

Two Ways of Looking At It
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What is the force of attraction between a boy weighting 160 lbs. and a girl weighting 120 lbs. who are 3 feet apart?

This problem is found in a book of physics. How to answer it? Scientifically? Take the law of gravitation, figure out the force between them?

Or do you answer it in personal terms? Is the girl beautiful? Is the boy good-looking? Do they like each other? Are they in love?

When you come to think of it, there are two completely different problems. Either way of looking at the problem is correct. Both answers are “right.” But which one interests you more?

Each of the problems calls for a different kind of “thinking.” In science you can think precisely, you can use numbers, and get exact answers. The law of attraction between the boy and girl is 1/10,000 oz. But so what? What really counts is how much closer the two persons want to be. You can’t measure this attraction precisely; you only know it intuitively. But it is just as real as anything you can measure on a pair of scales.

In other words, there are two ways of thinking. “Science” thinking can tell you how far away the boy and girl are and how strong the gravitational attraction between the two is. “Science” thinking can tell you how far away the stars are, how large they are, and what color they are. But it takes a different kind of “life” thinking to tell whether 3 feet between you and someone else is too close, or not close enough; it takes this kind of “life” thinking to tell you that the stars are awesome and beautiful. “Life thinking” is what you use with other living things. A dog becomes meaningful to you when you play with it and love it, when you see its happiness. You don’t think about it in terms of “science thinking”: a dog is a member of that species and this sub-group; it is a conglomeration of organs that operate in a certain way, it is something to experiment with. To you, when you begin “life thinking” a dog is something you can love.

“Life thinking” and “science thinking” can happen together, but to your life and happiness, life thinking is more meaningful. When you are close to someone, you are doing “life thinking,” not “science thinking.”

The difference between science and religion is precisely this difference between “science thinking” and “life thinking.” Science is what you learn through “science thinking.” But after you’ve finished with “science thinking,” there are still a lot of things which remain impossible to answer – life, love, awe, God. These are the things that religion is all about. To understand them, religion uses what we have called “life thinking.”