

1 Apology or Apologia?

- Module: Introduction
- Lesson 2

2 1 Peter 3:15

- But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense (Gk: apologia) to everyone who asks you to give an account (ESV: reason) (Gk: logos) for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence. (NAS)

3 A two-fold defense of our hope:

- The character of our lives (the lordship of Christ in our lives) — demonstrates the authenticity of our hope.
- The substance of our reasons (our logos)— demonstrates the reasonableness of our hope.

4 When we are asked for an account (apologia)...

- apologia: A legal term, as a defense in a court of law.
 - Illus: A child, when told to apologize, may instead offer a justification (an apologia) for his action.
- Note: the extent of Peter's injunction
 - When are we to be ready?
 - Always.
 - For whom should we be ready?
 - Everyone who asks us.

5 We are to give a reason (logos)...

- The Greek "logos" is a broad term with a variety of shades of meaning depending on the context.
- Here (1 Pet. 3:15) it has the sense of a banking-type term, an accounting or an audit.
 - Note: Peter is asserting that there are reasons to believe.
- Providing a reason (a logos) does not imply embarrassment or shame regarding our hope.
- When someone asks us for a reason—
 - We should give them the benefit of the doubt that they really would like to know our reasons.
 - Some, however, will eventually show themselves to be scoffers.

6 Objections to Doing Apologetics

- "Apologetics leads to arguments and arrogance."
- "No one ever came to Christ because of an argument."
- "People are saved by faith, not by reasoning or knowledge."
- Perhaps some are simply unwilling to do the challenging work entailed in apologetics.
 - It is hard work to become equipped to answer the questions many people are asking today.

- It is hard work to dialogue with people in a way that reflects Christ's love for them, respects their questions, and gives substantive answers.

7 Reasons for Doing Apologetics

- Because God has commanded it.
- It values people and their questions.
 - "Jo and I recently had diner with a friend of ours who wanted to talk with us about faith. She shared with us that as a young child she asked her churchgoing mother, 'Did Jesus really rise from the dead?' Her mom responded, 'Nicole, don't be difficult!' That may have been the last real question that Nicole ever asked about God, and today Nicole is one of the most intellectually accomplished atheists we know."
 - Vince Vitale, in Jesus Among Secular Gods-
- It strengthens believers in their faith and willingness to engage others regarding their faith.

8 Reasons for Doing Apologetics

- It removes obstacles to faith among unbelievers.
 - Anthony Flew (1923-2010)
British Philosopher and one of 20th century's most influential atheists.
 - In 2007, in his book There is a God, Flew wrote that evidence from science had led him to conclude there was a God.
 - He also wrote that in his view the Christian view of God was the most credible.
- Lee Strobel (b. 1952)
Former legal editor for the Chicago Tribune and staunch atheist, after his wife's conversion to Christianity began a lengthy historical investigation to disprove her faith.
 - "I'll admit it: I was ambushed by the amount and quality of the evidence that Jesus is the unique Son of God... I shook my head in amazement. I had seen defendants carted off to the death chamber on much less convincing proof! The cumulative facts and data pointed unmistakably towards a conclusion that I wasn't entirely comfortable in reaching." -The Case for Christ-

9 Reasons for Doing Apologetics

- To shape the culture.

- “False ideas are the greatest obstacle to the reception of the Gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation to be controlled by ideas which prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion.”

—J. Gresham Machen (1881–1937), a leading evangelical theologian.—

(from address to the opening session of Princeton Theological Seminary, Sept. 20, 1912)

- Christians have profoundly shaped the culture in the past.
- We can still shape the culture if—
 - We remain true to the historic faith.
 - We remain intellectually engaged with the culture.

10 Encouraging Developments in Recent Scholarship

- A strong resurgence of belief in theism in the field of philosophy.
- Rejection by historians of postmodern approaches to history.
- Resurgence of historical apologetics, especially re: Jesus and the Gospels.
 - Jewish scholars arguing forcefully for the historicity of Jesus and refuting claims that he was a myth..
 - Historians of the first century era are increasingly convinced Jesus used Christological titles to refer to himself, discounting earlier claims that those titles were added to the Gospels by later Christians.
 - A new era of resurrection scholarship among scholars.
- Developments in science from the microbiological level to the cosmic level which point to theism. (ILLUS: Anthony Flew)

11 Are faith and reason at odds?

- Faith and reason are friends, not adversaries. (More on this in our upcoming lessons on epistemology.)
- Faith is a fundamental element in relating to God.
- God created our minds, as part of the Imago Dei, to reason.
 - Our minds, our reasoning capacities, like the rest of us, were impacted by the fall.
 - Yet, like the rest of the Imago Dei, our reasoning is “effaced but not erased.”
 - Jesus includes our minds (our cognitive capacities) in that which must wholly devoted in love to God: “And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’” (Matt. 22:37)

12 Reasoning Throughout Scripture

- God appeals to reason.
 - “Come, let us reason together. (Isa. 1:18)

- “The prophetic word made more sure...” (2 Pet. 1:19)
- Jesus repeatedly employed reasoning.
 - From the Scripture (Jn. 8:17)
 - From nature (Matt. 6:26 ff.)
- Paul used reasoning. (Acts 17:17; 22-31)
 - In the synagogue from the Law
 - In the marketplace with the Gentiles: from natural revelation, from their own pagan authors, and from facts of history (resurrection)

13 **The Limits of Apologetics**

- Apologetics is only one part of our evangelistic task.
- The necessity of faith:
 - Without faith it is impossible to please God.
 - Man is justified by faith.
 - Faith is placing one’s confidence in the content of the Gospel message.
- Faith is, in the final product, a moral choice. (Though it must have an intellectual foundation.)

14 **Next Week:**

- The Spiritual Life of the Apologist