



# THE REASON FOR HOPE

## HOW DO WE GIVE AN ANSWER?

### GOAL

This first workshop is focused on the “how” of giving an answer for our faith, also called apologetics. The goal of this workshop is to establish a Biblical method of apologetics by considering what the Bible has to say about the topic.

### WHAT IS APOLOGETICS?

Today we'll be studying 1 Peter 3:15 which is often cited as the biblical proof text for what is called 'apologetics'. In fact, the word 'apologetics' comes from a Greek word used in that verse, *apologia*, which simply means “a reasoned defence.”

#### 1 PETER 3:15

“but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”

### APOLOGETICS IS FOR EVERYONE!

There is a tendency to make apologetics out to be more complicated than it actually is.

“It has led many to believe, and some to argue, that the most difficult issues of philosophical theology or theological philosophy should be engaged only by those philosophically trained, those whose minds have been able to meld together the best of theology with the best of philosophy.”

(K. Scott Oliphint, *Revelation and Reason*, pg 2)

1 Peter was written to people who weren't “professional apologists and philosophers” - they were ordinary people like you and me, fishermen, tradesmen, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, young and old. They were simply, Christians who loved Jesus and wanted others to be saved through faith in him also. Therefore, this verse, written to them is calling them to do what any one of us, any Christian can do!

### A SIMPLE DEFINITION

“In its simplest form, apologetics is knowing what we believe and why we believe it, and being able to communicate that to others effectively (cf. Titus 1:9; 1 Pet. 3:15; Jude 1-4).”

(Dr. Voddie Baucham Jr)

In other words, apologetics is about being:

1. **Biblical** - we answer objections with the power of the Word.
2. **Simple** - if we can't remember it, we won't use it.
3. **Conversational** - we must be able to share truth in a winsome manner.



**TAKE AWAY:** Apologetics must be biblical, simple, and conversational. It is knowing what you believe, why you believe it, and being able to communicate it effectively.

We're going to look at 3 main biblical points about apologetics from 1 Peter 3:15.

## 1. THE **FOUNDATION OF APOLOGETICS** **HONOURING CHRIST**

"...but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy..." (1 Peter 3:15a)

What does honouring Christ look like? There are 3 marks that define what honouring Christ looks like - and they are all related and co-dependent.

### **A. A HOLY LIFE:** LIVING as a Christian.

Peter is saying this, the starting point of apologetics is to set Christ as Lord over the way we think, feel and act - over all of our lives and resources.

In the Greek, this verse literally says that we are to "sanctify/set apart Christ in our hearts". This verb "to sanctify or make holy or set apart" (ἀγιάσατε) is actually the **ONLY** verbal imperative or command in this verse! It's the main verb. So often we are quick to stress 'giving a defence' - however, in the original text, that phrase is not the primary emphasis. Peter's main focus/command in this verse is to 'sanctify Christ' in our hearts. But what does this mean?

It means to set Christ apart as the ultimate uncontested Lord and put Him in the highest place of honour and control for our lives. Beyond this, 'heart' in this verse refers to the center of all our affections, emotions, intellect, desires, actions - ALL of our being and who we are - it refers to the totality of the essence of who you are.

*Peter is saying this, the starting point of apologetics - giving a defence for the hope in us - is to set Christ as Lord over the way we think, feel and act... over all of our lives and resources. It is to live totally and completely under the Lordship of our Great God and King, Jesus Christ!*

### **How many times have you thought of that when you considered apologetics?**

Yet that is exactly where Peter tells us to start! Before giving a response, your life must be totally devoted to Christ.



### **HEART CHECK:**

How does my lifestyle, generosity, finances, purity, relationships, affections, passions, hobbies, interests, integrity in business, truthfulness of speech, what I watch and listen to, where I go, how I spend my time reflect the fact that I honour Christ in all of my life?

Giving a reason for the hope in us is too often narrowly defined as only arguments, debates and logical discourse. While it does not exclude those things, it is not only those things. It involves ALL of our life.



**TAKE AWAY:** You cannot give a reason for the hope in you if that hope is not working its way out of you!

## **B. FEARLESSNESS:** SUFFERING as a Christian.

Look at the context:

"Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. ***Have no fear of them***, nor be troubled..." (1 Peter 3:13-14)

We see from the context of this verse that apologetics is not a means by which we make people like or accept us.

In verse 15, Peter is quoting Isaiah 8:13: "But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honour as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" in regards to Christ. By connecting Christ with Yahweh from this verse in Isaiah 8, he is calling for our sole, unflinching allegiance to be to Christ as the LORD. Verse 15 calls us to faithfulness to Christ in spite of opposition.

**Apologetics, instead of being a tool that alleviates the tension between us and the world, often times it \_\_\_\_\_ that tension. A life lived fully sold out to Christ is the \_\_\_\_\_ for our fearless witness.**

Apologetics is ultimately an expression of our willingness to suffer rather than compromise...  
Apologetics says to a watching world, "We have been captured by something so profound that we are willing not only to be considered fools, but to suffer as such."  
(Dr. Voddie Baucham Jr)

Believe it or not, a life lived fully sold out to Christ is the basis for our fearless witness - that is exactly what Peter just said in verses 13 & 14! This is what gives us confidence to not fear nor be troubled even if we should suffer "for righteousness' sake."



**TAKE AWAY:** When we fear men, we are looking for our approval from others rather than God. His is the only "Well done, good and faithful servant" we should desire to hear.

## **C. A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW:** THINKING as a Christian.

Lastly, honouring Christ means believing His Word. We cannot honour Christ without conforming our beliefs to His Word.

In short, this means we must operate from a Christian Worldview. Simply defined, this is a worldview based on what the Bible teaches about ultimate reality: our world and how to live in it. To put it another way, having a Christian Worldview simply means to think like a Christian.

**We cannot honour Christ without conforming our beliefs to His Word.**

## **WHAT IS A WORLDVIEW?**

Worldviews are like belly buttons - everyone has one, but few people seldom take a lot of time thinking about them or looking at them. Think of a worldview like a pair of glasses or lenses through which we see and interpret reality. Or you can think of it like the Big Picture Story about reality - that's our worldview - and it helps us figure out how and where we fit into that big story.

"Embedded in all grand stories are fundamental beliefs about the world, answers to questions of ultimate significance: What is life all about? Who are we? What kind of world do we live in? What's wrong with the world? How can it be fixed? The answers to these great questions are not philosophical concepts; rather, they are beliefs, often not even articulated, embedded firmly in the particular grand story that we share..."

(Michael Goheen, *Living at the Crossroads*, pg 24-25)

C.S. Lewis famously said,

"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

This is fundamentally how a Christian worldview functions. It gives light by which we see everything else.

A worldview is like **lenses** that we see through, like the big **story** we find ourselves in, or like the **light** by which we see things.

## **PRESUPPOSITIONS**

Worldviews are made up of the basic truths (or 'axioms') about reality we all assume without proving them. They can also be called our 'presuppositions'. These include beliefs in things such as logic, morality, being and reason. For example, how can you prove laws of logic without using logic? How can you prove that reason is the way to find the truth without using reason? You can't even prove existence without presupposing that you exist (at least not without turning into a crazy solipsist). These assumed truths are what we call "presuppositions" and we all have them. They inform us about the world we live in, and they act like the lenses through which we see the world and interpret facts.

Every system must have some unproven assumptions, a starting point not antecedently [previously] established, with which reasoning begins and according to which it proceeds to conclusion.

(Dr. Greg Bahnsen)

Our **presuppositions** are the reason some people will look at the same 'facts' about the world and end up at different conclusions. There is no such thing as an uninterpreted fact.

**For example:**

One scientist looks at the archeological and biological evidence and concludes that the world must have been created by God, and another scientist looks at the same evidence and concludes that it must be the result of blind chance and evolution. Why? Both scientists were just as smart and had the same evidence available to them. The difference is the presuppositions or worldview that they used to interpret those 'facts'.

**This shows us, there is no such thing as an uninterpreted fact.**



**TAKE AWAY:** Until we challenge an unbeliever's worldview (their presuppositions) they will keep looking at 'facts' and coming to wrong conclusions.



## **MYTH #1: THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A NEUTRAL PERSON**

We are told by unbelievers that we must abandon our Christian beliefs so that we can approach the facts 'neutrally'. However, this is not so, for even an atheist has a worldview and set of beliefs they accept by faith and use to interpret these facts. The idea that there is some sort of neutral common ground with no presuppositions on which we can meet an unbeliever is a myth.

Our Lord Jesus tells us that we are either for Christ or against him; no one is unbiased (Matt. 12:30). Therefore, there is no such thing as a neutral person when it comes to God. The worldview of person shows this - they don't interpret the facts correctly to come at a right conclusion because they're biased - they are not neutral, and nor should we be!

"It should be recognized that the claim to be, or the attempt to be, completely objective and value-free in deciding an issue of truth is ridiculous; the very fact that evidence is collected, arranged, and evaluated by each man's own mind and in response to his personality and past experience indicates the strong element of subjectivity that is involved in settling issues of truth."

(Dr. Greg Bahnsen, Presuppositional Apologetics, pg 88-89)

We must believe what the Bible tells us about the state of the sinner apart from God's saving grace - He is a slave to sin, a rebellious enemy against God (cf. John 8:34; Rom. 5:10 & 6:6-20; Eph. 2:3; Col. 1:21). The Bible's description of unbelievers are not 'neutral' descriptions.

"The unbeliever's professed interpretation of things is not our common ground, for we do not share that interpretation. Rather, the actual state of affairs—man as God's image, the suppressed knowledge of God, the world as totally revelatory of God—constitutes a point of contact for the apologist."

(Dr. Greg Bahnsen, Presuppositional Apologetics, pg 19)

Our 'common ground' with unbelievers is not some fictional neutral ground. It is rather, that like it or not, knowingly or unknowingly, they live in God's world - regardless of their rebellion against Him. Therefore, His truth will always stand sure - "let God be true and every man a liar!" (Rom. 3:4)



## **MYTH #2: EVERYONE IS WITHOUT EXCUSE** (See Romans 1:18-32)

How does this knowledge that no one is neutral help us? Let's look at what Romans 1:18-32 clearly says about the unbeliever.

Paul opens off (v.18) by stating that all ungodly and unrighteous people suppress the truth due to their unrighteousness. This implies that they already have the truth in order to suppress it - in fact, this is what the next two verses say. God himself has made it plain to everyone (v.19). In fact, so plain that they are without an excuse (v.20). This phrase "without an excuse" is actually the word "anapologetous" (ἀναπολογήτους). Literally it means, "without an apologetic". Unbelievers are without a reasoned defence. God's revelation of Himself to people in His creation is such that all people can be held to give an account and judged guilty for not acknowledging and worshipping Him (v.32).

This verse (and many others) clearly tells us that the primary reason for unbelief is not a lack of information, it is not intellectual. It is a moral problem: they suppress the truth they already have because of their unrighteousness.

### **Romans 1:18-20 says that:**

- The unbeliever \_\_\_\_\_ the truth in unrighteousness (v.18). This implies that they have the truth in order to be able to suppress it.
- God himself has made it \_\_\_\_\_ to everyone (v.19) - so plain that they are without an excuse (v.20).

This is the point at which you all should have breathed a big sigh of relief! Why? Because this verse just told you - "you don't need to be a scholar knowing everything about every religion, scientific fact and philosophy in order to be a good apologist." If people's primary problem is their unrighteousness that causes them to suppress the truth - what is the solution for our unrighteousness? It is the Gospel! It's Jesus Christ, the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.



The primary reason for unbelief is not a intellectual problem. It is an **unrighteousness** problem. This is why the Gospel is the solution to the problem!

So, any apologetic that does not first deal with this truth, that all people know God truly will "tend to be too concessive to the unbeliever and aim simply to show Christianity as probably true. It does not leave the unbeliever "without excuse," but suggests implicitly that he has the prerogative and ability to stand in judgment over God's own word." (Dr. Greg Bahnsen)

It is not God who is on trial with man as judge to decide whether He exists or not. We cannot come to some neutral ground and lay out the facts for the unbeliever in their rebellion to then decide if God exists or not. The unbeliever already knows this at a deep level because God has written His Law (Rom. 2:14-15) and set eternity in our hearts (Eccl. 3:11)! It's the other way around - God is Judge, and the unbeliever is on trial to give a reason (which there is none) as to why he does not believe and submit to God.

If we understand this, we see that even the excuses that unbelievers give for their unbelief betray the fact that they truly know God but suppress that truth because they are unwilling to submit to Him. Their God-given conscience, the Law written on their hearts, always testifies to the truth they know and suppress. This is why men invent all sorts of far-out theories and false religions rather than coming to the True God - because if they do, they know they will have to renounce their autonomy and bow their knee to Him.

The prodigal son can never forget the Father's voice. It is the albatross forever about his neck.  
(Cornelius Van Til)

So then, what does apologetics look like in light of this truth? Do we simply disbelieve, dismiss or deny someone who says they don't believe in the Christian God and yell "YES YOU DO!" louder and louder until they submit? Are we reduced to an exchange of: 'I don't believe in God' and replying 'yes, you do' - 'no, I don't' - 'yes, you do' - ad infinitum? No. Rather, this text gives us our goal in apologetics, and our goal in using argumentation and evidences. It is to expose this suppression in unrighteousness.

You see, until the unbeliever sees their unrighteousness, they will never want the cure for that unrighteousness - which is Christ. If they don't know they're terminally ill, they won't love the medicine. And this is the ultimate problem. Jesus said in John 3:19, "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil."

"What the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies."  
(Thomas Cranmer)



**TAKE AWAY:** Apologetics seeks to expose the unbeliever's suppression of the truth in unrighteousness in order to give them the solution for their unrighteousness - the Gospel.

## 2. THE CONTENT OF APOLOGETICS

### PREPARED TO GIVE THE REASON FOR HOPE

"...always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you..." (1 Peter 3:15b)

What does this look like then? How do we use apologetics to expose suppression of truth and unrighteousness?

The content of our apologetic consists of these 3 things:

#### A. BEING PREPARED: BIBLE STUDY & PRAYER

It should not be lost on us that the text calls us to 'always be ready to give a defence.' This clearly implies preparation.

We don't wait until we're in a situation where we must give an answer and then we try to scramble together some sort of answer in our own strength and cleverness. Rather, this passage is talking about living your life in such a way that you are 'always prepared.'

##### I. BIBLE STUDY

This may sound daunting to many of you. Does this mean that I have to read stacks of books as thick as law textbooks and watch apologetics lectures and get a PhD in world religions? Well, no. You may do those things if you'd like to, and they may be very beneficial - however, when we understand what God's word says to us, we realize that "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence." (2 Peter 1:3)

God has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness through knowledge of **Christ** (2 Peter 1:3), in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (Col. 2:3).

This is speaking about knowledge of Christ. Colossians 2:3 says that in Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." So if we want all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, we need to know Christ more. And we learn about Christ through His Word. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." Every good work includes giving a reasoned defence for our hope. God's Word is sufficient to equip us for the task to which it calls us. So, the way that we prepare ourselves is by studying God's word.

**Do you think that God would call you to a task that He has not also given you what you need to prepare you?**

Therefore, what does preparing yourself for the task of apologetics look like primarily? Well, it looks a lot like being a Christian who is intentional about growing in their faith! It's about learning to love and know Jesus more through His Word! This is a lot more doable for the working businessman trying to



manage home and work life, or the busy mom trying to manage all her responsibilities and caring for children.

Notice also that it implies effort - sorry, you're going to have to study and apply yourself to understanding God's word. However, this is what we should already be doing! This just shows us that all of our growth in knowing Christ actually serves as 'being prepared to give an answer for the hope in us' because we are getting to know that hope more deeply - to love that hope, express that hope, and live out that hope more passionately in our lives. It is learning how to apply God's word to our own hearts first, to answer our own areas of unbelief and doubt.

All of our \_\_\_\_\_ in knowing Christ actually serves as 'being prepared to give an answer for the hope in us' because it is learning how to apply God's word to our own hearts first, to answer our own areas of unbelief and doubt.



### HEART CHECK:

When you face problems in your own life or doubts how do you use God's word to respond to it? Can you? Do you have the word hidden in your heart - memorized - so that when situations come up it's ready? Or are you so unfamiliar with your bible that you couldn't even find Nahum if your life depended on it? If not - how then do you expect to be able to apply God's word to an unbelievers questions and doubts?

### **How is it that studying God's word prepares us to answer questions from atheists, muslims, mormons, etc?**

Because whether they believe it or not, they still live in God's world, and His word is objectively true - not just true for me, or true for you - but ultimately true and therefore answers all people with the truth necessary for them to come to saving knowledge of the Gospel. We'll come back to some examples of this at the end.

### **Why is it that we act schizophrenic when we approach apologetics to unbelievers?**

In the church, we believe wholeheartedly that God's Word is the solution for all of our most pressing problems - it pierces through the our souls, showing us our sin and need for God - it is alive and active, empowered by the very Spirit of God! Yet somehow, when we leave the church, we act as if there is something else, some other source of power to convert the soul and battle unbelief. Is anything more powerful than God's Word? It's God's word that created all things! God's word is not confined. It is powerful, inside and outside of the walls of the church (cf. Heb. 4:12; Rom. 10:17; Isa. 55:11; 2 Tim. 2:9).

**Remember:** "apologetics is knowing what we believe and why we believe it, and being able to communicate that to others effectively."

## II. PRAYER

Perhaps you still feel unfit for the task of defending the faith, or you're like, 'man, I struggle with even reading the Bible daily or understanding what I just read and you expect me to defend it to unbelievers?' Good. Welcome to the club.

We sometimes look to 'giants of the faith' like the apostle Paul giving a defense of the faith before the Greek philosophers at Mars Hill in Acts 17 and think, "I could never do that!" Yet, the 'great apostle' Paul himself when considering the Gospel he is tasked to proclaim asks, "who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. 2:16b) He answers his own question in 2 Cor. 3:4-6 that **our sufficiency is from God**. It is the Spirit that makes us sufficient for the task - for we are but 'jars of clay' - having no power of ourselves, but having the treasure of the Gospel inside of us to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. (2 Cor. 4:7)

We are not **sufficient** for the task (2 Cor. 2:16b). Our sufficiency comes from God (2 Cor. 3:4-6) because it is the **Spirit** that makes us sufficient for the task.

The Gospel is foolishness to the natural man (1 Cor. 1:18-23) and he CANNOT understand it (1 Cor. 2:14) apart from a supernatural work of the Spirit to bring the sinner to life.

God chooses the weak and foolish things of the world to shame the strong and wise of this world. (v.26-28) Why - because since the Fall, that's all He's got to work with! We're all fallen and weak. **But aren't you glad that God's requirement for using you is not that you be a scholar or strong in yourself - but rather that you just be a weak thing submitting yourself to be an instrument in His mighty hands?** This is so that no one can boast in themselves (v.29), but rather our boast is in the Lord! (v.31)

You must understand that the Gospel will always be foolishness and a stumbling block to those who do not believe (1 Cor. 1:23) but to us who believe, "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (v.24) **This wisdom of the Gospel is not discerned or accepted by the natural man** - meaning the person apart from the work of the Spirit illuminating His truth in their life - it is 'folly' to him, and he CANNOT understand it because it is spiritually discerned. (v.14) What we are desiring to see done in an unbeliever's life is nothing short of a supernatural work of God. **Jesus Christ didn't come to make bad men good, he came to make dead men live.**

We must feel the weight of this - that the natural man is not only unwilling (due to his rebellion) but also unable to accept the truth (because these truths are spiritually discerned). This truth must drive us to our knees to cry out to the only One who makes the spiritually dead come alive!

If you want to be a good apologist - you've got to be a prayer warrior!  
No apologist is greater than his/her \_\_\_\_\_ life.



### HEART CHECK:

The way to prepare yourself for apologetics - the task of defending the faith - is to study your Bible and pray. Yep. That's it. Basic Christianity - **but are we doing it?**

**Apologetics is essentially about doing the basics and doing them well.**

Before we continue on, I don't want it to be lost on you... just in case you're still thinking this apologetics thing is so complicated... I just told you that the way to prepare yourself for apologetics - the task of defending the faith - is to study your Bible and pray. Yep. That's it.

**Basic Christianity - but are we doing it?**



**TAKE AWAY:** The way you prepare for being a good apologist is to be a good Christian who is intentional about their spiritual growth and is desperate in prayer.

## B. PEOPLE ASKING YOU: YOUR LIFE'S WITNESS

1 Peter 3:15 assumes that people are asking you for reasons for your hope. This implies that you are living your Christian faith out in such a way that it stands out and people are compelled to ask - why are you different?



### HEART CHECK:

When was the last time that someone observed my walk with Christ and it so baffled them that they just had to ask me about the hope in me?

(For further study on this point, see Ephesians 5:1-21)

Too often, many ambitious and eager young men see apologetics as just another excuse to go pick an argument with people to prove them wrong. That's not apologetics - that's arrogance! Wrong A-word. Our text clearly implies that Peter expects that people should be asking you about the hope in you. Therefore, while there is a place for offering a critique of false beliefs when we see them, apologetics is primarily responsive in nature - not argumentative and offensive.

(For further study on this point, see Ephesians 5:1-2 & 7-11 & 15-16)

When we consider the questions that people ask us about our faith, there are four major challenges we must face today. Christianity is:

#### 4 TYPES OF QUESTIONS TO THE FAITH

1. **WEIRD** - What you believe is strange or odd
2. **UNTRUE** - What you believe is false
3. **IRRELEVANT** - What you believe is not important or applicable to my life
4. **HARMFUL** - What you believe is evil or hurtful

In a large part, apologetics is the application of God's Word to these 4 challenges. How we respond to people challenging our beliefs will depend on what is the challenge they bring. For example, an unbeliever may think that Christian beliefs are harmful, in which case we may respond by living out a life of sacrificial deeds of love and service towards them because of what we believe - showing them in our deeds and our words that Christianity is actually not harmful, but rather God's design for true joy and human flourishing. Or they may think its weird - in which case we bring them into contact with Christians who show them what real love looks like and help explain why we do some things that are strange to them.



**TAKE AWAY:** Ask yourself: **WHO** is asking me (is my life bearing witness?) and **WHAT** are they asking me (weird, untrue, irrelevant, harmful)?

## C. THE HOPE IN YOU: THE GOSPEL

Why is it that the Bible is the foundation for our apologetic? Because what we are called to give a defence for is "the hope that is in you." What is that hope? It is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27) - the hope is the Gospel! Not your testimony. Not clever arguments, proofs and scientific data. This brings us back to what we noted at the beginning - that apologetics is not an end in itself. Our goal should not be just to give people some good arguments for a god, or some probability that god exists, or a bunch of facts and evidences and thereby make them a deist believing in some vague notion of a higher power and yet still lost in their sins. As we saw in Romans 1, the problem is not a lack of evidence - all creation screams that God exists (Psalm 19:1-3)!

If our problem were a lack of information, God would have sent a \_\_\_\_\_.  
But our problem is a lack of righteousness, that's why He sent a \_\_\_\_\_.

The Gospel is the only solution to our problem of unrighteousness - it alone is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).

John Frame puts it this way:

“apologetics is also the application of Scripture to unbelief. The unregenerate heart desires a god that it can handle with a revelation that it finds palatable. The Christian defender is not free to water down the faith to suit the tastes of rebels. The unbeliever may be without excuse with regard to God’s existence and moral requirements (Rom. 1:18-32), but the apologist is likewise without excuse with regard to the truth that he or she must uphold and defend.” (John Frame)

Conversion is not just simply ‘accepting Jesus into your heart’ - it is actually an overthrowing of a person’s entire worldview, expelling any other thing that exalts itself over the One True God and putting Christ at His rightful place as the uncontested Lord of their life. The Gospel is not just ‘come have a relationship with Jesus’, for everyone already has a relationship with him, either as Judge or Saviour. The Gospel is a call to repent and believe in Christ’s work to change that relationship from enemy to friend.

As expository apologists, we point people to Christ and call them to repent and believe. We are constantly showing people how foolish and dangerous it is to trust in anything but Christ. At bottom, the expository apologist is an evangelist.

Evangelism is more than merely convincing people of the rightness of Christianity or getting them to walk an aisle and pray a prayer. Evangelism is about making disciples— calling people away from the kingdom of man and into the kingdom of God. This kind of transfer of allegiance is at the heart of expository apologetics.

(Voddie Baucham)

Cornelius Van Til put it this way:

“The [Christian apologist] does not tone down his message in order that it may find acceptance with the natural man. He does not say that his message is less certainly true because of its non-acceptance by the natural man... [Apologetics] is valuable to the precise extent that it presses the truth upon the attention of the natural man. The natural man must be blasted out of his hideouts, his caves, his last lurking places.”

(Cornelius Van Til, “Christian Apologetics,” 4.2)

The sinner still in rebellion against his Creator wants to suppress the truth because it exposes them to the judgement of God which they desperately want to avoid. So they will hide under every possible objection and seek cover under lies which they have exchanged the truth for. We may use evidences, arguments and proofs, but at every point the sinner will try to avoid the truth or simply divert to another topic. What we do then is call the sinner to account for the truth we’ve already presented and show them their suppression of that truth - their unwillingness to deal with the truth and not dismiss it or distract from it.

## **DIAGNOSIS & CURE**

We use evidences, arguments and scripture to diagnose the sinner and call them to account for the truth they suppress in unrighteousness (their fatal illness) so that they see their need for Christ (the only cure) and embrace Him.



**TAKE AWAY:** Apologetics is essentially exposing their suppression so that they are put face to face with the core of their problem - unrighteousness - and the only solution - Christ.

Only then can the Gospel be seen as truly beautiful. Only when you've diagnosed this fatal disease of unrighteousness before a Holy God can the cure of the Gospel be loved and accepted.

### **OBJECTION: You cannot use the Bible to prove the Bible**

I know this objection is probably on the minds of many of you now. Isn't it circular reasoning to use the Bible to prove the Bible? However, what many don't realize is that we all use circular reasoning at some point. There's a difference between vicious circularity (it's true just because it's true) and virtuous circularity (appealing to an ultimate standard).

"Every philosophy must use its own standards in proving its conclusions; otherwise, it is simply inconsistent. Those who believe that human reason is the ultimate authority (rationalists) must presuppose the authority of reason in their arguments for rationalism. Those who believe in the ultimacy of sense-experience must presuppose it in arguing for their philosophy (empiricism). And skepticism must be skeptical of their own skepticism (a fact that is, of course, the Achilles heel of skepticism). The point is that when one is arguing for an ultimate criterion, whether Scripture, the Qur'an, human reason, sensation, or whatever, one must use criteria compatible with that conclusion. If that is circularity, then everybody is guilty of circularity."  
(John Frame)

This goes back to what we talked about earlier that there's no such thing as a neutral person. Don't buy into the myth. They have their standards which they presuppose - don't put down yours and try to fight from their ground which has no foundation. If the Bible is the ultimate standard - then by very definition, an ultimate standard cannot point to something else to prove its legitimacy because then that other thing would be more ultimate than it! Every true standard rests on the Bible.



### **WARNING: DON'T PUT DOWN YOUR SWORD!**

The Enemy knows that it is the weapon given to us and he does all that he can to get us to lay it down and not know how to use it.

**Take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17) when you go to battle!**

Perhaps it is best to illustrate this with an example. I got this story from Voddie Baucham's book *Expository Apologetics*.

Imagine that two people meet on the field of battle, and the one is wielding an incredibly powerful and sharp sword in his hand, and the other comes empty handed. But the second person calls out to the one with the sword, "I don't believe in swords." Now, the person with the sword could do one of two things. He could put his sword down and explain to his opponent the science of metallurgy, he could show him how sharp the blade is, he could point to the history of warfare and how swords are deadly, he could examine the evidences for his swordsmith who made the sword... Or, he could just strike his opponent with the sword. Either he'll start believing in swords really quickly, or he shall perish.



We believe that “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10: 17). As a result, like a warrior whose opponent does not believe in the existence of his sword, we refuse to lay down our arms and argue, opting instead to hack away, knowing that eventually, he will believe . . . or he will perish!

(Dr. Voddie Baucham Jr., Expository Apologetics, loc. 895)



**TAKE AWAY:** Take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17) when you go to battle!

### 3. THE CONDUCT OF APOLOGETICS GENTLENESS, RESPECT & GOOD CONDUCT

“...yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame.” (1 Peter 3:15c-16)

Have you ever wondered why Peter goes to such trouble to tell us to have such an attitude and approach to apologetics? Look at the words he uses - gentleness, respect, good conscience and behaviour - he’s going to a lot of pains to tell us to be really careful about how we do apologetics.

#### GENTLY DEMOLISHING FOUNDATIONS

It is because ultimately, apologetics aims at the foundations of every opposing worldview - and when the foundations are taken out, it all comes crashing down. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says that, “We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.” **This can be a very traumatic experience for an unbeliever to have everything that they’ve (up to this point) put their hopes in come crashing down.** This is why we must do it with gentleness and respect. Apologetics involves the demolishing of an entire foundation upon which a person has built their lives - we must do so gently, lovingly and respectfully!

Therefore, we must give an answer with gentleness and respect.

Also, when a person’s foundation has been destroyed, we cannot just leave them free falling with nothing under them. When we wield the sword of the Spirit and cut them, we cannot leave them bleeding out. This is why it is essential that our apologetic aim is the Gospel. Yes, we are destroying foundations, but only so that they would replace their faulty foundation with the only true, strong foundation - Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11).

This is why it is essential that our apologetic aim is the **GOSPEL**.  
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## WAIT ON GOD'S VINDICATION

Note also Peter emphasizes doing apologetics having a good conscience and good behaviour. This circles back to our first point about the cornerstone of apologetics - living a holy life sold out to Christ. A life that displays the total Lordship of Christ shows the fruits of the Spirit to a watching and even critical world. But notice what the text says, that even if they slander and revile you - they will be put to shame. Put to shame by who? It does not say that we put them to shame... the passive voice of this verb shows that it is God who ultimately vindicates us.

He alone is the final **Judge** of all.



**TAKE AWAY:** In apologetics, we honour Christ in our words, thinking and behaviour by showing gentleness and respect for people - entrusting God with ultimate judgement.

## PRACTICAL TIPS (NEXT PAGE)

I'd like to circle back to the point we touched on about being prepared to help give you some practical examples and tips - because it's probably not very helpful for me to just yell at you 'study your Bible!'. How can you go about doing that?

Does it just mean that I sit down for hours by myself in a room and try to figure everything out about the Bible alone? No. By God's grace He has provided us with numerous ways to study and understand God's word. I'll point us to two practical examples here and leave you with some recommended resources at the end of the workshop to check out later.

We'll start off with some free, readily available, historic, solid resources then move on to some other resources.

## THEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Ultimately, there is no way around it - we must put effort into growing in our understanding of the Bible and our faith. Sometimes we cannot put all of the pieces together or connect all the dots. Or sometimes we don't know how a particular Biblical truth applies to our life. This is where good theology books will come in handy.

**While nothing replaces our own personal study of God's Word, humility also requires us to recognize that we don't have all the answers and must learn from others.**

One of the ways we do that is by reading books. And today there are various options available to us - not just physical books, but also digital e-Books which are cheaper a lot of the time, and even audiobooks that you can listen to on the go and fit into your commutes! There's really no excuse for us these days, we live in a time of unprecedented access to God's word and tools to help us understand it.

Sometimes I wonder if we can get away with being held responsible for not taking advantage of such a wealth of blessing! Will our social media feeds and Netflix subscriptions stand against us as witnesses to how much time we wasted on things that don't satisfy or feed our souls or equip us for what God has called us to?

**If you're struggling with where to start - check out our church website's [Recommended Resources page](#) for a list of great books on various topics.** Or you can always ask the church leaders for recommendations or look at online book recommendations from sites like Challies, TGC, and Ligonier.

If you're struggling with how to read and understand the Bible, check out our [Read Scripture Workshop](#) on the website or some of the books on the "How to read the Bible" section of the resource page.



**TAKE AWAY:** As you grow personally in your faith - in applying God's word to your own life - you'll grow in your ability to show how it's applicable in the lives of others.

Because there is no temptation which befalls us that is not common to all people that God hasn't already provided a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13).



# THE REASON FOR HOPE

## SOME PRACTICAL TIPS & FREE RESOURCES

By God's grace He has provided us with numerous ways to study and understand God's word. We'll start off with some free, readily available, historic, solid resources then some further recommendations to get you started.

### CATECHISMS

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#### *What is a catechism? (Questions & Answers)*

It is simply a series of short questions about faith, and short responses which are based in the Bible that are easy to memorize. Because catechisms are basically learning how to answer questions with the Word of God, they are perfect for preparing us to 'be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in us.'

Here are 2 recommended Catechisms:

- [The New City Catechism](#) - This is a modern catechism that is based off some of the best historic catechisms. It is available online for free, and also has an app, with devotionals, memorization helps, even kids songs!
- [The Westminster Catechism](#) - Available in 2 versions, the Shorter and Longer Catechism which include the scriptural 'proof texts'. It is available for free online and in book forms.

### CREEDS

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#### *What is a Creed? (That's wrong, this is right)*

A Creed is a precise statement affirming Biblical truth against heresy. Creeds connect us to the historic Christian faith. Creeds are useful to us when we want concise (short) and precise (accurate) definitions of core Christian doctrines (beliefs).

Here are 3 recommended Creeds:

- [The Apostle's Creed](#) (c.120-250 AD) - This is one of the oldest Creeds and it concisely defines the essence of the Christian faith. We even sing it today!
- [The Nicene Creed](#) (325-381 AD) - This Creed was in response to Arian heresy and clearly defines the doctrine of the deity of Christ.
- [Chalcedonian Creed](#) (451 AD) - This Creed is in response to the heresy of Nestorianism and focuses on Christology and the two natures of Christ known as the hypostatic union.

### CONFESSIONS

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#### *What is a Confession? (This we believe)*

Confessions vary in length and detail, but they outline what and why we believe. The advantage with confessions is that they are a detailed and systematic explanation of what and why we believe what we do with many scripture references.

Here are 2 recommended Confessions:

- [Hope Church Doctrinal Statement](#) ([hopechurchtw.ca/our-beliefs](http://hopechurchtw.ca/our-beliefs)) - this is our 'confession'. If this is your home church, you should know what we believe and why.
- [The Second London Baptist Confession of Faith](#) (1689) - This is a historic reformed baptist confession of faith. It is structured systematically and touches on every major category of the faith with scriptural texts to study explanations.



# THE REASON FOR HOPE

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

While nothing replaces our own personal study of God's Word, humility also requires us to recognize that we don't have all the answers and must learn from others. One of the ways we do that is by reading books.

Today there are various options available to us - not just physical books, but also digital e-Books which are often cheaper, and even audiobooks that you can listen to 'on-the-go' and fit into your commutes. There's really no excuse for us these days, we live in a time of unprecedented access to God's word and tools to help us understand it.

### RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

If you're struggling with where to start - check out our church website's [Recommended Resources Page](https://hopechurchtw.ca/resources) (hopechurchtw.ca/resources) for a list of great books on various topics. Or you can always ask the church leaders for recommendations.

Also look at online book recommendations from sites like [Challies](#), [TGC](#), and [Ligonier](#).

If you're struggling with how to read and understand the Bible, check out our [Read Scripture Workshop](#) on our learning archive (hopechurchtw.ca/learn).



**TAKE AWAY:** As you grow personally in your faith - in applying God's word to your own life - you'll grow in your ability to show how it's applicable in the lives of others.

### APOLOGETICS RESOURCES

#### INTRODUCTORY

- **Expository Apologetics** by Voddie Baucham Jr.
- **Know Why You Believe** by K. Scott Oliphint
- **A Guide to Christianity for Skeptics and Seekers** by John Frame
- **The Atheist Who Didn't Exist** by Andy Bannister

#### ADVANCED

- **Presuppositional Apologetics: Stated and Defended** by Greg Bahnsen
- **Apologetics: A Justification of Christian Belief** by John Frame
- **Covenantal Apologetics** by K. Scott Oliphint





# THE REASON FOR HOPE

## BONUS CONTENT

We said previously that every true axiom that we use to defend our beliefs ultimately rests on the God's Word because ultimately, we all live in His world which He established by His own standards. Therefore, when engaging with an unbeliever, we don't need to put aside our Christian worldview.

### BY WHAT STANDARD?

But what does this look like for someone who rejects the Bible? Well - one simple way to think about it is by asking the question "By what standard?" - what is the unbeliever's standard for believing in these things? In this section, I'll briefly provide a two examples of how we can use a Christian worldview to perform an internal critique of an opposing worldview and show the truth of Christianity from the impossibility of the contrary - ie - it is impossible for Christianity not to be true.

### I. Logic & Reason

Many atheists assert that logic and reason are the ultimate standard for truth. However, if we presuppose their worldview - that the universe is the product of random chance and just molecules in motion, then how can we account for laws of logic and reason? How does logic and reason come out of chaos?

Not only that, why are laws of logic and reason universally applicable? In a chance universe that develops from unguided processes, why should we expect things to make sense and have a reason? It's all chance and chaos! If all we are is matter in motion, why do laws of logic matter? All the atheist can do is assert that laws of logic exist - they just are! But they cannot give the reason why - talk about blind faith!

What then is the foundation upon which the atheist can use laws of logic and his own reason? Logic and reason are products of a mind and intellect, not the product of inanimate things or forces. No one ever considered the logic or reason of a rock or of motion. Logic and reason implies the Personal God behind the way things work. Without God, we have no foundation for reason and logic.

When we use logic and reason, we are simply thinking God's thoughts after Him - because we are made in His image (Gen. 1:27). He is a God of order (1 Cor. 14:33, 40; Rom. 8:28; Gen. 1). Laws of logic do not change because they flow out of God's unchanging character (Mal. 3:6; Jam. 1:17) and wisdom (Jam. 1:5; Prov. 2:6; Psa. 111:10; Isa. 40:28).

The atheist who asserts that there is no God, asserts by the same words that he holds the universe in his mind; he asserts that no fact, past, present, future, near, or far, escapes his



attention, that no power, however great, can baffle or deceive him. In rejecting God, he claims omniscience and omnipotence. In other words an atheist is one who claims that he himself is God.

(Gordon H. Clark, A Christian Philosophy of Education, 38)

This is the same rebellion that we saw in the beginning in the Garden of Eden, the same rebellion of Satan - all sin is wanting to dispose God as God and put ourselves upon the throne.

## **II. Knowledge & Truth**

What about knowledge itself? Have you ever thought - why can we even know things? Why is there absolute truth? If the Christian God does not exist, then knowledge and truth itself is impossible. How?

In a chance universe, why should we even expect that blind, unguided forces would produce a knowable universe that we have the ability to perceive? Why trust your senses of sight, touch and hearing if they are only the product of blind forces? What trust is there in something made by chaos? Why would an impersonal universe even develop senses in the first place for living creatures? If we are only the product of blind forces, we cannot even trust our senses by which we perceive the world. And if there is no God, why does truth matter? Where do we get the 'oughtness' of truth?

Some unbelievers think that all truth is relative. However, this statement is self-defeating. If all truth is relative, does that mean that this statement is also relative and not absolutely true? We can easily see the absurdity of this claim - but this is what you are left with when you abandon God: absurdity.

All of our knowledge is analogical - which simply means we know things by analogy. I know that this is a bowl and not a cup because it is similar to a small basin in that it holds liquid, but I know it is not a cup because it doesn't have a handle. So, it is like something, and not like something else... it's an analogical construction - a comparison - that tells me what this is and how I know it and distinguish it from something else. All knowledge is like this. Just think of what you do when you try to describe something to someone else who doesn't know what it is - what do you do? You use analogy. You use a comparison. You say, well it's sort of like this, but not like this.

This means that the foundation for knowledge is analogy - unity and diversity, things have similarity yet difference. If this universe is knowable, that means that this basis for knowability must also pre-exist the universe. Only in the Christian God - who is Triune (unity in diversity) - do we have the eternal basis for knowledge. Because God is unified (One Being of God) but also diverse (eternally existing as three Persons) we have in God the foundation for all knowledge which is based in analogy.

All of our knowledge flows out of God - it is revelational - God reveals His knowledge to us. We trust our senses because He is a good God whose design is good and not deceptive. The atheist, and even other religions do not have this basis for knowledge and truth. Only the Triune God of the Bible provides that.