Session 1: Skepticism Or Faith: Which Is Reasonable?

1. The Anatomy of Skepticism:

Skepticism by design is a poorly conceived_____.

The central premise of all skeptical inquiry is the_____of belief apart from (or in the face of)_____verifiable proof.

But is the premise true?

2. The Problem of Skepticism: The Failure of Internal Critique.

Skepticism holds that we prove everything to be true based upon a process of _____ verification.

The Skeptic's thesis in all cases would be_____ is true because _____ is the proof.

Key Example: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.

        T is true because_____ is the proof.
        M is true because_____ is the proof.
        E is true because _____ is the proof.
        Z is true because _____ is the proof.
        R is true because...

Example Reversal:

        Z is uncertain because _____ can't be proven.
        E is uncertain because _____ can't be proven.
        M is uncertain because _____ can't be proven.
        T is uncertain because _____ can't be proven.

It is _____ to independently verify the existence of anything!

"There is no model-independent test of reality, [by which we can independently verify the existence of anything]." (The Grand Design; brackets mine)

3. The Skeleton in The Skeptic's Closet:

We don't_____ to believe. We _____ to prove.

4. The Skeptic's Trilemma.

A. The _____ Regress. [The Problem of Infinitism]

"Even in the absence of a strongly satisfying explanation [for the origin of the universe]...we are not justified in inferring [intelligent] design as the best explanation, for...then a new problem arises, namely, who designed the designer?"
(The God Delusion)

"If God made the world than _____ made God?"

If everything, including God, has a maker, than it would take an _____ number of God's to create our world.

"Someone made the God who made the God who made the God who made God who made the God who made the God...[ad infinitum]...who made the world."

B. The_____Argument. [The Problem of Coherentism]

The skeptic assumes that:

T is true because M is the proof. M is true because E is the proof. E is true because Z is the proof. Z is true because R is the proof. R is true because Z is the proof.

Excurcis: The Skeptic's Secret Weapon: Always Ask Why.

The Skeptic knows that in order to win the argument, all he/she must do is keep asking why, so as to force the opponent into an infinite regress.

"Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19; NIV)

C. The Skeptic's Trilemma Concluded: The Axiomatic Argument.

Axiom (Definition): A self-evident, irreducible prime.

The skeptic must _____ to some kind of acceptable premise upon which he bases all his arguments.

These would be things that the skeptic _____ not to question.

5: Session Summary:

Key Thesis:

Skepticism holds that contingent proposition ___is proven by___, ___ is proven by ___, and so forth extending to___.

However, once ___is reached, we become faced the aforementioned Trilemma. In this event, either:

- ___is true because ___is the proof. (*Infinitism*)
- ___is true because___is the proof. (*Coherentism*)
- ___is true because___is the proof. (*Foundationalism*)

Remarks:

Infinitism cannot possibly be right. For taken into its logical conclusion, it holds that nothing is ultimately probative.

Coherentism holds that rather than continuing our regress of proofs, we argue that our proofs are coherent with each other. Notice above that the last proof simply affirms its adjacent member. We have thereby asserted that coherence rather than independence is to be favored when settling a matter as probabtive.

Finally, Foundationalism holds that there must be certain things we choose not to prove. For if we don't choose something not to question, than the first two problems cannot be reasonably avoided and ultimately, nothing is probative. "Surely that absurd," the Foundationalist argues. "We must choose something to rest our arguments upon."

6. Conclusion:

In the final analysis, Coherentism and Foundationalism can assume two forms:

Coherentism can either argue that:

• Members _____ together warrant a proof of Z.
• The warrant for "Z" is passed like a basketball between_____.

Foundationalism can either argue that:

• We presuppose that _____doesn't need to be proven.
• We show that _____may be axiomatically proven.

What is the difference between an axiom and a presupposition?

• A presupposition is blindly assumed.
• An axiom is a self-evident irreducible prime.

That is, it is something which cannot be reasonably disproven. (example: a + b = b + a)

So what does Christianity choose?

Axiomatic Foundationalism!

Session Answers:

1. System
2. Suspension, independently
3. Independent
4. X, Y
5. T, M, E, Z, R
6. M, E, Z, R
7. R, Z, E, M
8. Impossible
9. Prove, believe
10. Infinite
11. What
12. Infinite
13. Circular
14. Assent
15. Chooses
16. A, B, B, C, Z.
17. Z
18. Z, A1
19. Z, Y
20. Z, Z
21. A thru Y
22. A thru Z
23. Z
24. Z