

Revised Sept. 21, 2003

Before You Ask - Chapter 4

Diversion Tactics

A diversion is anything that diverts or distracts the attention. Countless, ingenuous ploys have been used down through the ages to direct attention away from the subject at hand. Frequently, diversions are used when one is backed into a corner, losing ground or face, in the hot seat, or feels uncomfortable with the present. Diversions may be useful, welcome, obvious, amusing, devious or creative. Everyone has at times deliberately created a diversion. When we offer candy to a crying child with a skinned knee, we are making an attempt to divert the child's attention away from his pain. Shoplifters often use an accomplice to create a diversion and distract attention from the shoplifter. In a conversation, changing the subject or focus usually diverts attention away from the subject.

If your goal is to get your Question answered, you need to be a good judge of replies. Some replies to sincere Questions are merely Diversions -- NOT answers. If they know the answer -- why don't they just tell it to you, instead of trying to get out of the Question? That's all you want -- a straight answer! Now, why on earth would someone deliberately try to divert your attention when you have asked a sincere Question? To get out of answering the Question is obvious.

I've come up with only three possible reasons why someone would try to get out of answering a Question.

1. **He doesn't want to answer it, or**
2. **He doesn't know the answer.**
3. **He knows the answer, and wants to answer, but the fear of loss or of a consequence from someone having power over him are so great that he will not tell the truth. He's afraid to answer.**

When the workers can't provide scriptural evidence and reason for accepting their practices and beliefs, they usually try to get off the hook. They cast around for a diversion because they don't want to say "I don't know," or admit that many of the required behaviors are not based on scriptural truth, but rather on their traditions. When reasons are scarce or lacking...many look for

a diversion since it provides a way out without losing face.

A totally irrelevant wisecrack has broken up many good discussions! A tip of the slung (slip of the tongue), can be quite diverting; i.e. such spoonerisms as: "For now we see through a dark, glassly..." (1 Cor 13:12). "Our Lord is a shoving leopard." "May Sod rest his goal." So it should not come as a surprise that humor or ridicule are occasionally intentionally introduced into a conversation in an effort to divert your attention away from your Question. While the humorous remark may be vastly amusing and very much diverting, nevertheless, it is usually irrelevant to your Question, which is sincere and deserves consideration. Press on until you get a satisfactory answer!

Saved by the Bell!

When the going gets tough -- the tough get going!

Suppose you have asked a Question that is important to you. The other person takes control of the conversation and talks non-stop at great length about some irrelevant side issue. You don't interrupt because you assume there will be plenty of time to adequately cover your Question. (Bad practice -- assuming!) You automatically defer to their authority and remain respectfully quiet while they lead the conversation completely astray. Surely, down the line somewhere, they will tie their rambling narrative into your Question. However, suddenly they stand up and say, "Sorry, our time's up, we've got to go now!" Then, they take their leave, appearing quite pleased with themselves.

Afterwards recalling the conversation, you realize, "I STILL don't have the answer to my Question!" What happened? You were taken! That's how far your deference and respect took you! They talked all around your Question, without ever actually answering it. They managed a successful diversion. They distracted your attention until their time ran out, and they were off the hook -- saved by the bell! The explanation was like parallel parking on a busy street. It started, proceeded, stopped, edged forward, backed up, as time zoomed past you. To keep this from happening, it's a good idea to find out at the beginning of the visit exactly how long they will be able to visit with you.

Beware! No matter what age you are, it is not uncommon to fall under the spell of those you consider to be your superiors or those in authority, and this respect holds you back from interrupting or taking control of a conversation. If you are intent on getting an answer to your Question, you may have to steel yourself to interrupt, and steer the conversation back to the subject you wish to discuss. Doing so may make you seem rather impatient or childish, but it's practically the only way to get your Question answered -- be tenacious.

Books about salesmanship point out that the longer a person interacts with you, especially one who wants to convince you of something, the more indebted to him you feel. The more time you allow to elapse in irrelevant conversation, the more inclined you are to agree with him, the less

inclined you are to challenge him, and the more guilty you feel rejecting his explanation. To avoid this pitfall, just don't let the discussion stray for long. Interrupt, take control and bring the discussion back to the subject.

The Red Herring

When the going gets tough -- change the subject!

In hunting fox, sometimes a herring (a fish) would be dragged across the hound's path to divert the hound from pursuing the scent of the fox. Distracted, the hounds would follow the scent of the herring and forget all about their original goal -- the fox. From this underhanded practice, the expression Red Herring was coined, and it has come to signify the act of deliberately changing the subject and diverting the course of a conversation.

If a Red Herring is successful, the initial topic will be dropped, and instead, the Red Herring topic will be picked up and discussed. We all resort to using a Red Herring occasionally. When we're in hot water, we change the subject! When our position is proving weak, we change the subject. When something makes us uncomfortable, we change the subject. The object of a Red Herring is to persuade you to voluntarily drop your concern, investigation or Question, and focus on something else. There are many variations of Red Herrings, but they all have in common that they take one away from the original goal, which, in this case, is the Question you would like to have answered.

Examples of Red Herrings:

Q: When did this fellowship actually start?

A: (Red Herring:) "I can't tell you that, but I CAN tell you about the time when the gospel came to my family in 19..."

Q: You say long hair for women is doctrine and not tradition. Yet, Dale X told me that long hair for women was not doctrine. Don't the workers agree on what is and is not doctrine??

A: (Red Herring:) "Ah, yes, Dale and I were companions for X years back in 19XX in the state of X; and then again in 19XX for another year. I remember one time when Dale blah--blah--blah (off with a diversion).

Q: Where did this doctrine start?

A: (Red Herring:) "It first came to us over 60 years ago. I thought it started in Canada, because the one that brought the gospel to us was from Canada. We had never heard of it before, and we inquired of him, 'Where did you hear this?' He said, 'We heard it from someone that came

from Ireland or Scotland.' We listened to that Gospel. 'Where did it start?' It started in Heaven, and we are thankful that this Truth came from Heaven that we have accepted today."

Q: (to sister worker) "Have you ever heard of a man called William Irvine?"

A: (Red Herring:) "Jerry, what have you been reading?!!"

Q: "It really doesn't matter; what I want to know is did 'the truth' start with William Irvine?"

A: (Red Herring:) "Who told you that?!!"

Q: "I'm not at liberty to say. I just want to know if it is true?"

A: (Diversion attempt:) "Absolutely not! I heard Linda isn't going to meetings now. How do her folks feel about that?"

Q: (Stunned at her lie, but determined to keep the conversation on track:) "Aunt Frances, I didn't call to talk about Linda. I called because I have some Questions I wanted to ask you which have really been troubling me. I want to know who William Irvine was? And why do some people say he started the truth?"

Q: "I read a book called The Secret Sect. Is what it says true?"

A: (Red Herring) "I know someone who read that book, and they said it made their faith grow even stronger."

Q: If that's the case, why aren't the workers handing it out to all the friends to read then? (Turns the tables)

Replies to Red Herring Fallacies

It's far better to give everyone the benefit of a doubt, rather than to assume that an irrelevant reply to your Question is a deliberate Diversion attempt. You're far more likely to reach your goal and get your question answered when you treat people with respect. Make certain of your facts before you accuse anyone. They may have truly misunderstood your Question. If this is so, when you point out the reply didn't answer your Question, they will verify the Question, and reply with a straight answer. And you save yourself the embarrassment of making the false accusation.

Technique: Don't become diverted or distracted from your purpose, which is to get your Question answered. Come back to your Question, like a boomerang. GET BACK ON TRACK. If their reply addressed a point other than the one you asked about:

1. Point out the subject they addressed
2. Point out the subject of your Question

3. Point out (1) and (2) are not the same topic
4. Therefore, their reply doesn't answer your Question.
5. Ask your Question again and ask for a simple/direct answer to it.

- "Excuse me for interrupting, but what about my Question?"
 - "Excuse me, but is this going to tie into my Question somewhere?"
 - "That's not what I meant by X. I was asking...."
 - "I don't see how that has anything to do with my Question, which is..."
 - "Please help me understand how that ties into my Question, which was Why...?"
 - "We seem to be hopping from subject to subject! I'd really like to get back to my original Question. It's important to me to understand this clearly." (repeat Question)
 - "Look, I asked a simple Question. All I want is a simple answer -- just a simple: "yes or no" will do." (repeat Question)
 - "Could we please just stick to my Question. Perhaps I didn't make myself very clear. What I need to know is..."
 - "You apparently misunderstood my Question. I am not concerned about that. What I AM concerned with is X? Is X true or false?"
 - "We sure have gotten off the subject. Before I forget all about it, I'd like to know..." (repeat Question)
 - "Excuse me for interrupting. I just want to make certain of something before we go any further. This is all very interesting, but I want to be sure that all this is going to lead back to my Question eventually? I've looked forward to this visit/conversation for a long time, and I don't want to get sidetracked."
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Replies: The Burden of Proof

When it is pointed out that a reply is irrelevant, beside the point, off the subject, doesn't answer the Question, etc, some may look amazed and ask: "How so?" or "Why Not?" They may challenge you, saying something like: "I don't see how you can say my answer is irrelevant. Why do you say that?" OR: "I didn't answer your Question? I sure thought I did. It's perfectly clear to me. I don't know how I can make it any clearer."

The reason their reply is irrelevant is because it did not answer your Question. Remember, the Burden of Proof is on THEM -- not you. It is THEIR responsibility to show you how their reply answers your Question. Some possible replies pointing out irrelevance are:

- "Y is irrelevant because it doesn't answer my Question -- I asked you about X -- not Y."
- "That is true/quite interesting, but as far as I can see, it is totally irrelevant to my Question, which was...?"
- "All of that is beside the point. Just give me a "yes or no?"

- "Y is true, but it doesn't explain my Question. I want to know: Why...?"
- "What you say is true, but so what? I didn't ask about that -- I asked about X. Why X?"
- "That is interesting, but it's beside the point; it doesn't answer my Question, which is: Why...?"

Red Herring: Reminders

TIP: Many times a Red Herring will begin with: That reminds me of X... Some Red Herrings are simply repetitions of statements made by a highly, revered worker. For example: Well I remember one time Willie Jamieson told us.; OR: George Walker used to say... Talking about something that is a reminder of the subject under discussion, can only lead the conversation FURTHER away from your Question. Stick to your guns and stay on the track. You may use this excellent line of reasoning to gently lead them back to the standard you want to be used, the Bible, God's Word, rather than the word of the workers.

Q. "Can workers fail? Or are they infallible?"

A. "No, they're not infallible"

Q. "Then, since workers are fallible, and it is possible they could fail, for the purpose of this discussion, let's stick to the Bible, God's Word alone, so we can be sure to keep any possibility of human error out of this. Let's go to Willie Jamieson's foundation. What Scripture supports his statement?"

Red Herring: Advice

Some reply to a Question by giving advice. "What YOU need to do is..." They always know better than you do! They talk down to you. They minimize what you think or have been doing; and maximize their knowledge and methods as being superior to yours. According to them, all you need to do is turn from doing what is wrong (what you're doing) and do what is right (what they recommend), and you'll have your answer! Advice is thinly veiled criticism.

Frequently, the advice given is: go to meetings regularly; come back to meetings; just keep coming to meeting and the Spirit will reveal it to you; get right with God; read and pray more; submit more; burn those books and read your Bible; try harder; stop questioning; drop the subject. For example: Some things you have to accept in faith. You don't have enough faith! You haven't been reading the Scriptures and praying enough.

Technique: Just ignore the advice. Don't let it get your back up, and don't get sidetracked into discussing it. If you can agree with it, do so. (Agree with thine adversary quickly.) Boomerang back to your Question. What about it? You don't want to wait for the answer. You would like the answer NOW. If it could be spoken and heard in meeting -- then it can be said and heard here and now. Why must you hear the answer within the limited framework of a meeting? Jesus and

Paul answered Questions when they were asked. Further, Paul even answered Questions in writing.

Red Herring: Counter-Questions

Instead of answering your specific Question, some will pose a counter-Question, sometimes playing for time or information. The counter-Question shifts the Burden of Proof back to the Questioner. DON'T accept it! It's not your responsibility to prove their position -- it's theirs! A conclusion stands or falls on its OWN merits, not because it cannot be/has not been proven false. For example:

Q: Can you give me one good reason I should believe X?

A: Can you give me one good reason NOT to believe X?

When your Question asks for their supporting reasons for a belief or practice, it's up to them to prove their position. You don't have to disprove it, or show how it is lacking or wrong at all, if you don't choose to. As God's servants, they are the teachers. You're asking for the reason they believe or do something; reasons to support their position, conclusion or practice. Either they have good reason, or they do not. If you are to hold this same position or belief, you must know their reason behind it and evaluate it for yourself.

Examples of Red Herrings Using Counter-Questions:

- "Now, why would you be worried about THAT?"
- "What do YOU think the answer to that Question is?"
- "Do you see it done any other way in the Bible?"
- "Was it not time to return to methods of Christ?"
- "And just who are you to be criticizing God's perfect way?"
- "Why do you always have to know WHY? Why can't you just accept it in faith?"
- "So what if there is a founder? What difference does that make?"
- "How can you criticize God's perfect way?"
- "What would it prove if we could trace back to Abraham?" (quote of Wm Lewis in The Sunday Sun (Georgetown, Texas), July 14, 1991, page 2, The Secret Sect By Brad Stutzman)

- "Just ask yourself why you want to do that? Examine your motives. Could it be vanity or pride or because you want to impress others?"
- "Why would we want something started by a man when we have Scripture to prove that this fellowship is "from the beginning"?"
- "Why does everyone need to know about the history? What good would it do anyone to know about William Irvine?"
- "Did it ever occur to you that the devil might have something to do with this Question?"
- "Have you read where they were to meet any other place than the home for worship or meetings?"
- "Why are you worrying about that? That's God's business, and He will take care of it in His own time."

- "The one thing they (authors of The Secret Sect) can't DISPROVE is that this (way) is from the beginning. Interruptions are insignificant. Surely the God who planned the way of salvation and got it started in the earth when He revealed it to Adam could do it one more time. If Adam got it without a human being revealing it to him, why couldn't William Irvine?"

Replies to Red Herrings Using Counter-Questions

Technique: Don't get taken up with their counter-Question. You don't have to answer a question just because you were asked. Ignore it. Refuse to play their game. Don't let them put the monkey on your back. Would they reply to an outsider with a counter-Question? You deserve no less consideration. Put the Burden of Proof back on them. They claim they follow the Bible only. Unless there is Scriptural support for a belief/practice, it is merely an assertion, preference or opinion.

- "So what are you saying -- exactly?"
- "What are you trying to imply?"
- "Exactly what are you suggesting?"
- "I'm asking YOU what YOU believe, and WHY."
- "If I knew the answer to my Question, I wouldn't be asking you."
- "I'm merely asking for the Scripture that supports this belief/practice."
- "No, I don't understand it. Would you please help me. I would like you to teach me ALL about it -- starting with the very basics."
 - "Usually, when a person answers a Question with a Question, they either don't know the answer, or they don't want to tell the answer. Which is the case with you?"
 - "If you know the answer -- why don't you just tell it to me, instead of trying to get out of the Question? That's all I want -- a straight answer!"
 - "I'm asking YOU for reasons why YOU believe this belief/practice is God's will. Just pretend I don't know anything about "this way." Now, tell me why I would be wise to accept this belief/practice."
 - "Asking ME a Question does not answer my Question to you. A belief stands or falls on its own merits. I asked you X. What is your answer?"
 - "All I'm asking is for you to explain your reasons for believing X. Since you're giving your very life for this fellowship/belief system, I'm sure you have very good reasons! I'd just like to know what they are."
 - "Why do I ask that Question? Because I don't want to "...err (by) not knowing the Scriptures...." (Matt 22:29). (OR: Because I want to "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. 1 Pet 3:15)
 - "If you preach something is essential for salvation, you, no doubt, have back-up for it in the New Testament. Could you tell me what Scripture supports X?"
 - "Unless you can show Scriptural support for a belief/practice, it's merely an assertion (or

your preference/opinion). A belief stands or falls on its own merits."

- "I'm curious: Is this how you would reply if an outsider asked you this Question?"

Red Herring: Minimizing Significance It doesn't matter...it's really not important

Sometimes Questions are brushed off as unimportant, irrelevant and not worthy of an answer. A mountain-size Question may be reduced to a mole hill. Some replies cut a pine tree down to a pine needle. Some replies major in the minors. The Red Herring diversion minimizes your present concern (X), and reinterprets it as insignificant. At the same time, you are encouraged to appreciate or maximize another subject (Z). Don't look there -- instead, look over here! The goal is not only to redirect your attention, but also to change your focus and perspective. Don't you see? What you are distressed about (X) doesn't matter at all -- THIS other thing (Z) is what really matters. What you need to do is decrease your concern for (X) and increase your concern for (Z). Your perspective is off, you see. You are making way too much of too little, and far too little of much. It's not (X) that is important, but rather (Z)! Your priorities are out of order; your perspective is out of kilter; you're making a big deal out of nothing; X is not worthy of the attention you're giving it. You're out of sync! Ideally, they hope you will buy their outlook, drop yours, and go away quite happy with the exchange.

Those who admit that William Irvine was the founder usually use some variation of the fallacious reasoning tactic Red Herring to talk down the significance of William Irvine's role in the fellowship. Does anything really change if you decide to call a skunk a rose? Minimizing a lie (skunk) doesn't really change the fact that a lie was and is still being told. Regardless of whether it's called a rose or a skunk, a lie still stinks! When you thought you were buying into the authentic, original way Jesus started, you were willing to pay dearly for this pearl of great price. Later, you found out you were intentionally sold a mess of pottage -- in exchange for your very LIFE! You can't replace those lost years, can't relive your childhood, can't erase your needless suffering and pain you endured or make up those missed experiences -- nor those you put your children through. You endured misery for happiness that should have been yours, except for the lie. Your joy was taken from you. None of that is important? Their intentions were good? They meant well? Doesn't change a thing. You were robbed! You endured pain and suffering. You have a right to righteous indignation that this fraud and farce is being carried out in the name of the truth of God! Don't feel one bit guilty if you are angry. You won't go wrong fighting against what God hates -- and God hates a lying tongue and a false witness.

Importance, significance, value and priority are matters of opinion -- not fact. They are individually ascertained and cannot be proven. You have a right to beg to differ with anyone's opinion as to what is and is not important. How can evidence be considered unimportant that proves you were intentionally deceived? Would a court find the evidence unimportant that proved a car dealership had deceived you regarding the mileage of one of their cars you purchased? Irvine's role IS of maximum importance because it proves the lie, the deception.

When confronted with evidence proving he has lied, a liar has three choices: admit it, deny it or evade the Question. This article uncovers several common evasions used to avoid the Question. If they know the answer -- why don't they just tell it to you, instead of trying to get out of the Question? That's all you want -- a straight answer!

Examples of Red Herring: Minimizing Significance

Question: "Who started this fellowship and when?"

Replies to this Question often minimize William Irvine's role, and emphasize something else.

Some examples are:

- "Irvine's founding role is of little consequence, for we alone follow the true pattern of the original apostles, and the early church."
- "It doesn't really matter who started it. All that matters is that we are building on the same foundation as Christ, and we know we are."
- "The history isn't really important. The important thing is when the gospel came to you, and began a work in YOUR life. Now, when was that?"
- "The origin makes no difference because the Spirit of God can do anything."
- "It doesn't matter if Irvine was 1st, 2nd or last -- as long as it is the same thing the disciples and apostles had, and it is."
- "Jesus said, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' We are thankful we have the fruit and don't need to trace the seed of the fruit back to Adam and original creation."
- "The Jews could trace back to Abraham, and it didn't mean a thing. God can raise up people from stones...we don't need to trace it back. Don't worry about tracing the truth back."

- "We may not know where God's people were in all ages, but that doesn't matter. If God has raised up in our day a prophet that has gone back to Christ, that's all that's important. We must keep that firmly in our minds."
- "I hope there were people who did this in the centuries between the first century and 20th, but we have no records and we do not know. God knows...Whether they did or did not does not make a bit of difference to our salvation. The pattern in Jesus was always there waiting for sincere and honest men and women to go back to." (Dan Hilton)
- "So what if there IS a founder? What difference does that make?"
- "Someone sometime had a revelation, but who it was and when doesn't matter. What does matter is that we have a revelation that this is the right way."
- "I don't see why it's any of the friend's business, or why they should ever need to know that. All they need to know is that this is God's only true way."
- "So what if 'the truth' came from Greece, Italy or Macedonia to England. What does it matter? The fact is -- it came. And we are ever so grateful. Why would I waste precious time pondering where it came from and how?"
- "Personally, I have never been taken up with genealogies, or other things that Paul warned against in 1 Tim. 1:3-4." (Understood that these things are not important, and you shouldn't be taken up with them either)
- "It doesn't really matter what people think of you today, or how they view the way you look."

Someday all will recognize that the women in the truth are the most beautiful people in all the world."

- "It's not how much head knowledge you have, but how much heart knowledge that really matters."

Replies to Red Herring: Minimizing Significance

How do you rate, rank or judge importance? Importance is individually ascertained, and is a matter of opinion. Someone baiting you with a Red Herring shrinks the importance of your concerns and blows something else all out of proportion. Since your goal is to get your question answered...you will be spinning your wheels if you get taken up discussing the value or importance they are boosting or demoting. It's not something that can be proven beyond all doubt -- importance is a judgment call, a value and not fact. You could argue all day about the importance something deserves -- and never prove it. However, no one can argue against or deny your feelings. They are yours. You are entitled to them. You feel exactly how you feel, no matter what anyone else says. No contest. Period. You do not have to accept the value others place on something -- it is their opinion.

Technique: For most topics, you can let it be known that you consider the values they expressed a matter of opinion. You're after facts -- not opinions, experiences, preferences, etc. What you consider important IS important to you, but you don't have to prove why. It's your choice -- values are choices. It's up to you. You may or may not choose to point out why William Irvine is important. You do not have to accept the value others place on Irvine's founding role. Nor are you obligated to argue how you feel or think concerning it. But, if you want to, go ahead and let it be known that you (emphatically/unequivocally) do not agree with their opinion regarding what is or is not important. Be aware, however, that in doing so, you are taking their bait (Red Herring), which can lead you away from your Question on a wild goose chase, especially if the other takes issue with your view.

The evidence that proves William Irvine was the founder is (no doubt about it!) EXTREMELY important/significant since it proves you were intentionally deceived. Drawing an analogy usually proves this point very well. Try illustrating how important it would be to them to find out something they believe is valuable or important is not true.

For example: Would they like to know it if the bank where they had their life savings had for its president a man who had a criminal record for embezzling? Would it be important for them to know this? If they had their preference, when would they like to know this fact? The sooner the better? Before they began to put their money in that bank? WHY? What difference would that have made? The answer is that they would have evaluated the situation differently. Well, feeling much the same way, you wish you had known much sooner that the belief system/church you had been investing your whole life in had for its founder a man who made false prophecies, was mentally unbalanced and also a womanizer. Just like them, you would have evaluated the

situation in a different light, had you known. Would it comfort them to be told not to worry; that people aren't always perfect -- but just trust us -- the bank is solid! Here you've been investing your time, money and very life in this 2x2 belief system for years, believing it had a solid foundation, and now you find out the founder has a sordid, questionable past. This is why this matter is important to you. You've been trusting something that isn't trustworthy, etc. If you'd known earlier, it would have saved you much unnecessary loss, pain and suffering. If any of you readers come up with some other analogies, please send them to Telling The Truth.

- "It may not be important to you, but it is VERY important to me. I will not have any peace until I know..."
- "Unlike you, this is VERY important to me, and I'm not going to rest until I get an answer to..."
- "Regardless of its importance, I would like to know..."
- "I understand that in YOUR opinion, X is not important. However, it is VERY important to me and many others! I want to know..."
- "You believe we are each individually accountable for our actions, don't you? As far as importance, would you agree your soul is your highest concern? Whose business is your soul? Who's accountable for your actions, for what you accept and believe? That's why this is VERY important to me -- it has the power to affect my soul. That's why I want to know..."
- "You seem to be diminishing the importance of understanding the Scripture, and emphasizing reliance on the Spirit. Do you believe the Spirit will ever guide us contrary to the Scripture? So, what Scripture says we must..."
- "Are you suggesting that I should sacrifice truth to preserve an illusion?? I can't do that -- I value truth too much. I have to realign my point of view when additional or corrected truth comes my way. Can you tell me the truth about..."

Red Herring: Clichés & Slogans

Canned Statements

Lousy logic is a more palatable when it is sloganized. Adages, slogans, platitudes and maxims are sometimes given in reply to a Question. However, a general saying of unknown origins is far from being an unquestionable authority and should not be accepted as a good reason. Many accept familiar axioms, sayings and proverbs as valid proof, but they aren't. Acceptance proves nothing.

Just because someone coined a cliché doesn't mean they were correct in their observations. Every adage cannot be true. In fact, for many adages offered to support an argument, there is another cliché saying the reverse is true! For example:

- Look before you leap - He who hesitates is lost.

- Leave well enough alone - Progress never stands still.
- A man gets no more than he pays for - The best things in life are free.
- A fool and his money are soon parted - You can't take it with you.
- Absence makes the heart grow fonder - Out of sight, out of mind.

Examples of Red Herring: □ Clichés & Slogans

- "Where there's a will, there's a way."
- "The people aren't perfect, but the way is."
- "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."
- "Paper doesn't refuse ink."
- "A person who is right on the inside, will be right on the outside."
- "When in doubt -- don't."
- "If we do not suffer with Him, we will not reign with Him."
- "Suffering must precede the glory."
- "We follow in a faith that questions not."
- "If you're not a part of the solution, you're a part of the problem."

Q: Do you believe in the doctrine of the trinity? A: Yes, and I would explain this teaching by John 15 and 17.

A: Yes, we sing a song (Cease Not) that mentions the Father, Son and Spirit -- these three are one. (NOTE: This hymn was omitted from the 1987 hymnbook!)

Replies to Red Herring: □ Clichés & Slogans

Technique: Ask for clarification or for the speaker to rephrase the statement. Ask for scripture to support the saying they are giving as a reason. Many times they are merely parroting phrases they've heard over the years, and they haven't ever really examined what the phrase is saying or means. In other words, they don't even know what they are really saying, or realize that their statement is full of holes or does not apply. "How does that saying tie into what we are discussing?"

- "Where does it say / indicate that in the Bible?"
- "In other words, what are you saying?"
- "Just exactly what do you mean by that statement?"
- "What are you trying to say?"
- "Could you rephrase what you just said in some other terms? I'm having trouble following you."

In Closing...

Whether or not a Diversion attempt will be successful is up to you, as the hearer! When your goal is to get your Question(s) answered, you need to be a good judge of replies. Does the reply you received actually answer your Question? If you can stand off and objectively look at a reply, carefully scrutinizing it from all angles, the possibility of your getting hurt or losing face in the questioning process is far less. When you stand off and look at something -- you're not engaging your emotions. You cannot be objective and emotional at the same time. Try it on something and prove it for yourself.

Further Recommended Reading:

[Vigilant Listening - The Importance of Developing Critical Listening Skills](#) By Kevin N. Daniel

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