

(Under Construction)

Character in the Classroom
Confronting Current Conflicts with Christian Care
By: Jonathan Harris

Competition or Concern?

Attempting to dispute a professor can turn into very tough situation, particularly in a classroom context. Even if your only endeavor is to ask a simple question, many realistic and unrealistic fears quickly ascend to the forefront of your mind. Questions develop such as: “Will this lower my grade?,” “What will the others think?,” “Will I ever get a chance to speak again in class?,” and the list goes on. I empathize with this dilemma because it is where I oftentimes find myself. There is no question in my mind that discernment is necessary when deliberately encountering a dispute. If we are wise students, we will gain the ability, over time, to practically detect the right fashion and setting for presenting our opinions.

I have observed, over the course many years, the typical reactions young Christians display upon the discovery that certain professors will purposely incline themselves to publically destroying a Judeo-Christian ethical framework while humiliating its adherents. I’m saddened to report that it appears most Christians take a very backseat approach. They may effusively complain about their “Liberal” teacher outside of class, but within the confines of the professors watchful eye they hastily shrink into a cowardly weak-kneed pacifist, unwilling to use the armor supplied them by Jesus Himself. A minority of Christian students react in a completely opposite manner. They purposely enter the classroom forgetting every piece of the armor, save a seemingly blunt Sword of the Spirit. Furiously they swing, attacking and counter-attacking their skillful enemy with stubborn determination and supercilious resolve. Their arguments are genuinely consistent with a Biblical worldview, but their methods are anything but practical or respectful. Though disciples of either approach will claim the Biblical high ground, both philosophies possess inherently flawed motivations. One student keeps quiet out of fear for the destruction of his own reputation and the construction of his teacher’s; while the other speaks out with the intent of building up his reputation at the expense of the professors. The main concern of both approaches: Pride.

When forming principles to guide you in debates with your professors and fellow classmates, it is important for your starting point to be based on a proper motivation. What is your intention when disagreeing? Are you trying to tear down other’s strongholds so you can build your own personal kingdom, or are you focused on building Christ’s kingdom. To be on God’s side, it is vital that you first possess humility.

"God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6b

You must also realize that your battles aren’t with those who disagree with you.

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Ephes. 6:12

Even though your college professors may be pushing dangerous beliefs, it may surprise you to find out that they aren't actually the enemy (even if they do work for him). They are actually the mission field. Every time you voice disagreement, it is your responsibility to do so in a loving and compassionate way. Your goal is to direct your audience to examine the error of their ways and find the truth. When sending someone on a voyage up any channel of truth, it ought to be your sincere desire that they discover the river of living waters, from which they will never thirst again.

Cooperating with the Cannon: Guidelines for Debating in the Classroom

(COMING SOON)