

— Apologetics —

DEFENDING THE FAITH

LET'S GET STARTED

WHAT IS APOLOGETICS?

Apologetics is narrowly defined as “defending the Christian faith by reason with gentleness and respect.” The Apostle Peter writes:

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 1 Peter 3:15-16

While we fully understand that you cannot reason someone into faith, we are not left without testimony (Acts 14:17). “These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31).

Christianity claims that Jesus rose from the dead, and if he *didn't*, the whole thing falls apart (1 Corinthians 15). Christianity is a robust worldview that touches every part of life.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF APOLOGETICS?

The apologetic task is to use every bit of knowledge available as we engage skeptics with the goal of proclaiming Christ crucified. We become all things to all people (1 Corinthians 9:18-23).

Think of apologetics as a ministry of caring. We care about skeptics and their thoughts.

WHAT ARE SOME CAUTIONS ABOUT APOLOGETICS?

1. We cannot argue anybody into faith. That's not how faith works generally, and it certainly is not how saving faith works. The Holy Spirit must work on dead hearts to make them alive in faith. The job of an “apologist” is really the same as an “evangelist” – to love the skeptic and proclaim the gospel.

2. There are no “homeruns” in apologetics. No rational argument is full proof. This is true of every argument no matter if it is engaging a secular or religious topic. The last thing we want to do is to leave the impression that we have it all figured out. Eventually we will be confronted with counterarguments. If we think we have all the answers, either:

- a. we will be set up for failure and our faith (if based on rational arguments and not Scripture) will be attacked. OR,
- b. we become know-it-alls and will turn off the skeptic.

Our goal here is to get ourselves to think clearly. When we *think* clearly, we will speak clearly. All this is with the goal of love towards neighbor.

Apologetics is a ministry of caring! Thank you for taking on this study.