

Apologetics 101

Study of Biblical Apologetics 101

What is Apologetics"?

It means, "a verbal defense." It is used eight times in the New Testament:

Acts 22:1; 25:16; 1 Cor. 9:3; 2 Cor. 7:11; Phil. 1:7; 2 Tim. 4:16, and 1 Pet. 3:15. But it is the last verse that is most commonly associated with Christian apologetics.

Apologetics comes from the Greek word "apologia" which means "to give a defense and it implies a defense supported by specific reasons and thought. This is the same kind of defense a defense attorney might give on behalf of his client, using reasons and arguments to prove innocence

Apologetics, from the Greek *apologia*, meaning to "give a defense," is the art and science of doing just that. That very word is found in 1 Peter 3:15.

1 Peter 3:15 scripture to memorize

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Philippians 1: 7 scripture to memorize

Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as

both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

Apologetics: systematic argumentative discourse in defense, as of a doctrine. It's Defense of faith.

That means you are called to give reasonable answers to questions regarding Christianity. Now this does not mean that you must have a Ph.D. or that you have to go to seminary. But it does mean that you should be willing to at least give an answer for your beliefs. If you find you cannot, then prayerfully take it to God and start studying

2 Timothy 2:5 *scripture to memorize*

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 4:2 *scripture to memorize*

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

As Christians it is our duty to fulfill the great commission. We must become defenders of the faith against false doctrine, teachings, cults, and religions.

Christian apologetics is that branch of Christianity that deals with answering any and all critics who oppose or question the revelation of God in Christ and the Bible. It can include studying such subjects as biblical manuscript transmission, philosophy, biology, mathematics, evolution, and logic. But it can also consist of simply giving an answer to a question about Jesus or a Bible passage.

Apologetics can be defensive and offensive.

Philippians 1:7 gives us instruction on the defensive side

Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

2 Cor. 10:5-6 gives us instruction on the offensive side

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

The study of **apologetics** means to sharpen your skills in defending what you believe, learning how to answer questions and/or criticisms, and doing it all in a humble, Christ-like manner. Sounds easier than it is! But the Lord will guide you through the Holy Spirit as you read His Word and desire to win people to Jesus!

There are two primary aspects / methods of Christian apologetics.

The first, commonly known as **classical apologetics**, involves sharing proofs and evidences that the Christian message is true.

The second, commonly known as **presuppositional apologetics**, involves confronting the presuppositions (preconceived ideas, assumptions) behind the anti-Christian positions. Proponents of the two methods of Christian apologetics often debate each other as to which method is most effective. To me, it would be far more productive to be using both methods, depending on the person and situation.

Christian apologetics is simply presenting a reasonable defense of the Christian faith and Christian truth to those whom disagree. Christian apologetics is a necessary aspect of our Christian life. We are all commanded to be ready and equipped to proclaim the Gospel and defend our faith (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Peter 3:15). That is the essence of Christian apologetics.

Eight Reasons we need Apologetics

1. To defend the faith 1 Peter 3:15
2. It helps us know our faith
3. It is an attempt to keep people from eternal damnation
4. To counter the bad image that Christianity has received from the media and culture
5. To expose the apostasy that is sweeping the church
6. To expose false teaching
7. The rise of immortality is a not only a threat to society but to Christianity
8. We need apologetics because schools are not friendly towards Christianity

We need apologetics to give rational, intelligent, and relevant explanations of Christian viability to the critics and the prejudiced who would seek to undermine the teachings of our Lord Jesus.

If there was ever a time that apologetics is needed, it is now.

The Nature of Apologetics

1 Peter 3:15

The above passage in 1 Peter sets forth the nature of what Christian apologetics should be. Good apologetics needs to be based on reason, it needs to be knowledgeable, and it needs to be done in a spirit of gentleness and respect.

Good Reasoning

First, our arguments should be rational and based on good reasoning, again like a trial attorney. This is a very important point, since so many people today seem to view faith and reason as concepts in tension with each other.

The Apostle Paul understood this well. In 1 Thessalonians he commands us to "examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good". This is a remarkable passage. So certain was Paul of the reasonableness of Christianity, he actually challenges believers to test its truth claims against all others. If another is more rational, then you should believe it instead! Rationality therefore becomes an important part of Christian apologetics and Christianity in general.

Knowledgeable

Because apologetics needs to be rational, it is important for the apologist to become more knowledgeable about Christianity as well as opposing arguments. In order to provide sound reasons for the hope of Christ, we have a responsibility to understand what others believe so we don't caricature their beliefs or build straw man arguments.

Gentle & respectful

Not only should apologetics be approached rationally and knowledgeably, but it should also be executed with sensitivity to the thoughts and feelings of other individuals. Remember, faith is a central part of our self-identity; it's how we understand who we are.

The Need for Apologetics

Christians want to have their faith but leave the heavy lifting to professionals.

It's not only every important to believers why they believe something but it is necessary

Apologetics helps you in these areas:

Helps us deepen our relationship with God

Matthew 22:37

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This helps us to align our minds with a biblical worldview according to his word.

Romans 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Apologetics helps secure our faith

Apologetics not only helps us to minister it also helps us to have accurate knowledge of our faith especially in times of trials

Protects us from heretical teachings

by educating ourselves in understanding the different cults, religions, and false teachings that have crept into the church. For example do you know what the Jehovah's Witness, Church of Latter day saints, Islam, New Age, and others teach. We'll in this study we are going to examine many of their teachings and doctrines. It will also prepare on how to reach them for Christ.

We are commanded to know who to defend our faith!

Pray

It is the Lord who opens the heart and mind, not you (Acts 16:14). Ask God for guidance (John 14:14). Ask for blessing in your understanding (James 1:5) and your speech (Col. 4:6). Ask the Lord to also open their understanding to Gods word (Luke 24:45).

Memorize Scripture

Few things are as powerful when defending the faith as being able to cite chapter and verse of a particular verse (Psalm 119:11; 2 Tim. 3:16).

Memorize the locations of information whether it be in cult material, secular material, or any other source you've got.

It is extremely valuable to know material in different disciplines. Of course, you cannot know everything, but you can memorize a few pertinent facts about Mormonism, or evolution, or philosophy, or the Bible, or whatever else may be needed. You will learn what you need as you witness.

Listen to what is being said to you

and respond to what is said. It is by listening that you will then know what to say. Listen for errors in logic. Listen for motives, for hurts, for intent. Listen.

Don't interrupt

This is just common courtesy. You need to earn the right to speak. Just because you have an answer doesn't mean it must be heard right away. When interruptions become the norm, learning is thrown out the window.

Don't be afraid to make mistakes

One of the best ways to improve is to discover your weaknesses. The best way to discover your weaknesses is when mistakes uncover them for you.

Study what you discover you don't know

If you don't know something, then study it. Get books and read. Write down what you learn.

Don't be afraid to take a chance

This takes real faith. All you have to do is be available, speak up, and take a chance in defending

the Christian faith. You'll be surprised at how well you do. And when you mess up, don't worry, review guideline # 6.

Rehearse

Perhaps the best place to do apologetics is in your head. Think of a situation, a scenario that you need to have an answer for, and develop an answer. Practice in your mind. Try and corner yourself and then get out of it.

Read Books that deal with what you need to know

The knowledge of others is invaluable. Isaac Newton said, "If I have reached the stars, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants." In other words, he learned from others.

Basically, the guidelines are common sense. All you have to do is try, don't worry about failure, keep going, pray, and trust God. It works.