



# THE REASON FOR HOPE

## HOW DO WE GIVE AN ANSWER?

This first workshop is focused on the “how” of giving an answer for our faith, also called *apologetics*.

### WHAT IS APOLOGETICS?

The term apologetics means a \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 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”

### 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. \_\_\_\_\_ - we answer objections with the power of the Word.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ - if we can't remember it, we won't use it.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ - 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)

There are 3 marks of honouring Christ:

**A. A HOLY LIFE:** \_\_\_\_\_ 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.



## 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?



**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: \_\_\_\_\_ 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)

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.

We say 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."



**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: \_\_\_\_\_ as a Christian.

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

### WHAT IS A WORLDVIEW?

A worldview is like \_\_\_\_\_ that we see through, like the big \_\_\_\_\_ we find ourselves in, or like the \_\_\_\_\_ by which we see things.

### PRESUPPOSITIONS

"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 \_\_\_\_\_ 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.



**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**

The Bible's descriptions of unbelievers are not 'neutral' descriptions. The unbeliever is a willing slave to sin, and a rebellious enemy against God (cf. John 8:34; Rom. 5:10 & 6:6-20; Eph. 2:3; Col. 1:21). Jesus tells us that we are either for him or against him; no one is unbiased (Matt. 12:30) - everyone has a worldview and presuppositions. Everyone has an ultimate allegiance: either God or self.



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

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).

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

God has written His Law (Rom. 2:14-15) and set eternity in their hearts (Eccl. 3:11). This is why men invent 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.



**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)

The content of our apologetic consists of these 3 things:

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

#### **I. BIBLE STUDY**

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

If we want all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, we need to know Christ through studying His Word. Scripture is able to make us “equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Every good work includes giving an answer for the hope in us.

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.

## II. PRAYER

We are not \_\_\_\_\_ for the task (2 Cor. 2:16b). Our sufficiency comes from God (2 Cor. 3:4-6) because is the \_\_\_\_\_ 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.

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.



**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)

#### 4 TYPES OF QUESTIONS TO THE FAITH

1. \_\_\_\_\_ - What you believe is strange or odd
2. \_\_\_\_\_ - What you believe is false
3. \_\_\_\_\_ - What you believe is not important or applicable to my life
4. \_\_\_\_\_ - What you believe is evil or hurtful



**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

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!

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).

#### 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.



#### **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!**



### 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

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.**

Therefore, we must give an answer with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

This is why it is essential that our apologetic aim is the \_\_\_\_\_.  
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).

#### WAIT ON GOD'S VINDICATION

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 \_\_\_\_\_ 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.



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## 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.



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## 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

There are many great resources on apologetics out there. Here are a few that we think would be very helpful to you. The introductory ones are very easy to pick up and read, and they offer a great introduction and overview of apologetics. The advanced ones go a little deeper into the study of apologetics.

#### 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