

Is Circular Reasoning Always a Fallacy?

- Circular reasoning is unavoidable
 - Especially when attempting to justify or prove one's ultimate standard of authority / measurement
 - A starting point / method / and conclusion are always involved with one another
- **Ultimate standards** can have nothing that stand over them in authority
 - Otherwise - they would not be ultimate standards
 - They would be secondary standards
 - In order for a standard to be ultimate
 - It must use itself as its own standard of judgment when coming to any decision for justification
 - That means - some degree of circular reasoning is necessary when proving one's ultimate authority
 - Example:
 - Prove to me your reason is reliable without using your mind
 - Prove to me your senses are reliable without using your senses
 - Prove to me your thoughts are correct without using thought
 - Prove to me your emotions exist without using emotion

God Himself uses circular reasoning

- When God makes an oath - who does He swear by?
 - He is ultimate over all things
 - Nothing is above Him
 - When human beings make an oath, they swear to something higher than them (Heb 6:16)
 - How does God swear to something higher than Himself when He is ultimate over all?
 - Since God is ultimate, He can only use Himself as the authority (Heb 6:13)
 - He can only swear by Himself
 - Some degree of circular reasoning is necessary when proving one's ultimate authority

Not all circular arguments are a fallacy

- Circular arguments are not necessarily a fallacy
- Circular reasoning is often considered a fallacy because it is usually random and not specific
 - Example – “the Bible is true because the Bible says so”
- But it can be reasonable if it goes beyond a simple circle
- This has to present additional information in order to support its conclusion and not be considered simple
 - “Since God inspired Scripture, the Bible is true”
- If the ultimate authority is first assumed because without it you cannot make sense out of anything
 - It is perfectly legitimate to reason in a circle.

An Ultimate Authority Must Appeal to Itself in Order to Provide Proof and Justification

- It must use itself as part of its own proof
- Yes – to some degree circular reasoning is involved
 - But - it cannot be a simple circle
 - It must be reasonable
 - 1 – If there were no laws of logic, we couldn't make an argument.
 - 2 – We can make an argument.
 - 3 – Therefore, there must be laws of logic
- What makes this circular argument powerful is that **to deny it would be to assume it**
 - Any potential rebuttal would be self-defeating
 - One would have to assume that the presupposition is true even to argue against it in the first place