



Introduction to Christian Apologetics June 1st and 8th

Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope,
always be ready to explain it.

1 Peter 3:15 (NLT)



Opening Remarks

- Opening Prayer
- Need your help:
 - What do you want to learn?
 - Help Tom; be his “iron” (Proverbs 27:17)
 - Bit of testimony
- Discuss the goal for this class:
 - ... to lead the honest truth-seeker to an openness where the Gospel is shared.
- All Bible verses are from the New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.
- Contact me at: tatwood234@aol.com
- Each class will start at 1830 (6:30 PM) and end by 2000 (8:00 PM)
- Class dates:
 - 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29 June
 - 6, 13, 20 and 27 July,
 - 3 and 10 August



Opening Remarks

- Why study Christian Apologetics?
 - To help equip and encourage Christians so they might engage honest truth-seekers, under the right circumstances, with gentleness, respect, and with the ultimate goal of introducing the Gospel of Jesus
 - Apologetics is a branch of Christian Theology that tries to answer the question: What rational arguments can be given for the Christian faith?
 - The goal is to lead the honest truth-seeker to an openness where the Gospel is shared.

So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.

Romans 10:17

- Four purposes for Apologetics.
 - Show unbelievers the truth of the Christian Faith,
 - Help believers confirm that Faith
 - To reveal,
 - and explore the connections/disconnections between the Christian worldview and other worldviews



Course Outline

- Review
- What do you want to see/discuss/address?
 - What topics aren't listed that you would like to see?
- What causes you concern?
 - What topics are listed that may differ with our beliefs?



June 1st and 8th

- Introduction
 - Discuss what Apologetics is/is not
 - Why is Apologetics needed?
 - Discuss the Biblical foundations for Apologetics
 - Brief history of Apologetics
 - Discuss Positive vs Negative Apologetics
 - Discuss the main forms of Apologetics
 - Testimonial
 - Presuppositional vice Traditional Apologetics
 - Psychological
 - Philosophical
 - Historical
 - Scientific
 - Comparative Religious Apologetics
 - Cultural



June 1st and 8th

- What Apologetics is?
 - It is not: “apologizing”
 - Apologetics comes from the Greek: apologia
 - From Merriam-Webster: *a defense; especially of one's opinions, position, or actions*
 - From *Reasonable Faith*: Apologetics is that branch of Christian Theology which seeks to provide a rational justification for the truth claims of the Christian faith.



June 1st and 8th

- What Apologetics is not?
 - Not a substitute for the Holy Spirit in bringing people to Christ.
 - If you can get an honest truth-seeker to walk away from your conversations, and that person is saying things like: “Hmm, maybe I should look at Christianity again”, I would submit that you have been successful.
 - If that person continues to engage you in dialogue, and the Holy Spirit is prompting you, then you can share the Gospel.
 - You have built a level of trust that will then allow you to share the Gospel.



June 1st and 8th

- Why is Apologetics needed?
- Shaping culture, i.e. how a Christian worldview affects the “world”
 - The Gospel is never heard in isolation, but against the backdrop of the cultural milieu in which one lives
 - The “Enlightened” era, modernism, whatever you want to call it, has led to a rejection of the concept of “objective” or “absolute” truth

An excerpt from the New York Times – 18 April 2017

...”For decades, critical social scientists and humanists have chipped away at the idea of truth. We’ve deconstructed facts, insisted that knowledge is situated and denied the existence of objectivity. The bedrock claim of critical philosophy, going back to Kant, is simple: We can never have certain knowledge about the world in its entirety. Claiming to know the truth is therefore a kind of assertion of power. These ideas animate the work of influential thinkers like Nietzsche, Foucault and Derrida, and they’ve become axiomatic for many scholars in literary studies, cultural anthropology and sociology. From these premises, philosophers and theorists have derived a number of related insights. One is that facts are socially constructed. People who produce facts — scientists, reporters, witnesses — do so from a particular social position (maybe they’re white, male and live in America) that influences how they perceive, interpret and judge the world. They rely on non-neutral methods (microscopes, cameras, eyeballs) and use non-neutral symbols (words, numbers, images) to communicate facts to people who receive, interpret and deploy them from their own social positions. Call it what you want: relativism, constructivism, deconstruction, postmodernism, critique.

The idea is the same: Truth is not found, but made, and making truth means exercising power.”....

As Christians our worldview states that “objective” or “absolute” truth exists.
Absolute truth is not dependent on time, place or situation.



June 1st and 8th

- Why is Apologetics needed?
- Strengthening believers
 - Anybody dealt with a kid who goes off to college and comes home and starts repeating the atheistic stuff they have heard at college?
 - Our kids need to be trained for combat with the forces of the Enemy and they are sorely underarmed with rubber swords and plastic armor.
 - 2002 Barna study shows that, by a 3-1 margin, adults say that truth is relative to the person and their situation.
 - Direct disconnect with the concept of absolute truth



June 1st and 8th

- Why is Apologetics needed?
- Evangelizing unbelievers:
 - But wait, nobody comes to Christ through argument!
 - If that is true, then how do we explain Acts 17:2-3,17; 19:8; 28:23-24?
 - From Merriam-Webster: Argument – a coherent series of reasons, statements, or facts intended to support or establish a point of view.
 - If an unbeliever is unwilling to hear the Gospel the 1st time you meet them, maybe an apologetics approach, e.g. the cosmological argument (Acts 14:15-17; Psalm 19:1-6), will get them to listen to the Good News when other approaches have failed



June 1st and 8th

- Biblical Basis for Apologetics:

Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. 1 Peter 3:15

Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people. Jude 1:3

He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong. Titus 1:9

Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone. Colossians 4:6



June 1st and 8th

- Apologetics History
 - Early Church
 - Peter practiced “Testimonial” Apologetics - Acts 2:32; Acts 3:15; 5:30-32; 10:39-41
 - John explained why he wrote his Gospel – John 20:30-31
 - Not only did Luke write his Gospel, he wrote the book of Acts and he proclaimed the Resurrection of Jesus – Acts 1:1-3
 - Paul was a stout defender of the faith – Acts 9:22; 17:1-3; 17:16-34 (Mars Hill); 18:4; 19:8-10
 - 2nd – 13th Century
 - Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch
 - Martyred, developed the first defense against Gnosticism and Docetism (believed that Christ was a spirit only)
 - Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons
 - Refuted Gnosticism
 - Wrote “Proof of the Apostolic Preaching”, demonstrating that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament teachings
 - Augustine
 - Argued that evil is a “privation” (lack of good that should be there)
 - Prolific author defending the faith



June 1st and 8th

- Apologetics History
 - 2nd – 13th Century (continued)
 - Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury
 - Developed the “ontological” argument for God
 - Thomas Aquinas
 - Developed the “traditional” arguments for God
 - 5 ways to prove God’s existence
 - 14th – 20th Century
 - William of Ockham
 - “Ockham’s Razor”, used by many contemporary scientists to dispose of the supernatural explanation
 - Martin Luthur
 - Salvation is: By Grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone
 - Blaise Pascal
 - The “Wager”



June 1st and 8th

- Apologetics History
 - Modern Era – Mid 20th Century to present
 - C.S. Lewis
 - Credited with a revival of Christian Apologetics
 - Francis Schaeffer
 - Developed a presentation of the Gospel that managed to reach the disaffected “intellectual”



June 1st and 8th

- Positive vs Negative Apologetics
 - Negative – Refutation of systems that oppose Christianity
 - Positive – Defense of the essential truths

- Takeaway:
 - Now what you believe and why
 - Worldview



June 1st and 8th

- General types of Apologetics
 - Testimonial
 - Transformed Lives
 - Divine Intervention
 - Presuppositional vice Traditional Apologetics
 - Presuppositional Apologetics is more of a defensive mode, i.e. presupposes the truth of Christianity in a refutation of heretical arguments. Downside: Rejects the idea that unaided human reason could arrive at truths about God, i.e. the basis for traditional Apologetics. Best exemplified by Gordon Clark and Cornelius Van Til
 - Psychological
 - The absurdity of life without God
 - Man's thirst for God
 - Man's greatness and wretchedness



June 1st and 8th

- General types of Apologetics, contd
 - Philosophical
 - Failure of Atheism
 - Failure of non-theistic worldviews
 - Ontological Argument
 - Argue for God based on the idea of God
 - Teleological Argument
 - Intelligent Design
 - Moral Argument
 - Cosmological Argument
 - Problem of Evil
 - Miracles
 - Moral Relativism



June 1st and 8th

- General types of Apologetics, contd
 - Historical
 - Old Testament Reliability
 - New Testament Reliability
 - Did Jesus rise from the dead?
 - Is the Bible God's Word
 - Scientific
 - The argument for Creation
 - The argument against evolution
 - Comparative Religious Apologetics
 - World Religions
 - Cults that purport to be Christian
 - Cultural
 - Impact of religion on Government
 - The coming death of Western Civilization



Homework

- What references, especially videos and podcasts, have you seen on this subject?
 - Would you be prepared to give a 5 – 10 minute discussion on something that really spoke to you?
- Think back on your walk with Christ. Would you be willing to share something in the testimonial Apologetics realm that speaks to how God is working in your life? How could that experience be used in an Apologetics encounter?



Videos

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77RafeobscY>
Why Christian Apologetics?
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhORbHDBFYU>
Christian Apologetics: What is Christian Apologetics?
- Check out the “Theology, Philosophy and Science” channel on YouTube