

Lots of Questions – **An Introduction to Christian Apologetics**

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some common questions about or arguments made against religion, theism, or Christianity?

2. Which ones are the hardest to address and why?

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson you'll learn:

1. Why we need apologetics.
2. What the Bible teaches about apologetics.
3. The two different modes of apologetics.
4. The various methods of Christian apologetics.
5. The tools of apologetics.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF PEOPLE WITH QUESTIONS

Every time a student comes into my office, it's for one of two reasons. And usually, it comes down to one reason anyway. The first reason students come to me is they have a question to ask of me. The second reason is they have something they want to share with me or just say "hi," but usually after sitting and chatting for a while, that is followed up by a question anyway!

What are the different kinds of questions asked by different kinds of people?

1. There's the intellectual side of people who are always bothered by issues that most people don't understand or care.
2. There's the emotional side of people who don't really care about issues, until something (bad) happens to them. (trial, hypocritical believers, betrayal by Christians)
3. There's the practical side of people who don't care about issues until someone they're witnessing to asks the tough questions.
4. There's the curious side of people who don't really think about questions until they're hanging out with Enoch talking to one of the people above and having an interesting conversation!

What is Apologetics?

Apologetics is the reasoned defense of the Christian faith. It's answering questions posed against Christianity. It's answering, better than any other religion or system, questions posed about life in general.

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

While there are numerous passages touching on the reasoned defense of the Christian faith, we'll look briefly at three.

1. Acts 17:1-4. Paul reasoned and persuaded nonbelievers.
2. Peter 3:15. All believers should be ready to give a defense.
3. Romans 8:15-16. The Spirit testifies internally to us.

TWO MODES OF APOLOGETICS

1. Negative or defensive apologetics
2. Positive or offensive apologetics

THE ISSUES SURROUNDING TYPES OF APOLOGETICS

1. ***The effects of sin on our minds.*** Can fallen man still rely on his reason to find God?
2. ***The extent and limits of reason.*** Same question as #1, but from the other direction. Can we find God and Jesus Christ through reason? What are the limits of reason?
3. ***The Christian experience vs. a non-Christian experience.*** Does a non-Christian have enough in common with a Christian to talk meaningfully and productively about faith and Jesus Christ? What if a Christian knows Jesus is real because "Jesus lives in my heart"?
4. ***The relationship between faith and reason.*** This is basically the question from the first 3 above. Can you argue someone into Christianity? Can you be a Christian without any reasonable or intellectual support?
5. ***How do you know Christianity to be true? How do you show Christianity to be true?*** Should the answers to the two above questions be the same or different?

MAIN METHODS OF APOLOGETICS

1. ***Classical*** (two step dance) – Use reason to argue for the existence of God. Then use evidence to argue for the reliability of the Bible and miracles.
2. ***Evidential*** (one step dance) – Use any argument or piece of evidence to show Christianity is true.
3. ***Cumulative*** (it's the Christian dance that makes the most sense) – You can't prove Christianity to be true, but if you take all the evidence and arguments we have, Christianity makes the most sense.
4. ***Presuppositional*** (assume the Christian dance is) – Sin has affected the minds of all people, especially unsaved. The best way to show Christianity is true is to just presuppose (or assume) Christianity is the truth. Then show how it's not only the most sensible way, but the only sensible way.
5. ***Reformed Epistemological*** (who needs to dance?) – Sometimes you don't need an argument or piece of evidence to believe something. In fact, there are many things we believe without evidence as part of the foundation for all our beliefs.

TOOLS OF APOLOGETICS

1. A clear thinking mind
2. Understanding of logic
3. Humility
4. Love

The 4 Laws of Logic

1. The law of non-contradiction – Two contradictory statements cannot both be true at the same time in the same way. (It cannot be A and \sim A)
2. The law of identity. (A is A)
3. The law of excluded middle. A statement about reality (or a *proposition*) is either true or not true. (It is either A or \sim A)
4. The law of rational inference.

Absolute Truth vs. Relative Truth

Is truth absolute? Is truth true for all people in all places in all times?

Is truth relative? Can something be “true for you but not for me”?

CONCLUSION

What it all comes down to is this: *why* do I believe in this stuff? Why do I believe in anything at all? Will my faith ever be challenged or tested to a point when I will need this stuff? Will I ever have a conversation with a believer about why we believe? Will I ever have a conversation with a nonbeliever about why I believe and they should also?

Does my faith ever need help? Can I help remove hindrances to help others believe? If I have not had to engage in defending the faith, then ask myself “Why not?”

NEXT WEEK: A CRASH COURSE ON LOGIC

Homework:

1. Consider the statements
 “It’s true because it’s in the Bible.”
 And “If it’s in the Bible, it must be true.”
Are they the same? Are you sure?
2. Google “Laminin” and “Louie Giglio” for YouTube. What do you think of his point about laminin? What kind of argument is he making, and how persuasive is it? Try to imagine yourself in that place, not just watching on YouTube.