



WHAT IS APOLOGETICS?

SESSION 1

Theme: God expects us to prepare to defend and share our faith.

I. _____ Apologetics

"Apologetics" comes from the Greek word *apologia*, meaning to "_____."

Christian apologetics is a defense of the _____.

II. Apologetics _____ (1 Pet. 3:14, 15, 20–25)

A. Share _____ (1 Pet. 3:14, 15)

Jesus is to be the most important Person in our lives. We should take our _____ from Christ rather than living in response to _____ from unbelievers.

B. Share _____ (2 Pet. 3:15)

Peter commands believers to be _____ to give a _____, or to speak to the validity of Christianity.

C. Share _____ (2 Pet. 3:15)

When we _____ to our hope in the face of persecution or ridicule, we present a _____ for the validity of Christianity.

D. Share _____ and _____ (2 Pet. 3:15, 20–25)

Believers should also be meek toward _____ and respectful toward _____.

III. _____ for Apologetics

A. Provide _____ of Christianity

Apologetics sets forth _____ for Christianity.

B. Defend _____ against Christianity

Apologetics dispels arguments that Christianity is _____.

C. Refute _____ for opposing beliefs

Apologetics _____ "evidence" for opposing beliefs as unreasonable.

D. _____ unbelievers to trust Christ

The Holy Spirit can use the _____ shared during an apologetic defense to _____ the unbeliever to God.



Time with God

Read each passage and answer the questions to spend personal time with God.

MONDAY

Read 1 Peter 3:14.

The threat of suffering keeps some believers from standing up for their faith. When have you feared to stand up for your faith?

Joy is part of the blessing that comes from suffering for your faith. How can joy come from suffering? That doesn't seem normal.

THURSDAY

Read 1 Peter 3:15.

What have you done to prepare to give an answer for your hope in Christ?

How might you become better prepared?

TUESDAY

Read 1 Peter 3:14.

Why should you not be afraid to share your faith? Who is helping you?

When you feel the urge to refrain from defending your faith, pray. God will respond to your request for help.

FRIDAY

Read 1 Peter 3:15.

How do you think an unbeliever would respond to your defense of your faith if you were aggressive and rude in your presentation?

Is the unbeliever your enemy? Explain.

WEDNESDAY

Read 1 Peter 3:15.

To sanctify Christ in your heart means to make Him more important than anyone else in your life. Have you done that? How do you know?

What might you do to give Christ first place in your heart?

SATURDAY

Read 2 Peter 3:20–25.

Jesus demonstrated both a meek response to others and a respect for God the Father. What did His meekness and respect accomplish for you?

Thank God for Jesus' work on your behalf. Commit to being meek toward others and respectful toward God as you defend your faith.

Tough Questions Answered



Why is apologetics necessary?



God is all-powerful and sovereign over all. And God the Holy Spirit works in the world to convict unbelievers of their sin, their need to meet God's righteous standard, and God's coming judgment on the lost (John 16:7–11). So why is apologetics necessary? Does the Holy Spirit really need our help? Does He view apologetics as an insult to His role in the world?

First, God commands us to be ready to give an answer for the hope of Christ in us (1 Peter 3:15). We practice apologetics in obedience to God's command. Every believer should know at least the basics on how to defend his or her faith.

Second, God the Holy Spirit chooses to use an apologetic approach in the lives of some believers as a means of helping them understand the truth and come to the place of accepting it. Many believers have come to faith through searching for answers for their doubts about God, Jesus, the Bible, and Christianity in general. In fact, some of the world's greatest apologists came to Christ while seeking to disprove the Bible's truth claims. They examined the evidence in defense of Christianity and came under conviction of their sin and need for a Savior.

Third, believers need answers to their questions about God, the Bible, and the Christian life. Apologetics is an essential part of growing in our faith. Doubts and misunderstandings can lead a believer to become troubled spiritually and perhaps even disinterested in spiritual growth. Disillusioned, they stop going to church and become ineffective witnesses in the world. Paul wrote to Timothy to preach the Word in order to convince his church members of its truth. Paul warned of a time when people would turn away from sound doctrine and follow teachers who taught only what they wanted to hear (2 Tim. 4:1–5). A strong apologetic builds church members who are confident in their faith and active in ministry.

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A Defense to the Death



Peter's command in 1 Peter 3:15 challenges all believers to be apologists for God, Christ, and the Bible. So how did Peter do? Did he practice what he preached?

Tradition says that Peter was crucified upside down in Rome. The Bible doesn't confirm or deny that report, but God's Word does tell us something about his death. Jesus predicted Peter would die as a martyr for defending the Christian faith. In John 21:18 and 19, Jesus said one day Peter would no longer have the freedom to move about as he pleased. Instead, his arms would be spread and secured, perhaps on a cross. Peter would then be carried where he didn't want to go, meaning to his death.

John followed Jesus' prophesy of Peter's death with the note that Peter would glorify God by his martyrdom. Peter magnified God by being willing to give up his life in defense of his faith. Defending our faith, even to the death, glorifies God. Make your life all about God's glory.



Memory Verse Review



Memory Verse—1 Peter 3:15

Paul calls on believers to give Christ a place of lordship in their hearts. They must recognize Christ as their leader. Christ will use God's Word to guide them in preparing to give an answer for the hope that is in them. That presupposes their hope is obvious to others. Preparing to give answers means learning to defend their faith. Believers should deliver such answers with meekness toward others and respect toward God.

1. How might you make your hope in Christ evident to unbelievers?
2. What questions have they asked you about your hope in Christ?
3. What do you need to do to prepare to answer their questions?

Additional Memory Verses—Romans 15:13; Jude 3, 4.

Measuring Growth



The word "apologetics" comes from a Greek word meaning to "speak away." The word describes the answer a defendant gives in response to an accusation. Guidelines for apologetics include focusing on sharing Christ, sharing truth with confidence, sharing one's hope in Christ, and sharing truth with meekness toward others and respect toward God. Apologetics includes making a positive case for Christianity, refuting opposing beliefs, and persuading unbelievers to trust Christ. God expects all believers to practice apologetics as part of their daily lives.

Look for the following indicators that you understand the importance of apologetics.

1. I am aware of my need to be ready to defend my faith.
2. I have committed myself to preparing to defend my faith.
3. I have identified people who are skeptical of my faith and need to hear a reasoned defense of it.