



Faith & Science

SESSION ONE FAITH & SCIENCE DIALOGUE: CAN IT HAPPEN?

CONFLICT – OIL & WATER

Science and faith may be in **conflict** with each other – like oil and water. No matter how hard one may try, oil and water simply do not mix! They cannot mix, and they will not mix with one another.

The conflict model claims that science and religion must be opposite. For instance, some believe that the scientific method is the *only* way to knowledge. Faith lacks data and therefore cannot be tested to prove its claims.

On the other side, people of faith may believe that anything not in Scripture has no claim to truth. Some hold that every word of the Bible is the inspired word of God, the historical and scientific truth. Because the Bible has no flaws, it must be taken literally.

Imagine that you are on the basketball court of reality. There are two teams. Team one is Faith, and team two is Science. Both teams are on the same court, and both are playing a basketball game. Yet they are not playing basketball together. They have two half-court games going on at the same time. Faith is playing on one side of the court and Science is playing on the other.

As the games continue, Faith begins to watch Science play basketball. Members of the Faith team start yelling at the Science players. "You're not playing basketball, we're playing basketball! GET OFF THE COURT!" Science looks at Faith and says, "You're not playing basketball, we're playing basketball! GET OFF THE COURT!"

QUESTIONS

- Does this way of relating faith and science ring true for you? Explain why or why not.
- Does this way of relating faith and science seem healthy or unhealthy to you? Why?
- Can you think of current situations where faith and science are in conflict with one another?



Faith & SCIENCE

SESSION ONE FAITH & SCIENCE DIALOGUE: CAN IT HAPPEN?

INDEPENDENCE – APPLES & ORANGES

Science and faith may be **independent** from one another. A metaphor to describe this relationship is using the example of comparing apples and oranges. Apples and oranges both grow on a tree. They are both fruit, but they are not the same fruit, and they come from different trees. They both exist, and they bring benefit to the world, but they are independent from one another.

From this point of view, we cannot expect science to contribute at all to an overall worldview or philosophy for life. That is exclusively the task of the theologians. Moreover, it is not possible to dialog because scientists and theologians speak different languages. This is not surprising since even different kinds of scientists –biologist vs. physicist—can have communication problems, too. For instance, NASA is bringing together groups of astrophysicists and astrobiologists to discuss the definition of life and how they will know life if they find it. They have had difficulty communicating since each group speaks a different language within its respective field. This view holds then that it should not be so strange for science and religion to be unable to communicate. They speak very different languages!

Imagine that you are on the basketball court of reality. There are two teams. Team one is Faith, and team two is Science. Both teams are on the same court, and both are playing a basketball game. Yet they are not playing basketball together. They have two half-court games going on at the same time. Faith is playing on one side of the court and Science is playing on the other.

As the games continue, Faith and Science acknowledge that they are on the same basketball court of reality. However, they simply continue to play basketball only with their team on their half of the court with no interaction between the teams. It is simply two different games of basketball being played at the same time on the same court.

QUESTIONS

- Do you think this model accurately represents the way most people see faith and science relate in the world? Explain why or why not.
- Does this way of relating faith and science seem healthy or unhealthy to you? Why?
- Can you think of current situations where faith and science are independent from one another?



Faith & SCIENCE

SESSION ONE FAITH & SCIENCE DIALOGUE: CAN IT HAPPEN?

DIALOGUE – FRUIT SALAD

Science and faith may relate **in dialogue** with one another. A metaphor to describe this relationship is using the example of a fruit salad – it's a good mix! The juices from the fruit blend and we find that eating some pineapple with a grape isn't so bad. In fact, the mixture makes a good salad. Pineapples and grapes are not the same things, but they both add a special flavor to the salad.

Dialogue recognizes that there are similarities and differences between science and faith. The model argues that faith and science need to embrace each other's limitations while uplifting their strengths.

Science helps us to understand how much a part of nature we are. Science inspires us to be in awe and wonder at the complexity of creation and helps us to better understand it. On the other hand, through religious rituals and experiences of God we are gratefully able to connect with nature and the world around us in more than a biological level.

Imagine that you are on the basketball court of reality. There are two teams. Team one is Faith, and team two is Science. Both teams are on the same court, and both are playing a basketball game. Yet they are not playing basketball together. They have two half-court games going on at the same time. Faith is playing on one side of the court and Science is playing on the other.

As the games continue, Faith and Science decide that it would be good to practice together. Faith players share a drill with Science that helps with their game. Faith and Science practice the drill together. Then Science players share a drill with Faith and they follow the drill together. They are beginning to know and understand one another, watching and experiencing what the other has to add to the game of basketball. They are not playing basketball together or against each other, but they are practicing and learning from each other.

QUESTIONS

- Does this way of relating faith and science ring true for you? Explain why or why not.
- Does this way of relating faith and science seem healthy or unhealthy to you? Why?
- Can you think of current situations where faith and science are in dialogue with one another?



Faith & SCIENCE

SESSION ONE FAITH & SCIENCE DIALOGUE: CAN IT HAPPEN?

INTEGRATION – STEW

Science and faith may become **integrated** with one another. A metaphor to describe this relationship is the example of stew. A good stew simmers all day before it is eaten. Different vegetables are put in the same pot with meat, and they cook together. The juice of a good stew is a mix of all the flavors that are cooking in the pot. You do not taste the individual vegetables – they have become one.

Integration brings science and faith together. According to this model, science proves that there is a God, and faith needs science to better understand God's creation and our role in it.

Imagine that you are on the basketball court of reality. There are two teams. Team one is Faith, and team two is Science. Both teams are on the same court, and both are playing a basketball game. Yet they are not playing basketball together. They have two half-court games going on at the same time. Faith is playing on one side of the court and Science is playing on the other.

As the games continue, Faith and Science decide that it would be better to use the whole court. Not only do they begin to play a full-court game, but, in addition, members from Faith join the Science team, and members of Science join the Faith team. Now the teams are mixed, using the whole court in a game of basketball.

QUESTIONS

- Does this way of relating faith and science ring true for you? Explain why or why not.
- Does this way of relating faith and science seem healthy or unhealthy to you? Why?
- Can you think of current situations where faith and science are integrated with one another?