

## Intro to Apologetics

### I. What is Christian apologetics?

- A. it is not apologizing for what we believe.
- B. it comes from the word "apologia" which means to give an explanation to rebut charges.
- C. What are ways we do this every day?
  - 1. You give a reason for a decision you made
  - 2. You defend your position on a subject.  
"Why you are a Lion's fan."
- D. Defn: the discipline of offering a defense for and evidence of the reliability of the Christian faith.

### E. Evangelism differs from apologetics

- 1. evangelism explains the truth of the gospel
  - a. who is Jesus
  - b. What is sin
  - c. How to be saved
- 2. Apologetics defends the truthfulness and reliability of biblical claims and provides a critique against false claims.
  - a. it is defensive- defending the truthfulness of biblical claims
  - b. it is offensive- attacking the false teaching and an unbiblical worldview.

### II. Who are Christian apologetics for? Christians

A. All Christians should be able to articulate the gospel and offer a defense for its truthfulness and reliability.

- 1. Can you do that?
- 2. Can you walk someone through a logical, sequential explanation of the gospel from the Bible.
- 3. Do you know how to answer the questions your friends are asking?
  - a. How do you know the Bible is reliable?
  - b. How do you know Jesus is God?
  - c. How do you know that the resurrection really took place?
  - d. How do you know that Christianity is right and Islam is wrong?

### B. Reasons that apologetics is for all Christians

1. We should be able to explain why unbelievers should put their faith in Jesus.

1 Peter 3:15- Why do you have "hope" in Jesus and the resurrection?

2. We should be able to critique unbiblical worldviews. 2 Cor. 10:3-5 that set themselves up against the knowledge of God.

- b. We should all be prepared to "wage war" by challenging unbiblical teaching that contradicts Jesus' teaching.

(Reasons apologetics is for all Christians)

3. We should use our minds to the glory of God

- a. We should be able "to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ."

b. practically speaking how do you do that?

-You recognize what the lies are.

-You push out the lies by replacing them with the truth.

c. One of the reasons that some of you struggle in your faith is because you are believing lies or if you know you have wrong thoughts in your mind you are still dwelling on them instead of replacing them with the truth.

d. Matt. 22:37 "Love God with our minds."

e. We do not have to be afraid of hard questions. We have the truth and the truth is a person- Jesus (John 14:6, Rev. 19:11)

f. How can we use our minds to the glory of God?

-Not by learning truth so we can win debates

- But by learning truth to win hearts by defending the gospel.

g. We want non-Christians to question the reliability of their beliefs and help them to recognize the rationality of Christian beliefs.

4. Christians throughout history have used apologetics to the glory of God

a. In Acts 17:17-ff Paul reasons in the public square.

b. in Acts 24-26 Paul "makes his defense" (apologia) before a number of Roman leaders.

c. the church fathers had to distinguish Christian doctrine from pagan belief.

d. Who are Christian apologists that you are aware of in our day?

Ravi Zacharius, Lee Strobel, Josh McDowell, CS Lewis

C. Reasons Christians struggle with using apologetics

1. Some deny the role of apologetics because they think it is contrary to faith.

a. Some wrongly believe that the whole point of faith is because it doesn't make rational sense so that is why you exercise faith.

b. that is not a biblical understanding of faith. Biblical faith is based on the truth of what God.

c. it is true that reason alone is not enough for salvation. Jesus saves not reason but Christian apologetics helps a person understand the reliability of God's truth which is an important part of faith.

2. Fear what others will think Eph. 6:19-20

3. They are intellectually lazy

a. it requires study and work to be able to answer people's questions but there is no higher calling. People's eternal souls are at stake. This is a spiritual battle. God has given us all we need, we just need to be equipped and do it.

III. Who are Apologetics for? Non-Christians

A. Christian apologetics answers non-Christians questions and removes barriers for belief.

1. Some non-Christians ask questions to distract from the gospel and submitting to God. They aren't really looking for answers.

2. But others have legitimate questions related to faith that apologetics helps to answer.

3. Answering all their questions isn't necessary before faith as we don't understand all, but the answer to fundamental questions opens the way to faith.

B. Christian apologetics coupled with evangelism points non-Christians to faith in Jesus.

1. The point is not to win an argument but to defend the reliability of placing your faith in Jesus.

2. Apologetics defends a biblical worldview.
  3. Apologetics deconstructs unbelief and provides a launching pad for evangelism.
  4. This is spiritual warfare. The opponent is not non-Christians but unbelief and false beliefs.
- 2 Thess. 2:9-10 Satan loves to deceive with lies.

#### Conclusion

We will seek to give evidence and proofs as we make the case for the Christian faith but no matter how persuasive we must never forget that no one is saved apart from faith in Jesus. Our trust is not in our intellectual ability to answer questions. Our trust has to be in Christ.

Over the coming weeks we will consider:

1. the existence of God
2. the problem of evil
3. the reliability of scripture
4. the resurrection
5. world religions- Is Jesus the only way?
6. Is Jesus God?

#### Questions for small groups

1. Do you have any questions about your beliefs that trouble you? What are they? What have you done to try to get answers? How has not having an answer impacted your faith?

2. What do you think about the idea of being able to answer the questions that your non-Christian friends are asking? Does it excite you? Scare you?

3. Do you have spiritual conversations with your friends very often about questions that they are asking?

If you do, tell us about it. If not, why do you think that is? What do you think God would want you to do about it?

4. In 2 Cor. 10:3-5 we learned that we are in a spiritual battle. Where does that battle take place? Do you have any thoughts that you struggle with taking captive? What did you learn that could help you have victory? What steps will you take to