

Mission: To glorify God and respond to the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20), by faithfully declaring the Gospel of Jesus Christ and actively defending arguments against Christianity.

Purpose: To individually and collectively seek God's guidance, study His Word, examine opposing beliefs and ideologies, and support one another so that we may more effectively share the Gospel message by being prepared to give a reasoned and gracious defense of the Christian faith.

Defending our Faith: Week 1 (Notes)

What is Christian Apologetics and Why is it Important?

Apologetics

What is it? ¹

- Derives from the Greek word *apologia*, meaning a speech of defense
- In Ancient Athens, it referred to a defense made in the courtroom as part of the normal judicial procedure. After the accusation, the defendant was allowed to refute the charge with a defense (*apologia*).

Why study it?

- The word *apologia* appears 17 times in noun or verb form in the NT [New Testament], and can be translated "defense" or "vindication" in every case.
- Apologetics focuses on offering a reasoned defense of the Christian faith as described in scripture (see p.3)

Functions of Apologetics²

1. **Proof** - developing a positive case for Christianity as a belief system (using philosophical arguments, scientific and historical evidence, etc.)
2. **Offense** – answering (refuting) arguments non-Christians give in support of their own beliefs
3. **Defense** - clarifying the Christian position (against misunderstanding or misrepresentation), answering objections/questions/criticisms
4. **Persuasion** - convincing people to apply the truth of Christianity to their lives; not just to win the argument but to persuade people to commit their lives and eternal futures into the trust of the Son of God who died for them



*Apologetics has also been called **pre-evangelism** because of the role it plays in preparing non-believers to receive the gospel.*

¹ Kenneth D. Boa, "What is Apologetics?" in The Apologetics Study Bible (eds. Ted Cabal, et al; Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), xxv

² "What is Apologetics?" Bible.org, <https://bible.org/seriespage/2-what-apologetics>, (November 10, 2015)

Is Learning and Practicing Apologetics Biblical?

Misconception	Notes
<p>It is quarrelsome/argumentative <i>(Idea being that we should avoid anything that resembles this)</i></p>	<p>Matthew 12:30 - Loving God w our minds is active: coming to conclusions about God and His world based on revelation, observation, and careful reflection Arguing in a virtue because it helps us determine what is true and discard what is false. Hostility is not necessary and we should strive to avoid it. Make sure it's your ideas that offend and not you, that your beliefs cause the dispute and not your behavior.³</p>
<p>It infringes on faith <i>(Idea being that "faith" is belief without evidence)</i></p>	<p>Apologetics supports belief with evidence (because it exists) The Bible remains our foundation Truth is on our side</p>
<p>It credits men, not God <i>(Idea being that conversions are attributed to human efforts; pride is sinful and God should receive the credit)</i></p>	<p>The Apostles actively engaged in apologetics, didn't think it took glory from God Isaiah 1:18 – God's character is one of reason as well as love 1 Peter 3:15 – We do it as a result of honoring the Lord, and we always link back to Christ</p>
<p>It is "worldly" wisdom <i>(Idea being that it depends on "worldly wisdom" which the Bible denounces; 1 Cor 3:19)</i></p>	<p>The "worldly wisdom" denounced by Paul is that of the value humans place on things themselves (judgments based on emotion or rhetoric vs. evidence) Logic, reason, philosophy, history and science are not mutually exclusive of God or evidence</p>
<p>It does not work <i>(Idea being that using reason isn't spiritual, that argument can't take the place of God drawing one near, John 6:44)</i></p>	<p>It doesn't follow from John 6:44 that if God's Spirit plays a vital role, then reason and persuasion play none. Paul reasoned with his audience in Acts 17 Arguments can be effective, but not in a vacuum (same to be said about "love"). Without God's work, nothing else works; but with God's work, many things work.⁴</p>
Truth	Notes
<p>Displays obedience to God</p>	<p>We are to make disciples, and the Bible gives numerous examples of the Apostles actively engaging in apologetics (reasoning) while evangelizing (<i>see next page</i>) More about honoring God than winning the argument</p>
<p>Serves non-believers</p>	<p>Restoring the Christian worldview to prominence in culture and education is absolutely necessary, and we must be prepared to address objections to it. More importantly, we must help to remove the stumbling blocks that keep others from the Gospel.</p>
<p>Serves believers</p>	<p>We are given an opportunity to serve other believers by helping to support them and address doubts. We bring glory to God when we allow Him to use us in this way.</p>
<p>Builds confidence</p>	<p>The more we study and practice, the more confident we will become in sharing our faith.</p>
<p>Encourages love of Truth</p>	<p>We are rational because we are made in God's image. We are able to realize the beauty in which God created our world so that we can enjoy discovery (how science supports the Bible, etc)</p>

³ Koukl, Greg. *Tactics: A game plan for discussing your Christian convictions*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009, p. 33

⁴ Koukl, Greg. *Tactics: A game plan for discussing your Christian convictions*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009, p. 33

Basis for Apologetics in Scripture

1 Peter 3:14-16 (ESV)

¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, **always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you**; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (ESV)

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ **We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,** ⁶ being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

Philippians 1:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, **for you are all partakers with me of grace,** ¹⁴ **both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.**

Philippians 1:14-16 (ESV)

¹⁴ And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word ¹⁵ without fear.

¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. ¹⁶ The latter do it out of love, **knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.**

Jude 1:3 (ESV)

³ Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write **appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.**

Acts 17:2-4 (ESV)

² And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days **he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,** ³ **explaining and proving** that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." ⁴ **And some of them were persuaded** and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.

Acts 18:27-28 (ESV)

²⁷ And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, **he greatly helped those who through grace had believed,** ²⁸ **for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public,** showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

Colossians 2:6-8 (ESV)

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. ⁸ **See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits[a] of the world, and not according to Christ.**

C. S. Lewis: "...to not to be able to meet the enemies on their own ground -- would be to throw down our weapons, and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered."

Two Sides of the Same Coin

"...always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;"

"...yet do it with gentleness and respect,"
~ 1 Peter 3:15

Knowledge / Strategy (The "What")

Developing defenses to many types of objections:

- Scientific
- Historical
- Philosophical
- Religious
- Theological
- Cultural
- Ethical

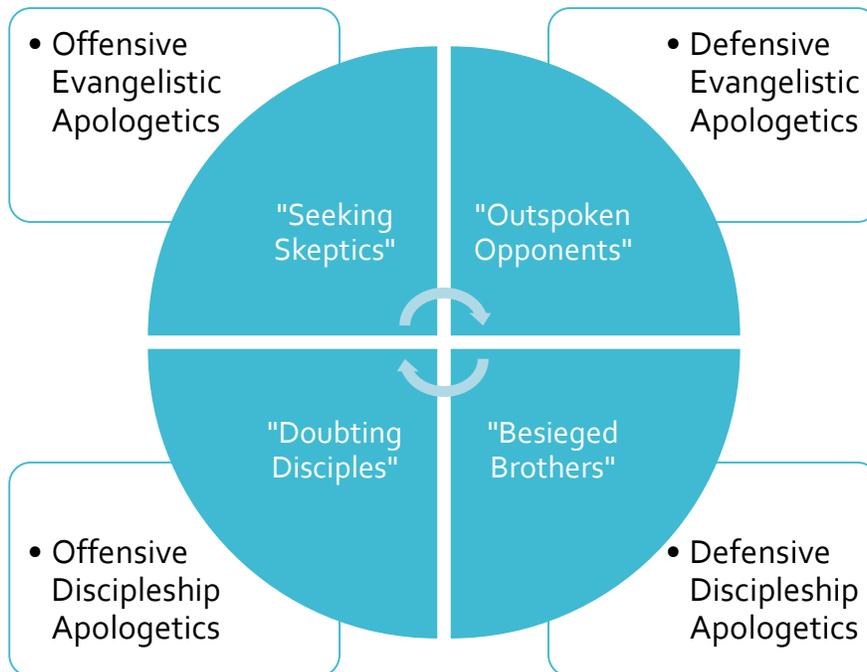
Wisdom / Tactics (The "How")

Developing a game-plan for how to engage:

- Staying in control of the conversation
- Keeping the discussion diplomatic
- Responding to believers vs. non-believers
- Responding to different personality types
- Avoiding common mistakes / talking points
- Understanding basics of logic, philosophy, probability, etc.

Fundamental Purposes of Apologetics⁵

(Focus & Audience)



⁵ "How to get Apologetics in your Church", Apologetics315.com, <http://www.apologetics315.com/2010/09/how-to-get-apologetics-in-your-church.html>, (January 2, 2016)