the teachings of that pastor. We must realize that he may sincerely believe that he is right. In most cases he probably is; but if anyone uses Analytical or Critical Thinking and dares suggest that his beliefs are really predicated on opinions, either his own or of those who taught him, rather than verifiable biblical facts, then the Analytical/Critical Thinking by the member will be summarily executed by branding it as "rebellion." Most pastors of the Independent ranks and some in the Denominational ranks would not allow such independent thinking to ever get started in the first place. And preventing such thinking could only happen if Analytical/Critical Thinking were banned outright and, probably, branded as only causing "rebellion" which would automatically make it ungodly and "of the devil."

### **Conclusion:**

There are more reasons than the few presented above why Analytical/Critical Thinking has been rejected in many religious circles, Analytical Thinking to a lesser degree but Critical Thinking totally, and if time and space permitted we would go into those. However, I believe that the ones presented are the most prevalent from my own observation during my 30 years in the ministry and that is why I chose to present only those.

## **IV. The Need for Analytical/Critical Thinking Today.**

### **A. The Information Age.**

The onset of the "Information Age" and the widespread use of the Internet has given the average person an unprecedented access to vast amounts of information once only available to scholars who had access to large libraries and the time to deeply research various religious topics. No more is the average member of the congregation totally dependent on the Pastor to study the Bible and appropriate religious literature and then deliver the proofs to them of the various biblical stands drawn from his studies. Where once only the pastor had a library of religious literature, commentaries, bible dictionaries, Greek and Hebrew grammars and Word Studies, etc., now any congregant with a computer and Internet access

can avail themselves of a library of literature thousands, if not millions, of times larger than the average pastor's library. In addition the congregant can access thousands, if not millions, of "authorities" on just about any biblical subject. Meaning that their pastor is no longer the sole authority concerning biblical truth. Right or wrong, conservative or liberal, knowledgeable or ignorant, saved and exercising spiritual discernment or lost and incapable of spiritual discernment, or even saved but in the flesh instead of in the spirit, these multitudes of "authorities" are, nonetheless, available to the congregant. Thus, the pastors now, more than ever, need to exercise analytical and critical thinking when preparing lessons or sermons to deliver to their tech savvy congregants. He must also teach them the essentials of analytical/critical thinking so that they can maneuver their way through the seas of information now available to them and decide through analytical methods what is acceptable as biblical truth and study the information critically before deciding what to believe and to act upon. In essence, he needs to equip them to navigate to clear theological seas of knowledge and avoid the Sargasso Seas of heresy. Those dangerous waters are many, wide, and found all throughout the world of the Internet. And they are growing exponentially with the corresponding exponential growth of the heretics who are gaining access to the world-encompassing sea of knowledge called the Internet. The pastor/teacher will not be able to keep them from sailing the waters, to do so would be an exercise in futility. Therefore, the only thing he can do is prepare them for the voyage by himself using and teaching them to use the mechanics of Analytical/Critical Thinking.

#### **B. The Onslaught of the Cults.**

**'A few years ago while in a thrift store in Salt Lake City, I asked the young register clerk if he had been on his mission yet. He said that he had just completed it and amazingly he had served in Dallas, Texas for his two year mission. I asked him if he had any converts and he smiled and said, "Yes!" He did not know that I was a Baptist preacher, but I asked him what group was the easiest to convert. Without any hesitation, he said, "The Baptists." How sad! Yet, it is true according to their statistics that Baptists are "prime for the picking."' (Dr. Tommy O'Dell)**

The two fastest growing cults, Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, claim that 80% of their converts from other churches are from Baptist Churches. Aside from that appalling figure, their inroads into all of the other groups is growing rapidly. When we add to those two the other cults as well as the false religions of the world, it is obvious that Christian preachers and teachers from all of the various church groups need to arm their congregants/students against the assault propagated by these and other cults and false religions. The only way to do that is to teach them to Analyze and Critically examine not only any teachings brought to them from the cults and the false religions, but to do the same to their own beliefs so they can effectively defend them when necessary.

To effectively carry out the ministry to which the Lord has called them,

pastor/teachers now must teach their congregants/students Analytical/Critical Thinking or else they will be leaving them to the wolves. And the wolves are circling in greater and greater numbers as each day passes. I cannot believe that dereliction of this pastoral duty, protecting the sheep in their care from the growing numbers of wolves who are on the attack, can be pleasing to the Lord.

### C. Things Have Changed In the Knowledge Level of Congregants/Students.

It is now becoming mandatory that Christians be able, and more so for those of us that are pastors and teachers, to clearly, concisely, logically, and thoroughly, present and defend our beliefs. For pastors especially, no longer can the “ignorance” of the people be counted upon to allow us to make broad, sweeping statements without giving solid biblical backing for them. Also, no longer can the business of the Churches we pastor be carried out in certain ways solely because “we have always done it that way” and therefore, “that way” must be the right way and everybody else is doing it the wrong way, without a solid biblical basis for what is done and how it is done. Keeping secrets is **“becoming very difficult”** whether it be the secrets of the inner workings of the local Church, or denominations for those who have fallen into that heresy, or the deep teachings and mysteries of the Bible itself which we dogmatically state to the congregants or students as fact, without vindicating our stand with plain teachings from the scriptures.

**“Protecting your inner workings is becoming very difficult; it’s very hard to keep secrets. Religions have thrived in part because they were able to keep secrets. They were able to keep secrets about other religions from their parishioners, who were largely ignorant of what other people in the world believed, and also keep secrets about their own inner workings and their own histories, so that it was easy to have a sort of controlled message that went out to people. Those days are over. You can go on the Internet and access to all kinds of information. This is going to change everything.”<sup>(15)</sup>**

If any pastor/teacher believes that they can ignore the Internet’s influence on their congregants and can continue on with “business as usual” as they and their mentors have done for decades, if not centuries, that pastor is declaring that to be an ostrich is an acceptable way to carry out ministry today and an acceptable way to view the needs of their congregants/students and the dangers they face in this present world and will face increasingly in the future. On the other hand, the possible benefits of expanded theological understanding to be gained by their congregants/students must also be taken into account by the pastors/teachers. And to ignore the benefits that can be appropriated by any who they prepare to sift information critically and analytically is just as big an error. To be oblivious to the possible benefits is no better nor no worse than being oblivious to the clear and present dangers to their congregants/students. And one action, teaching Analytical/Critical Thinking principles to their congregants/students, can simultaneously solve both of those problems. Unfortunately, those who will not teach

those principles will not and often can not do so because they refuse to use them themselves to solidify and critique their own beliefs and thinking processes.

We will now go on to the main topic at hand, Analytical/Critical Thinking.

## CHAPTER ONE

### **Analytical Thinking and Critical Thinking Defined and Compared.**

Although Critical Thinking and Analytical Thinking are akin to one another. Sometimes they are considered synonymous terms. However, although there are many similarities there are striking differences. The main differences are, how the facts are gathered and the purposes for which they are used as well as the processes used in each type of thinking.

#### **I. Critical Thinking- Definition and Purpose and Quotes about it.**

##### **A. Critical Thinking Defined.**

**“Critical thinking is, in short, self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking. It presupposes assent to rigorous standards of excellence and mindful command of their use. It entails effective communication and problem solving abilities and a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

##### **“egocentrism” from “egocentric”**

*def. - having or regarding the self or the individual as the center of all things: an egocentric philosophy that ignores social causes - having little or no regard for interests, beliefs, or attitudes other than one's own; self-centered: (an egocentric person; egocentric demands upon the time and patience of others.)*

##### **“sociocentrism” from “sociocentric”;**

*def. - oriented toward or focused on one's own social group, tending to regard one's own social group as superior to others.*

In essence, egocentrism is making self the center and superior; and sociocentrism is making your social group the center and superior. These are both elements of the mind and heart of all human beings. Found in a greater or lesser measure within individuals, true, but incontrovertibly extant to some extent in all of us as a race.

#### **Proverbs 21:12 “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes but the LORD pondereth the hearts.”**

On a practical level these tendencies are not destructive. In fact they are survival traits for individuals and societies. One needs to take care of one's self in order to survive. On this level, concerning the needs of an individual, egocentrism is a survival trait. Likewise concerning sociocentrism. In order for a society to survive certain things must take place in and for the sake of the society as a whole with the individuals giving up some rights for the sake of the whole. However, closer scrutiny reveals the obvious truth that the survival

of that society makes the survival of the individuals that make up that society much more likely. Therefore, it is easy to see that sociocentrism is a survival trait that has its roots in egocentrism; i.e., sociocentrism results in an increase in the likelihood of the survival of the individual. Both traits are beneficial for survival, on the one hand for the lone individual, egocentrism, and on the other hand for the collection of the individuals aggregate, sociocentrism. However, because the individual's reason for adopting behaviors beneficial to the society in which he is involved is because he knows it will, in turn, increase his own likelihood of survival, then we can see that his involvement in the mechanics of sociocentrism is rooted in and merely an extension of the individual's egocentrism. Therefore, the relationship between egocentrism and sociocentrism is much closer than that of brother and sister. In actuality it is more like that of conjoined twins. Egocentrism on an individual level and sociocentrism on a corporate level which feeds the overall survival of the individual. The individual is willing to give up some small rights for the welfare of the society. As long, of course, as the society improves the overall likelihood of the survival of that individual.

Therefore, it is easy to see that egocentrism and sociocentrism are not in themselves negative. To the contrary, they are positive and even generally necessary for survival. However, to make proper judgements and decisions in belief and action in every sphere of our lives, including religion, we must include in our thinking processes reflection on those two "cisms" and weigh their effects on our thinking processes while making those judgements and decisions. That is a part of the Analytical/ Critical Thinking process- **"a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism."** To properly weigh information and make reasonable judgements concerning that information, we must understand that ego-centered proclivities and presuppositions and society-centered proclivities and presuppositions are a part of us and, because of our recognition and awareness of their existence, take a serious look at our thinking processes to be sure we do not allow those two to unduly sway us or maybe even make the judgment or decision for us. Let them be part of our thinking process, yes, but be consciously aware that they are only a part of it and weigh them for significance, truthfulness, and keep or discard them as careful judgment declares.

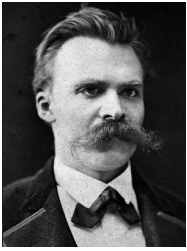
## **B. The purpose for Critical Thinking.**

One short definition of Critical Thinking focusing on its purpose is, **"Reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do."**<sup>(13)</sup>

The focus, or purpose if you will, of Critical Thinking is not so much on discovering something, such as truth, direction, etc.- but is more narrowly focused on **"deciding what to believe or do"**<sup>(op cit)</sup> based upon the information presented to us by examining the veracity of the information considered as well as the completeness of that information and researching and discovering new relevant information if necessary. This is the main factor that differentiates it from Analytical Thinking.

## C. Quotes About Critical Thinking

Friedrich Nietzsche



**“Doubt as sin. — Christianity has done its utmost to close the circle and declared even doubt to be sin. One is supposed to be cast into belief without reason, by a miracle, and from then on to swim in it as in the brightest and least ambiguous of elements: even a glance towards land, even the thought that one perhaps exists for something else as well as swimming, even the slightest impulse of our amphibious nature — is sin! And notice that all this means that the foundation of belief and all reflection on its origin is likewise excluded as sinful. What is wanted are blindness and intoxication and an eternal song over the waves in which reason has drowned.”**



Anaïs Nin

**“When we blindly adopt a religion, a political system, a literary dogma, we become automatons.”**

- Anaïs Nin, *The Diary of Anaïs Nin*, Vol. 4: 1944-1947



**“There are few things more dangerous than inbred religious certainty.”**

- Bart D. Ehrman, *God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question - Why We Suffer*

**“Critical thinking is thinking about your thinking while you're thinking in order to make your thinking better.”**

- Richard W. Paul

**“Religion has the capacity to silence critical thinking and create blindness in entire groups of people. It can infect the minds of followers so completely as to allow the most egregious sexual acts against children and others to go unchallenged for centuries.”**

- Darrel Ray, *Sex & God: How Religion Distorts Sexuality*

**“In a world where critical thinking skills are almost wholly absent, repetition effectively leapfrogs the cognitive portion of the brain. It helps something get processed as truth. We used to call it unsubstantiated buy-in. Belief without evidence. It only works in a society where thinking for one's self is discouraged. That's how we lost our country.”**

- Laura Bynum, *Veracity*

## II. Analytical Thinking- Definition and Purpose.

### A. Analytical Thinking Defined.

**“When you think analytically you examine, or think about, the different parts or details of something in order to understand or explain it.”<sup>(12)</sup>**

**“Analytic thinking - the abstract separation of a whole into its constituent parts in order to study the parts and their relations.”<sup>(14)</sup>**

The definition of the term Analytical Thinking points us to an arrangement of our thought processes that allows us to carry out a serious examination of the parts of something, either something physical or ephemeral such as a thought, a teaching, or a concept, and the relationships of those parts one to another in order to enable us to understand the whole so we can correctly explain it to others should we be called upon to do so.

### B. The purpose for Analytical Thinking.

The purpose, or focus if you will, of Analytical Thinking is not so much to discover truth but rather to understand it completely. To assess something presented to us by analyzing all of its parts, their relationships to one another, their veracity and authority, and by that analysis to understand it so completely that we can satisfactorily explain it. Whether that explanation is for our own benefit or for the benefit of others.

## III. Differences Between Analytical & Critical Thinking

By Kyra Sheahan (eHow Contributor)

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Analytical thinking can help you problem-solve issues in your life.

Any time you read literary materials or experience something that requires you to comprehend it, you employ a variety of thinking skills. Thinking skills relate to the way in which you process and understand information, and you employ specific thinking skills based on what you wish to gain from your thoughts. Analytical and critical thinking are two styles of thinking skills that are commonly used, but employed for different purposes.

**Analytical thinking** describes a thinking style that enables a person to break down complex information or a series of comprehensive data. It uses a step-by-step method to analyze a problem and then come to an answer or solution. In essence, analytical thinking represents a cause and effect style of looking at a problem, and is sometimes referred to as perceiving something through multiple lenses. An example of analytical thinking involves understanding the relationship between leaves and the color green. One could ask "Why are leaves green?" and then use analytical thinking skills to tie the answer together.



## **Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking has to do with evaluating information that is fed to you, and determining how to interpret it, what to believe and whether something appears to be right or wrong. In this style of thinking the thinker employs reasoning to come to a conclusion about how he wants to perceive the information. Critical thinking also takes outside information into account during the thought process. Rather than sticking strictly with the information presented, critical thinking lets the thinker explore other elements that could be of influence.

## **Facts-Based**

Analytical and critical thinking styles both look at facts, but those facts are then used for different purposes. When it comes to analytical thinking, facts are used to build on information and support evidence that leads to a logical conclusion. Critical thinking, on the other hand, uses facts to determine a belief, form an opinion or decide whether something makes sense.

## **Process**

The processes of analytical thinking and critical thinking are different. Analytical thinking uses a linear and focused process, with one thought following the other in a stream-like formation. Critical thinking occurs more in circles and can go around and around until a conclusion is stumbled upon.

## **Purpose**

The purposes of critical thinking and analytical thinking are not the same. You do not employ critical thinking strategies to figure out the solution to a complex question or to problem-solve. Rather, analytical thinking is used for this purpose. However, you would not use analytical thinking if your main goal was to come up with a belief or perception about something. In this case, you would use critical thinking methods.

Kyra Sheahan

[http://www.ehow.com/info\\_12001467\\_differences-between-analytical-critical-thinking.html](http://www.ehow.com/info_12001467_differences-between-analytical-critical-thinking.html)

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## CHAPTER TWO

### **Analytical Thinking and Critical Thinking for Christians.**

Critical Thinking and Analytical Thinking are generally taught from the standpoint that Empirical Science is the standard by which all things are judged. For Christians, however, only one standard is possible, the Bible. All things are to be judged by this one infallible standard. Knowledge, fact, truth, understanding, comparison, all are to be judged by, and understood by, this one repository of all knowledge given to man by the infinitely intelligent and all understanding Creator of all things, a being we generally refer to as “God.” This difference is of supreme importance concerning how we go about implimenting and carrying out both Analytical and Critical Thinking. One’s worldview will dictate whether the secular standard or the spiritual standard is used. If we have a Scientific Worldview, then we will use science as the standard by which all things or concepts are investigated. If we hold a Biblical Worldview, then our standard for all things investigated and embraced will be the perfect Word of God, the Bible. With a Biblical Worldview, we will judge even science by the Bible rather than judge the Bible by science as the secularists do.

A word of caution, do not think that science and the Bible are irreconcilable. Quite to the contrary. True science always agrees with the Bible. Unfortunately the perception, one’s overall view if you will of the results reached through use of empirical science is too often flavored by the worldview of the observer. If one has a worldview based strictly on science minus the Creator, then perceived discrepancies between science and the Bible exist in the mind of the observer. On the other hand, when one’s world view is based on God and His Word, then any perceived discrepancies vanish away as shadows dispersed by the infusion of light.

One prime example of this is the secular/scientific belief in the origins of the universe. According to them, everything came from a singularity, which is an unprovable and unobservable point of infinite mass and temperature; or, according to a new theory which is quickly gaining acceptance, it didn’t come from a singularity but spontaneously appeared, along with time. The latter theory being the one espoused by the well-respected scholar, Stephen Hawking. According to the singularity theory, the singularity did not explode at a particular place and time, but rather, “**it was an explosion of space and time**”<sup>(17a)</sup> (*emphasis is mine*) which necessitates an outside force or cause to have caused the explosion; which, in turn, leaves the door open for God as a possible candidate for that “outside force or cause.” This is acceptable to those who operate from a Biblical Worldview but is totally unacceptable to those who operate from a Scientific Worldview. Hawking’s vision of the universe, on the other hand, envisions the beginning as not necessitating an outside influence (God or any other) which, in his mind, can only be

brought about by utilizing the Quantum Theory idea “**of imaginary time**”. Alternate theories include String Theory, necessitating seven “**hidden dimensions of space in addition to the three we experience.**”<sup>(op cit)</sup> and an undetectable group of universes, dubbed “**the bulk,**” of which ours is only a part; which caused the Big Bang and once again eliminates the need for an outside force or cause, including the one we call God. But in essence, science based in String theory is once again dependent upon a belief that the majority of the cause and sustainer of our universe to be invisible and undetectable.

No matter which of these theories one chooses to believe, for either of them to be considered one must accept the bedrock postulate on which both are based, the Theory of Evolution. This essential postulate brings all of the various theories to a crisis because for Evolution to be true, and for the universe to exist and function the way it observably does, the vast majority of the energy and substance of the universe has to be invisible and undetectable. This unobservable/undetectable dark matter and dark energy, as they are called, must compose “**roughly 96 percent of the mass of the universe**”<sup>(17b)</sup> in order for the visible universe to exist and function as observation tells us it does. The one common thread of all of these theories as well as the observations of empirical science agree that the universe had a beginning and that it is held together by an invisible agency of some sort. Since that agency is invisible and undetectable then true science agrees with the Bible which for thousands of years has taught us exactly that same thing; an invisible and undetectable agency which is both the cause and the sustainer of the universe. The only difference being that a Biblical Worldview chooses to believe that the agency is a being called God while a Scientific Worldview, refusing to acknowledge the existence of God, believes that the existence of the Universe is grounded in an undetectable and invisible agency operating in and with imaginary time, extra dimensions, dark matter and dark energy, both of which are invisible and ultimately undetectable, and/or multiple universes, also invisible and ultimately undetectable. The latter, multiple universes, being circular in the question of ultimate origin, begs the question, where did they come from and essentially leaves the whole question unanswered. In the end, the Biblical Worldview answers the question while the Scientific Worldview does not. When observation is used, one has to admit that the universe does exist. How it got here and how it continues to exist is answered only by faith no matter which possibility one chooses to embrace: biblical, which embraces true science and observation, or scientific, which denies both the bible and observable science and embraces only the realm of the invisible, undetectable, and unprovable. In essence, since it is unprovable by observation, it must operate only in the imaginary realm. And, therefore, to hold either of those beliefs is as much a matter of faith as the Biblical Worldview which embraces Creation by a Creator, which we call God.

As I said at the beginning of this section, Science and the Bible are not irreconcilable. The one, Science, tells us the mechanics of how the Creation operates; the other, the

Bible, tells us how and why it exists and why it continues in the paths explained by Science. Therefore, as I stated earlier, true Science agrees with the Bible; and the false Science which disagrees with the Bible is shown, in the fundamental point just discussed as well as all points deriving from it, to be predicated upon faith in the invisible and physically undetectable just as much as biblical faith is in an invisible and undetectable Creator which we call God.

Thus, we, meaning all of human-kind, are left with only two choices, both having the same basis- Faith. One can have False Scientific Faith or one can have Biblical Faith. The former, disagreeing with the Bible and dependent instead on creation of the universe by and sustaining of it by, something invisible, undetectable, and ultimately scientifically unprovable, which, therefore, must be accepted by faith alone without provable, observable fact; and the latter depending on a Creator and agreeing totally with true science and facts which are provable, observable, and measurable by accepted Empirical methods and, therefore, acceptable by both faith and fact.

Which of those two, if thought out thoroughly and honestly, utilizing observable and provable fact while setting aside any preconceived egocentric or sociocentric notion that there is no God, would be the most logical belief to accept and act upon to any Critical Thinker? If one is honest and critical in their thinking processes, then to operate from a Biblical Worldview takes much less faith than to operate from a Scientific Worldview. Meaning a false scientific worldview, which we will henceforth refer to simply as a Scientific Worldview because that is what holders of that view overwhelmingly mean- a worldview devoid of God and denying the truth of the Bible.

One word of caution! Don't expect holders of the "Scientific Worldview" to ever acknowledge they operate by faith when you bring it to their attention. In fact, you can expect it to generate hostility in them. One personal example will clearly show what I mean by that statement.

In 2006 my wife and I were invited to a Solstice Party at an atheist's house that we had met at an Atheists of Utah meeting some time before. I like to investigate various points of view and sporadic attendance at meetings of the Atheists of Utah and, from that, attendance at a Solstice Party hosted by one of the atheists seemed like good places to gather information about atheists and their social group. While at the house party, the host struck up a conversation with me, knowing that I was a pastor. I always made that fact known because I want my position in any ensuing conversations to be established from the start. Which, by the way opened the door at one time for an invitation from the Atheists of Utah to lecture at one of their meetings on the topic of Morals and Ethics. At my request, insistence actually, I was allowed to include The Bible as one of the major basis' for morals and ethics from antiquity to the present, among 5 or 6 others.

Anyway, back to the host at the party. He stated that one of the reasons he rejected

“religion” was because we, meaning practitioners of religion (he would have been incapable of differentiating between Christianity and Religion in general) had to accept everything by faith and not by fact. I then stated that he too accepted most things by faith and not by fact. His answer was an adamant refusal that he ever operated by faith- ever!

I then asked him a simple question, “Have you ever been to Germany?” His immediate answer was, “Yes!” My follow-up question was “Have you ever been to France?” He then, with a somewhat quizzical look on his face answered “No.” I then asked him “Do you believe it exists?” “Yes” he immediately answered. “Why?” I asked. “Because I have seen TV programs about it.” came his quick response. “So then you have faith that the producers of those programs were presenting fact and not fiction.” was my reply. You could almost see the fire begin to kindle in his eyes as he snapped back with “Well, I’ve read books and newspaper articles about it?” Again my answer was “So you have faith that those who wrote those books and articles were telling you the truth.” By now his eyes were snapping with antagonism and he spit out “I’ve got friends who have actually been there!” My answer, once again, was “So you have faith that your friends are telling you the truth.”

By now his anger was beginning to manifest itself in his physical demeanor as he began to swell up and actually lean forward toward me. This time, although his anger had observably reached nearly to the threshold of physical violence, he gave me no answer. I then stated “So you see, if you have never been to France, never seen it with your eyes, touched it, personally experienced its physical existence, then to believe it exists has to be, ultimately, a matter of faith for you.” At this point he was nearly beside himself with anger and frustration. By his demeanor I fully expected that a personal attack was immanent. To his credit, he controlled himself, muttered a few incomprehensible words, waved his arms about, and abruptly terminated the conversation and moved on to others of his guests.

Later, however, he did return and started another conversation in which he made reference to physical violence against me in the context of “How would you react if I kicked you in the ... (I can’t include what he actually said he would do to me because of its obscene nature)? Would you stand there and take it and then forgive me?” My answer was “I would walk away from you before you could do it.” And that pretty much ended the encounter.

This example is sufficient to illustrate that you cannot expect the secularists operating from a non-Biblical Worldview to respond favorably when you show them, logically, that they too operate by faith on a regular basis. Their adamant refusal to acknowledge that fact is their normal response and sometimes, as in the story just recounted, they will even respond with anger and threats. So be warned. Just because you choose to use Critical Thinking to come to your conclusions about God, the Bible, and your Faith, do not expect the secularists to use Critical Thinking in their assessment of their beliefs.

The average person today does not use Critical Thinking. They have been taught to accept what is given to them at face value and to not question but to simply accept it as fact. Unfortunately, this is true not only of the secularists but also of the Christians. The average Christian is as unlikely to think critically about their beliefs as anyone else. This tendency must be broken if we are to obey God and think critically about our beliefs, as was shown in an earlier segment of this text He has commanded us to do. You do not have to give an answer to God for what others do or do not do. You can only and are expected only to give an answer for yourself- to both God and man.

**Romans 14:12** So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

**I Peter 3:15** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

If this lack of Critical Thinking among Christians is to stop, it can only be accomplished one person at a time. To do your part in conquering this plague of ignorance, be that one person step of the solution for which you are responsible. Begin to use Critical Thinking when formulating your beliefs and do your best to foster this same thing in all others over which you have some influence. Be a help to them, not a hindrance. Be a step, not a stumbling-block.

**Gal 6:1** Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Do what you can for other Christians, but for the rest of humanity, turning now again to the secularists, you can attempt to influence them in this matter of using Critical Thinking when assessing their beliefs and trying to understand yours but do not expect a positive response. It has been bred out of humanity by the educational systems from antiquity to the present. Even the philosophers like Socrates of Greece and those of other countries that have tried to foster Critical Thinking have only succeeded in influencing a very small percentage of the people. Some were even killed for doing so, or committed suicide to escape execution as Socrates did. The damage done for millenia cannot be reversed instantaneously in humanity at large, but it can be reversed in one human being, you, if you decide to work to make it happen.

It will not happen by accident or by some forced infusion from the outside, you must make it happen. It will take work to reverse the tendency that has been bred into you by education and society at large, which is to simply “Go with the flow. Accept what you have been taught. Better minds than yours have figured things out. Therefore, to question them is ridiculous because you are not mentally capable of such depth of thinking. Just accept that what you have been taught is true, that it is factual and beyond question, and then get on with using it.” These habits and inbred tendencies will not go away by themselves. You will have to work at breaking their chains of intellectual enslavement and purposefully learn how to start thinking for yourself. And it matters not if the chains are from secular scholarship or religious leadership. You must learn to think for yourself. If you choose to do so- freedom begins now.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Step One - RRA

**Reflection**



**Reasons**

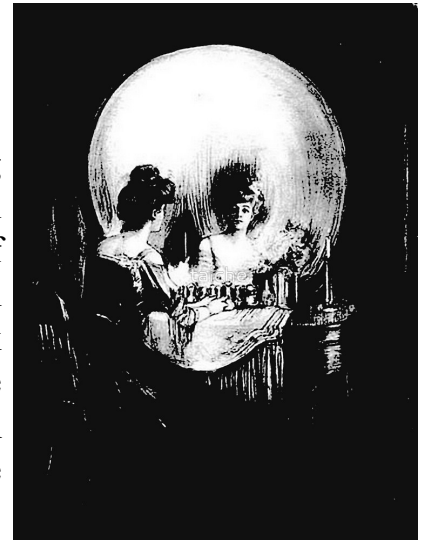


**Alternatives**



## Reflection

The first step is to unlearn the habit of immediately receiving the things you hear and see as truthful and reliable. Reflect upon them. Critically think about them. Just because the deliverer of the information may be someone you respect, maybe someone in authority over you, that does not mean they are infallible. Check the information for yourself. Don't receive it as truth based on the person who delivers it to you. You may love and/or respect them but, because they are human beings, you must realize that they are fallible.



### TWO EXAMPLES:

*First Example:* I love and respect my mom and dad. They are residing in heaven right now but I still love and respect them as much as I did when they lived on the physical plane with me.

When I was a child and on through until my teen years, I believed everything they said. Then as time passed I began to disagree with them on certain matters. As time passed and I reached my early twenties, I began to realize that some of those matters on which I disagreed with them were really as they said they were; that I was wrong and they were right; and sometimes it was vice-versa. They were wrong and I was right.

On the other hand, I also realized that some of the things that they were mistaken about were not as I thought they were either. I discovered that we could both be wrong and that the truth was other than what either of us believed was true. We were all sincere in our beliefs but sincerity does not indicate truth. It only indicates a lack of guile on the part of the one who is sincere, but wrong.

There are several salient points here. One point I am trying to make is that even though I respect and love them, not everything they said during their time here with me was true. However, their fallibility, which is common to all of humanity, does not lessen my love and respect for them. I love them in spite of their humanity, not because of it.

Another point is that I can also be wrong. My egocentricity does not like admitting that fact but critical thinking forces me to consider my past failures when judging my current stands on any matter. Just because I sincerely believe something does not make it true. Yes, it might be true, that is a possibility, but not necessarily so just because I believe it. I need to verify the accuracy of the information or belief by other means than simply my sincere belief in its accuracy.

Also, even when what I believe agrees with what others whom I love and respect believe, such as when I agreed with my parents, that does not mean that our common beliefs are accurate. This is a prime example of sociocentricity. My social group, in this example one comprised of my family circle, can sincerely agree on something but that agreement does not



make that belief an accurate one. Outside verification is needed. My social group might be right, but, on the other hand, we might be wrong. Thus I need to recognize the fact that my tendency toward sociocentricity must be taken into account when formulating beliefs. Just as my egocentricity had to be taken into account earlier. Both tendencies are there and Critical Thinking necessitates that I recognize the presence of both whenever formulating or verifying the accuracy of my beliefs.

**Second Example:** Just recently (2016) there was a television reporter who was well-respected nationwide. His credentials were impeccable and his veracity well established by decades as a national TV anchor. In fact he was respected internationally because at times he was on-site in various foreign countries to cover stories taking place there. Then, suddenly it was made public that he falsified some information for one of his TV stories. He was replaced with another anchorman by the TV network but was allowed to continue in a lesser capacity. Very soon he retired from his career as a TV newsman.

For decades his word was unquestioned by millions of viewers. Based on his reputation, which most believed was an extension of his character, viewers took what he reported at face value. If he reported it, it was accepted as truth, as fact, and he went virtually unquestioned. Then, when his reputation was sullied by his false reporting and the flaw in his character was unveiled, viewers began to question everything he said from that point on and that led to his soon retirement as a reporter.

The point here is that even though someone is respected in their job by millions, it is always possible that they have feet of clay. Acceptance as truth of something seen or heard should not be based upon the character of the one delivering the message. Truth is not established based upon the character, or lack of it, of the one delivering the information; it is established by facts. Even if it is someone respected and, in this case, supposed by most to be reliable and truthful over a period of decades, truth is only established by facts; not respect, reputation, or character. Yes, a respected person can and should be looked to for direction of investigation; but outside verification needs to be sought to establish the veracity of what they espouse as truth.

### Reflection:



Reflect upon what you see or hear; whether via the media or directly from the lips of anyone; even if it is someone loved and/or respected. Take nothing as true until you reflect upon it - verify it - investigate it - analyze it - critically think about it; don't just swallow it whole.

### Reasons

Be sure you have reasons to back up what you believe. The reasons need to come first and then, based upon those reasons you decide what is to be believed. Again, don't just make a snap judgement, have firm, logical, verifiable, biblical reasons for what you believe.



Such things as Bible references, references and definitions from the original Bible languages, comments by respected scholars, references from Commentaries, all verified and backed up by other reliable sources. Recognize and use materials from genuine authorities and reject those of dubious or questionable ones. Having your reasons firmly in hand and mind will not only enable you to make good judgements concerning what to believe; but it will also enable you to help direct others toward good, viable, beliefs by giving them the reasons why you believe what you do. Hopefully, those reasons will be sufficient to lead them into the same beliefs that you hold. Lastly, they will help arm you against heretics and heresies that the devil will throw at you in various ways and from various directions.

*Things to consider or be aware of:* Be aware of your own tendencies toward egocentrism and sociocentrism as well as those of your sources of information. Consider the possible motives of your sources. Do they have an agenda? Are they trying to manipulate toward some hidden goal? If so, consider what that might be. Is there some personal gain they will receive? Not necessarily a monetary one, although that is a possibility to consider, but such things as status or power or manipulation to gain or retain those already possessed. Is their presentation of facts straightforward and easily followed or is it convoluted, containing half-tuths and/or unfinished thoughts or possibly circular thinking? Are they leaning on their own reputation to convince rather than presenting verifiable facts? Consider the context as well as the facts they are presenting. Is the context and the information really relevant to your current study? If not, reject it as spurious information.

## Alternatives

Always consider the alternatives. Search them out. Seek to understand them. Consider the **reasons** why the presenters of the alternatives believe them. See if those reasons are bible-based and, if they seem to be, investigate to try to discern if they are truly biblical. First, check the plain sense of the reference verses and check them in context both locally and within the Bible as a whole. Look up esoteric, archaic, and unusual words and make sure the definitions are what are claimed for them. Is there more than one definition for the English word? Check the Greek for New Testament words or the Hebrew/Chaldee/Aramaic (whichever is appropriate for the particular word) for the Old Testament words to be sure the English word translated from them means what we think it means. Remember, the English language has evolved since the KJV was translated so you will need to check to see if the meaning of the English word has changed or has nuances that are either not clear or have been lost in the evolution of English from 1611 to today. In addition there are the normal language difficulties when translating from one language to another as well as idiomatic language of which we need to take note when attempting to understand certain Bible passages.

*Caution:* Be sure that only the KJV for the English is used and that any Greek text used is the Received Greek Text alone and nothing else. Any other Greek text will have incorrect words and the presentation of the Alternative may be based on a word from that corrupted

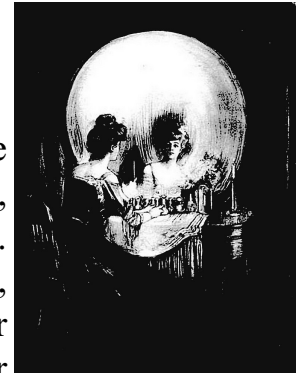


Greek text that has a different meaning than the word used in the Received Text. This difference alone can lead to a seemingly viable Alternative that is totally different, and totally in error.

**Remember** when considering alternatives, you may find one that fits the facts better than the belief that you currently hold. If you find such an one, run it through the RRA process and if it truly is the better one, then don't be afraid to adopt it as your own. Your search is for truth and if truth turns out to be other than what you believed, then as a Critical Thinker you will gladly adopt that belief as your own from this time forward.

### Repeat the process

Once you have gone through the Alternatives, go back and repeat the entire **RRA**. Reflect again while looking for any overlooked possibilities, unexplained terms, unclear reasons, any "thin spots" in your construct. Make sure everything is clear, concise, and as far as is humanly possible, without any flaw in which a detractor can place a wedge to split your presentation into useless fragments. Check again to be sure that your argument is one coherent whole, flowing from the presentation portion of it, all logically connected, and progressing to its logical conclusion. Comprehensive and tight and presenting convincing arguments against any false alternatives that may predominate in the sphere it addresses.



**Reflection**



**Reasons**




### Repeat again

Once more, go through the entire **RRA** process to make sure your argument as a whole has been fine-tuned. Peruse it as an unbeliever would do. One with preconceived notions against what you believe. Make sure your arguments are unassailable, coherent, complete and well able to answer their objections. Check for any final traces of arguments based on your egocentrism or sociocentrism. Are they vindicated by the Reasons you gave? If they are, leave them in; if they are not, take them out and replace them with viable reasons. Make sure that everything leads to the one Conclusion you have drawn.



**Alternatives**

On the next page is a reproducible note sheet for **RRA**.

<b>RRA</b> - (3 Underlying strategies for Critical Thinking)	
<b>Reflection</b> 	
<b>Reasons</b> 	
<b>Alternatives</b> 	

**1. Reflection** - Stop and think, instead of making snap judgments, or accepting the first idea that comes into your head, or automatically accepting whatever is presented to you.

**2. Reasons** - Ask yourself such questions as “How do you know”, "What are the reasons?" and “Is that a good source of information?” thus prodding yourself to have good Reasons for your views and to seek Reasons for others' views.

**3. Alternatives** - Be very alert for Alternative hypotheses, conclusions, explanations, sources of evidence, points of view, plans, etc.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Step Two - FRISCO

In this mid-advanced level of Critical Thinking, we will use a chart. The purpose of the chart is to help you see, on paper, what you need to learn to do in your head. Remember, one short definition of Critical Thinking is “Thinking about your thinking while you are thinking.” The chart is only a temporary, but necessary, crutch.

When you break a leg it is necessary to use a crutch while healing the bone. But once the bone is healed it would be ridiculous, and redundant, to continue using the crutch because now you are able to function quite well without it. In fact, continued use of the crutch would be cumbersome and actually hinder the process of walking.

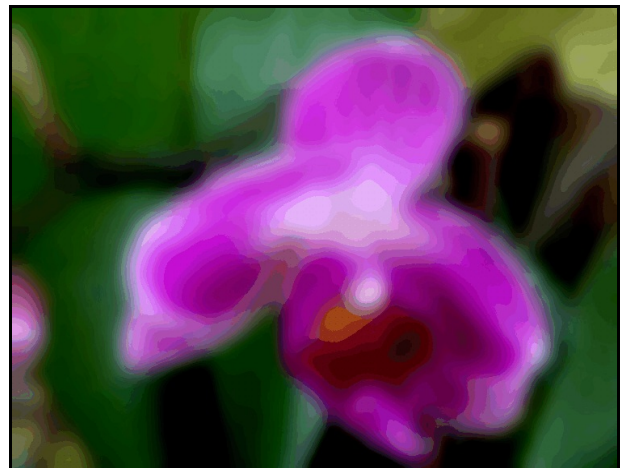
The same goes for the chart. It is necessary because your ability to think Critically has been broken by our educational system and needs to be fixed and mended. The chart will help you as you heal; but, once you have repaired your broken thinking the chart would be a hindrance and not a further help. Use it during your time of learning but only until it is no longer necessary. Here we go.

## FRISCO

### Focus

What is the main point- that is, what is the Conclusion. Once you have established that, then you will know how to judge and weigh the Reasons given that are being used to supposedly prove that point.

Sometimes, because of lack of clarity, the main point in the material is not always readily seen. Peruse the material, especially the Introduction and any Summary or obvious Conclusion at the end of it. Discover the main point the author is trying to make. Then you can see if the Reasons lead, inexorably, to that Conclusion.



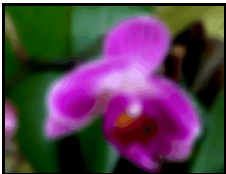
An imaginary case in point would be a treatise titled “Tongues In the Bible.” From the Title and the Introduction it would seem that tongues and proper use of the gift as well as showing the misuse of it in the Bible is the main point and the Conclusion would be that some uses are biblical and some uses are not. However, as deeper consideration is given to it, it is soon discovered that the author is really trying to prove that the Charismatics that believe in the modern use of the gift of tongues are heretics and are to be avoided as such. The material presented, the reasons, are good ones showing the biblically correct use of tongues as well as

showing what would constitute misuse of that gift but the application throughout is always toward proving that those groups that use tongues today are absolute heretics. If the author's intent was to prove that Charismatics are heretics for practicing tongues, then the Title should have been changed to reflect that as the point pursued and the Introduction should also have made it perfectly clear that the heretical nature of Charismatics was the main point of the treatise and that drawing that Conclusion was to be based upon their use of tongues.

Such lack of clarity can make it hard to discover the actual Conclusion that is expected to be drawn. It is misleading and serves only to cloud the issue. Yes, in that treatise the use or misuse of tongues was discussed and sufficient reasons were given for a scriptural conclusion to be drawn concerning which are proper uses and which are improper; however, the application of the information was constantly throughout the entire treatise aimed at the heretical nature of the Charismatic movement. It was easily discovered that that was the actual main point of the treatise; i.e., the conclusion the author wanted established.

Misleading is one possibility, misdirection is another. It leaves one questioning the motives of the author. Why did he not state his purpose up front? Why did he use a convoluted approach that led the readers in one direction but then at certain junctures would jerk them abruptly in another? Such composition would leave me questioning the motives of the author and/or wondering if there was a possible hidden agenda of the author and would probably cause me to discount the treatise altogether. It did not accomplish its stated purpose of discussing "Tongues In the Bible." In fact it only obliquely addressed that issue while plowing on toward a different issue altogether.

### ***Summary - Focus***



Find the Focus of anything presented to you. Sometimes it may be easy to find but in others, as in the treatise discussed above, it may take determined assessment while following an author's convoluted trail through the wilderness trying to discern the actual destination.

### **Reasons**

Once you have determined the main point, the Focus, next you will need to discover and assess the Reasons given.

Remember, as in the example of the treatise discussed in the previous section, the Reasons must apply to the actual Conclusion. If the author is misleading concerning the main point, as in that previous example, then you need to assess the reasons according to the actual Conclusion rather than the one given by the author. In that example, the Reasons did not address the actual Conclusion but addressed the Conclusion promised by the author. Which was "Tongues In the Bible." Therefore, we would have to conclude that the Reasons did not support the actual Conclusion which we had to discern for ourselves. Since the reasons did not support the actual Conclusion, that the Charasmatics were heretics because they speak in tonges, we would then reject the



Conclusion as unsupported based upon the Reasons presented by the author.

When identifying the Reasons, be aware that **statements** by the one presenting the position are not, themselves, Reasons. They may be commentary on a Reason or even an explanation of one or a statement connecting the various Reasons one to another or explanations on how they are connected to the Conclusion, but they are not Reasons. The Critical Thinker will carefully discern the actual Reasons, which may be buried in commentary or other statements by the presenter.

Once the Reasons have been identified, then we must assess them for relevance to the topic at hand. Is a particular Reason, taken in context, related to the discussion at hand? If it is, is it: (1) a direct validation of the Conclusion or, (2) is it an inferential one or, (3) is it a valid step in the progression of the arguments toward the Conclusion? If you determine that it falls into any one of those 3 categories, then keep it. If it does not, then discard it as a spurious argument. And do not be swayed by the insistence of the presenter, verbal or written, or his or her language fluency and manipulative powers of persuasion. No matter how vehemently he or she insists that the Reason is a valid one or an important one, if it does not fall into one of those 3 categories, it is irrelevant and is to be discarded.

Now that we have discovered and categorized the Reasons, we need to assess them for levels of importance. Any Reason that is a direct validation of the Conclusion must, of course, top the list in importance. Next would be inferential Reasons and, last on the list, would be the arguments that are valid steps in the progression through the presentation to the Conclusion.

List your Reasons like this:

**1. Direct validation**

**2. Inferential validation**

**3. Steps in the progression (Possibly sub-points under Reasons from categories 1 and 2 or connecting points between two Direct or Inferential Reasons or necessary explanations of them.)**

Next, arrange the Reasons in the order presented by the author. In this portion of the process the Reasons in category 3 will probably be disbursed under or between the Reasons in categories 1 and 2.

Once you have discerned, assessed, categorized, and then rearranged the Reasons in the original order presented by the author, go through the Reasons to see if they are convincing and do indeed lead to the Conclusion given by the author. Do the Reasons, in the order presented by the author, proceed in a logical fashion to the Conclusion or are they jumbled, disconnected, or otherwise than a logical progression through the Reasons. If they are convincing and they proceed in a logical fashion, step by step, to the Conclusion, keep them. If not, discard them; and you will probably discard the entire presentation as well deeming it to be unconvincing and disjointed. Without valid reasons given in a logical procession from Intro to Conclusion, there is no logical reason to accept the premise presented as being a valid one.

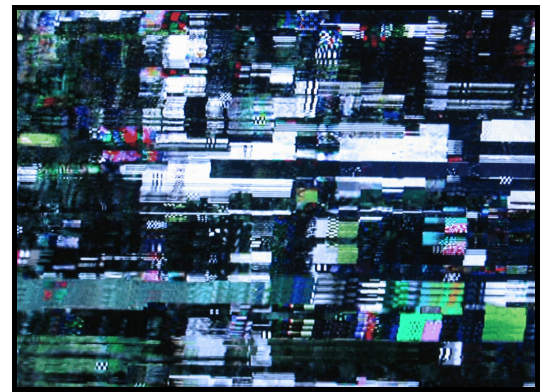
## Reasons



1. Discern the Reasons
2. Assess the Reasons
3. Categorize the Reasons
4. Arrange the Reasons (in the order given in the original presentation)
5. Weigh them for validity and logical procession
6. Repeat/Review
7. Accept or reject the premise

## Inference (not Interference)

Do the Reasons given establish the Conclusion, given the alternatives. Always consider the validity of the Conclusion judging it one way or the other according to the Reasons given by the presenter. However, there may be other equally valid conclusions that could be drawn from the Reasons given. Consider them. Walk through the Reasons and see if they could clearly lead one to a different Conclusion than the one drawn by the presenter. Do the reasons more convincingly lead to an alternate conclusion rather than the one presented by the author or speaker? Are there relevant Reasons and viable alternatives being left out by the presenter? Are there linguistic gymnastics being utilized by the presenter to shade or contort the Reasons in ill-defined or even illogical and twisted ways in order to lead you toward his or her Conclusion? Or is the presenter being honest, logical, and straightforward in their presentation? If the Reasons given, when rightly understood, lead more convincingly to an alternative, then don't be afraid to discard the Conclusion the presenter wants drawn and align your beliefs with the alternative. But only do so if the facts warrant this action. Overall, do the Reasons given establish the Conclusion, given the alternatives.



**TV Interference**

## Situation

### **Pay close attention to the Situation.**

How does the situation affect the matter at hand? Does it slant it in one direction or another? Could it do so? If it did, what could the effects be on the conclusion, or the other parts of the process: focus, reasons, inference, clarity, overview or the conclusion? Does the situation show that there is an agenda which is being pursued? Does it reflect positively or negatively on the veracity of the presenter of the argument? If so, how does or would it cast doubt on the whole argument or some portions of it; maybe critically so?



## Clarity

**Make sure that the meanings are clear.**

**Watch for qualifying statements. They often come before a weak argument.<sup>(18a)</sup>**

- **I want to say**
- **I'm just saying**
- **To be perfectly honest**
- **I just want you to know**
- **To tell you the truth**
- **I'm not saying**
- **I hear what you're saying**
- **Don't take this the wrong way**
- **Let's be frank**
- **As far as I know**
- **I'm thinking that**
- **Surely**

In addition to signaling a weak argument, these types of statements also often signal untruth, and they're a good indicator that it's time to start paying attention.

### **Are all statements clear and logical and are all terms defined?**

Are statements free of any ambiguity? Are they straight and to the point; that is, is their meaning clear and easily understood? Are the statements and arguments logical in themselves as well as in their connection to the other statements and arguments being presented? Are they complete- no missing information or gray areas?

## **Overview**

Review your entire appraisal as a unit. You have built your construct from individual parts, ("FRISC") now consider the construct as a complete single unit. Does it hold up under scrutiny? Is it off balance or unstable in any way? If so, what are the weak parts that are causing it to be so? Can it withstand attacks- such as from opposing viewpoints? Is there anything missing that might make it stronger had it been included?

## **Chart**

There is a chart on the next page that can be reproduced for use until this method becomes second nature. Once you reach the "second nature" point, do not continue using the chart. If you do it will become a crutch and will stunt your growth as a critical thinker.

<b>FRISCO</b> - (When appraising a position, whether yours or another's, attend at least to these elements:)	
<b>F</b>	<b>Focus:</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Reasons:</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Inference:</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>Situation:</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Clarity:</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Overview:</b>

**F** for Focus: Identify or be clear about the main point, that is, the conclusion

**R** for Reasons: Identify and evaluate the reasons

**I** for Inference:

Consider whether the reasons establish the conclusion, given the alternatives

**S** for Situation: Pay attention to the situation

**C** for Clarity: Make sure that the meanings are clear

**O** for Overview: Review your entire appraisal as a unit

## End of Part One

On the next page are some “**Questions for consideration.**”

There are also some sub-questions to consider.

1. Many of the questions bring to mind immediate answers that may or may not be biblical.
2. Think of the immediate answers that come to mind for them and then check out your answer in the Scriptures to see if that answer is actually biblical.
3. If you find biblical proof for your immediate answer, then retain that belief/understanding. If, however, you find biblical proof for a different belief or understanding of the question, do not hesitate to change your mind.
4. These exercises are meant to improve your Critical Thinking by means of the Scriptures, which are the final authority. This course is named “Critical Thinking (from a biblical worldview).” Therefore, you will improve your Critical Thinking by proving or disproving these basic questions from the Word of God.
5. Use the methods of Critical Thinking that are taught in this course as you consider the Questions. Do not be quick or shallow. Be aware of any shortcomings in your thinking. Look for them and correct them when you become aware of them. Take into account your egocentric and sociocentric tendencies and use all of the teachings you have had presented to you in this course. As you consider the questions, and any others that come your way, be assured that if you can prove it from the Bible, then it is truth. If you cannot prove it from the Bible, then it is not truth. Be thorough in your study and be sure you can prove what you believe and address all opposing viewpoints and be prepared to refute them. Strictly observe context, understand all word meanings in the original languages, and construct your answers showing agreement as well as your espousal of contrary views in a logical and thorough manner.

My sole purpose is to get you to improve your Critical Thinking abilities so you will be able to solidify your beliefs which will then enable you to better contend for the faith and teach the truth of God’s Word to others. - Doc Van

**Questions for consideration:****1. Salvation****What is it?****Where did it come from?****How do you get it?****Do we need it and why?****How can we lose it?****2. Hell****What is it?****Is it real and, if so, where is it?****Where did it come from?****What is its purpose?****How does one go there?****How long will it last?****3. Will we cast our crowns at Jesus' feet?****4. Church****What is Church?****Where or who did it come from?****What is its purpose?****Should we attend Church and why?****5. Tithing****What is it?****Where did it come from?****Who is it for?****Should we do it today and why?****6. Sin****What is it?****Who decides what sin is?****What are its causes?**

**Where did it come from?**

**What are its consequences?**

**Do we sin and Why**

**7. The Bible**

**What is it?**

**Where did it come from?**

**Can it be proved to be true?**

**What is its purpose?**

**Is it a source of morality?**

**8. God**

**Does God exist?**

**What is God?**

**Where is God?**

**Can we know God on a personal level or only on a mental level?**

**Is belief in God rational?**

**9. Who is on the throne in Heaven?**

**10. Is the use of drums in music evil; or, as some believe, “Of the devil!”**

**Where is the first use of drums found in the Scriptures?**

**How were they used in that first mention? Not physically “how” but for what purpose?**

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**18. How to Train Your Mind to Think Critically and Form Your Own Opinions**

Thorin Klosowski 2/06/14 8:00am Filed to: MIND HACKS

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