



Dear Friends, Thank you for your partnership in this ministry. Your generosity has afforded us the opportunity to help shape the lives of many young adults. As a result of your investment, I have included a few notes submitted by students that serve to testify to the work God is doing in their hearts and minds. As always, I hope their sentiments will encourage you, as you have encouraged us.

IDENTITY & SELF-IMAGE: In previous updates I have written about how important it is for students to recognize their God-given identity, especially at a time when ***social media has a major impact on self-image***. You may be wondering how personal identity and teaching critical thinking skills are connected. I hope this brief summary will explain that connection. During the first few weeks of critical thinking, students learn that the first principle of all knowledge is the *law of non-contradiction*. ***Embedded in that first principle is a profoundly simple law of thought known as the law of identity***. This law is used to check the veracity of terms to confirm that they correspond to reality (that they are true). Throughout his ministry, Jesus utilized this law in a variety of ways. For example, when the Pharisees approached Jesus and tried to trap him in his own words, they asked him this question: “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” Jesus answered, “Whose image and whose name are on the coin?” They said, “Caesar’s.” Jesus said, “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

THE IMAGO DEI: This is brilliant because the image on the coin *identifies its owner—Caesar*. Therefore, give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. Then notice the implied question asked by Jesus, “Whose image is on your soul?” The image engraved on your soul *identifies its owner—God*. Therefore, give to God what belongs to God—your soul. God is not concerned with material things like money because they really have no value. However, ***God values us so much that He has engraved His image on our souls***. Jesus used the law of identity (LID) as a bridge to connect the image to the reality it represented. In the same way, the image of God has been imprinted on our souls and serves as the framework for knowing who we are (our true identity). ***God is the only One who knows who we are at the very core of our existence***. He even knew us before we were born. “Your eyes saw

my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalm 139:16).

THE FALSE IDENTITY: So, we have a true identity but there are also false identities. A false identity is forged over the years by accepting what people say about us (our relationships), what we do (our behavior) and what we experience (our circumstances). As result, we end up embracing a distorted self-image out of which a bogus identity is constructed. ***Fear and anxiety is the framework upon which a false identity is fabricated.*** In order to *overcome fear*, we must learn to listen for God’s voice, and His voice is specific and very personal. When the disciples were in a boat during a violent storm at sea, they were *filled with fear*. During that storm, Jesus called Peter to step out of the boat. Peter heard His voice, fixed his eyes on Jesus, and started to walk on the water toward him. However, when ***Peter heard the voice of the wind and refocused his attention on the waves, he became fearful and started to sink.*** When Mary Magdalene discovered that the body of Jesus was missing from the tomb, that shocking experience resulted in a state of anxiety. Then she heard a voice saying, “Why are you weeping?” At first, Mary thought it was the voice of the gardener. But when Jesus *called her by name* she immediately recognized his voice and anxiety was overpowered by joy!

THE VOICE OF TRUTH: God's voice is central to knowing our true identity and it is the power source to overcome fear and anxiety. His voice is also the catalyst that can increase the rate of spiritual growth and provide the motivation for positive behavior. In so many words, ***the voice of God is the voice of Truth*** and without it we would be forever lost as we drift aimlessly on the sea of confusion and remain powerless to overcome the endless waves of opinion. After students become aware of the need to hear God’s voice, ***the next step is to teach them how to identify and listen for His voice.*** In our next update, I will continue this theme and take you through the steps that are necessary to listen for God’s voice in the midst of other voices that are vying for attention.

Finally, we are living in financially challenging times, and we need to be wise with our investments in God’s Kingdom. However, since we have a shared burden to equip young adults to “fight the good fight,” would you please consider making a donation to support our efforts? If so, I would be most grateful! - ***By God’s Grace Alone—Pete***

CRITICAL THINKING CLASSES - STUDENT FEEDBACK

The Value of Intentional Thinking . . . I initially signed up for the Critical Thinking 1 (When Students Ask Tough Questions) simply because of good recommendations. Also, I often heard laughter coming from the classroom, and students told me that

the teacher was quite exceptional. It did not take very long for me to recognize that everything I heard was “spot on.” In fact, as the course moved forward into the second semester, I knew I needed to enroll in Critical Thinking 2 (When Professors Ask Tough Questions).

Eventually I realized that these courses provided a place to think intentionally about the points of view regarding current sociocultural issues. In other words, Mr. B. would ask a series of questions that forced us to think about how to apply the skills and principles we learned throughout both courses to think critically about contemporary, controversial issues. ***No matter the topic of discussion or the debate, the focus is not on articulating an argument but to construct a meaningful response and, more often than not, by asking a question.***

This approach opens the door for intense meaningful discussions as both sides present their point of view using rational principles of thought that almost always produce a mutual interest for further discussion. Anyone can speak, but few can articulate and support his or her beliefs and arguments. Critical Thinking has sent me on my way to realize both of those marks regarding academics and engaging the culture.

This class did not simply teach me how to defend my point of view and how to skillfully engage the opposing viewpoint. I learned that there is a delicate balance that must be maintained and how emotions ought to be suppressed in order to respond with a clear head. ***All of these skills, simple lessons, and valuable experiences will continue to develop, not just my argumentation skills, but more importantly my character! Invaluable lessons for the new environments I face now and environments I will face soon!***

Undoubtedly, Mr. B.'s teaching is one of the unique aspects of this course. Always practical and never demeaning. As a result, I am ready to “fight the good fight.” With this in mind, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. B. and everyone who supports Legacy of Truth. ***Sincerely, Tad***

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We Were Encouraged To Ask Our Own Questions . . . I took Critical Thinking because I wanted to learn how to sleuth out the truth in a world full of thousands of answers, knowing that only one could be right. I have seen the pressing condition that the culture is in today, and with so many ideologies and hundreds more I haven't heard of, yet I didn't even know what stance to take (much less how to analyze what is true.).

This course was special compared to other apologetics-based classes I've taken because ***the students were encouraged to ask their own questions, and the content perfectly addressed the questions by building upon the foundation of first principles.*** The flexibility, openness, and class interaction made this course one of my favorite high school classes.

There can be a lot of difficulty when trying to apply age-old principles to the

current culture. But this class did so seamlessly and actually encouraged students to think critically about how to analyze current sociocultural topics. ***We were taught how to take a complicated issue and break it down into its basic elements in order to discover the groundwork for its fundamental claim.***

Once that underlying claim was identified, we used first principles to test its veracity. Now that I know how to think for myself, and how to analyze various viewpoints, I often catch myself unconsciously utilizing these new skills. From social media to watching the news, I find myself asking questions in order to examine their claims. Even in daily conversations, I have been analyzing the way people think in order to understand and test their truth claims by asking questions. ***With gratitude – Riley***

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I Had Loads of Difficult Questions . . . Before I took the class on critical thinking, I had loads of difficult questions rattling around in my brain. I was sure that this class would provide answers to so many of my questions. And I was hopeful that, by the end of the course, I would finally put to rest any outstanding doubts I had regarding what I believed. However, rather than answering the questions for me, I was given the necessary skills to find the answers on my own.

One of the strongest pillars of Critical Thinking is the way Mr. B. teaches students how to apply first principles to a variety of different issues. By zooming out and examining problems through these first principles, the confusing language and blaring ideologies fall away. This emphasis on truth and rational thinking encouraged me to keep coming back for more.

In a time when the foundations of our society seem to be shaken, the pursuit of truth is crucial. I've really appreciated Mr. B's passion to equip the next generation with solid logic and critical thinking skills. Before I took this class, I severely underestimated the importance of being able to interpret ideas and think through issues for myself. However, these classes have done an excellent job with respect to teaching me how to pursue truth. Moreover, they have taught me how to ask questions in order to find common ground with someone who holds an opposing viewpoint. ***Throughout this course I have been continually reminded that it is the Lord who gives insight and true clarity of thought when discussing difficult topics.*** I have also learned that it is the Lord who provides solace when trying to comprehend human suffering and violence.

Finally, one of the most important aspects of Critical Thinking is the way students are taught to build and preserve relationships. As students, it is so easy to find ourselves at odds with people who disagree with our point of view. ***During our discussions regarding some of the most potentially conflict-ridden sociocultural issues, we would often be reminded that it is not our job to convince, convict, condemn, or compel someone of anything. We learned that it is the Holy Spirit's job.*** Our job is to love our neighbors and to pursue truth,

justice, and righteousness. That is easily the most important thing I learned throughout this course. So, thank you, Mr. B., for instilling in us what it means to think for ourselves. ***With a grateful heart – Finn***

DONATIONS: As previously mentioned, we have a shared burden to equip young adults to “fight the good fight.” Therefore, would you please consider making a donation to support our efforts? For more information on how to donate, please visit our website at: www.legacyoftruth.org/giving