

Through a child's eyes

Dear God,
I bet it is
very hard
for you to
love all of
every body in the
whole world
There are only
4 people in our
family and I
can never do it.

Nan

Dear God
Maybe Cain and Abel
would not kill each so much
if they had their own rooms.
It works with my brothe

Larry



Jonah 4

“9 Then God said to Jonah, "Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "I have good reason to be angry, even to death." 10 Then the LORD said, "You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight. 11 "Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?"”

God's Point to Jonah

Jonah had strong feelings about God's gift that gave him mercy



but he had little feeling for others to whom God wished to show mercy.

1. God expected Jonah to use **reason**.
2. God expected Jonah to **empathize**.

Matthew 18

“28 But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. 29 His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' 30 But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.”

God's Heart revealed in the story of Jonah

Holy
not evil

Compassionate
not cruel

Sovereign
not weak

Responsive
not ridged

Rational
not moody

Empathetic
not apathetic



The role of reason / empathy in Christian faith

1. The Biblical story values both reason and empathy.

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord, Though our sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.”

2. Both are a **common part of human discourse** and are necessary in sharing the Gospel.

Acts 17

“² And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths **reasoned with them from the Scriptures**, ³ explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead.”

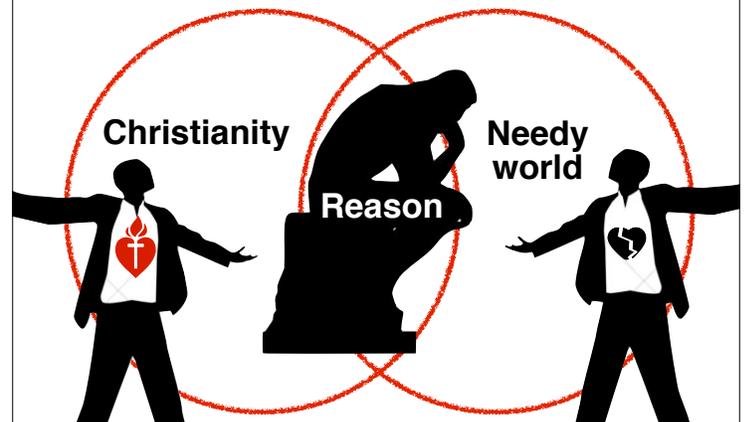
1 Peter 3:15

“but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to **make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account** for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

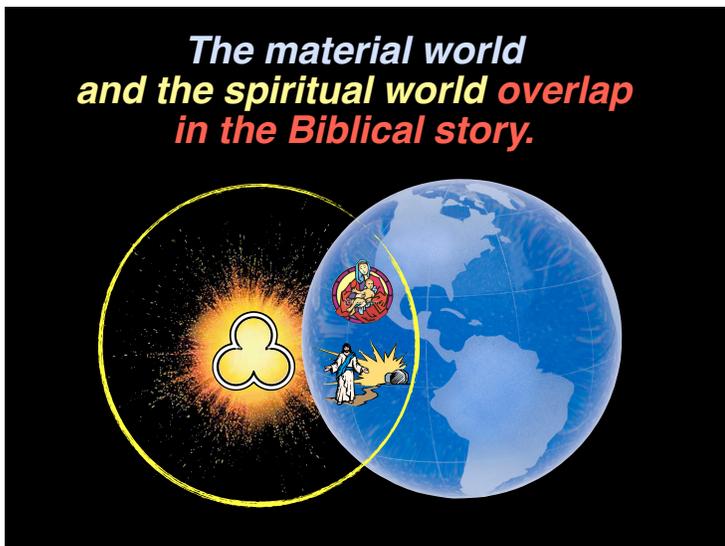
Empathy is why Christians communicate with the world.



Reason is how Christians communicate with the world.



The material world and the spiritual world overlap in the Biblical story.



because circular reasoning works

Spiritual Sense

Five Senses

Both religion and science make faith assumptions and use reason.



We are all called to be both theologians and scientists at heart.

We all “Assume”

We all “Observe”

We all “Question”

We all “Reason”

We all “Conclude”

We all “Trust”



1 Corinthians 1

“¹⁸ For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God ¹⁹ For it is written, *“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.”*”

1 Corinthians 2

“⁶ Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;”

Unhealthy empathy

- ✓ Devoid of rational thinking.
- ✓ Enmeshment - loss of the big picture
- ✓ Poor boundaries - can't say “NO!”

Healthy empathy

- ✓ Compassionate care - see big picture
- ✓ Good boundaries - knows when and how to say “NO!”

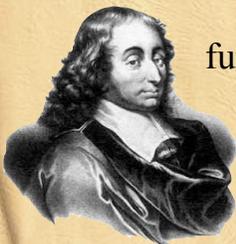
Unhealthy reason

- ✓ Assumes philosophical naturalism.
- ✓ Disrespects the spiritual dimension.
- ✓ Pride

Healthy reason

- ✓ Respects and includes God and special revelation.
- ✓ Knows its limits.
- ✓ Humility

Blaise Pascal



“The supreme function of reason is to show man that some things are beyond reason.”

4. A renewed mind is a part of a reborn heart.

Romans 12

“¹ Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by *the renewing of your mind,*”

Common Mistakes

Spirituality is a matter of the heart not the mind.

Spirituality can be reduced to sound doctrinal thinking.