

# Defending Your Faith

**Presenter:** David D. Ireland, Ph.D.

## The Foundation of Apologetics

### 1.0 What is apologetics?

1.1 The word *apologetics* comes from the Greek word *apologia*, which means *to make a reasoned defense; a verbal defense*. Apologetics is largely broken into two parts.

A) **Part 1:** It presents objective reasons and evidence in a logical, systematic manner in defense of the Christian faith.

B) **Part 2:** The reasoned defense is communicated in ways that outsiders/unbelievers /non-adherents of that faith can understand what is being shared because of the logic and logos [Greek word for *word*] used.

**1 Peter 3:15** (*English Standard Version*)—“But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a *defense* [apologia] to anyone who asks you for a *reason* [logos] for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.” (Italics mine.)

1.2 *Conversational apologetics* is a phrase that takes to heart Peter’s charge to the Church.

A) Settle matters in your heart regarding the Lordship of Christ.

1. Know to whom you belong, Jesus Christ—the Savior.

2. To honor Christ as holy means to worship Him from a place of submission and surrender. Christ has become *your* Lord.

B) A settled heart is better prepared to fully serve God and His agenda.

1. You’re willing to take the needed time to prepare a good defense.

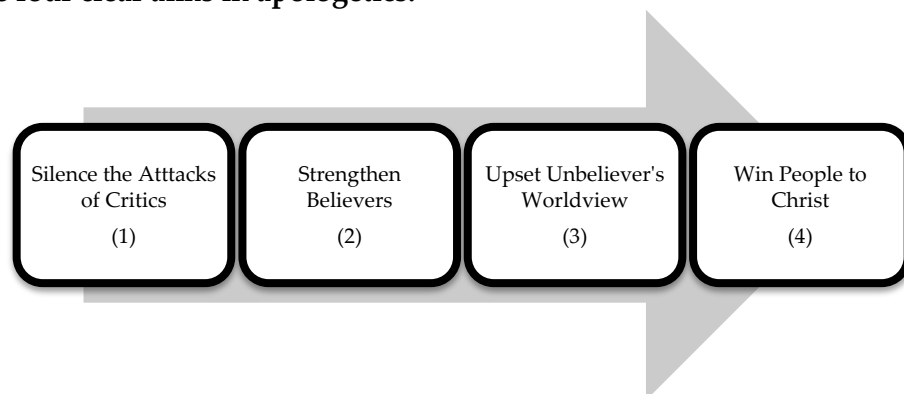
2. You recognize the need to prepare because your faith is so valuable you delight in helping others personally experience it.

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- C) The need to offer a defense of your faith happens organically in unplanned conversations.
1. Spiritual conversations are seldom scheduled. They pop up in the midst of normal human interaction.
  
  2. Peter urged you to *always be prepared* to offer a reasoned defense concerning the hope we have in Christ.
    - i. To be prepared you must be aware of the big philosophical and theological questions that most people ask.
  
    - ii. To be prepared you must have studied answers that are plausible and reasonable to rational people anywhere.
  
    - iii. To be prepared you must convey your reasonable answers in a way that connects with the questioner.
  
  3. Peter was teaching us that good preparation increases the probability of good performance.

## 2.0 There are four clear aims in apologetics.



2.1 **Aim #1:** Apologetics exist to silence the attacks of critics against the gospel.

**John Calvin** said the apologetic task is to “stop the mouths of the obstreperous.”

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**Psalm 11:3**—“When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

- A) The Christian faith is a reasoned faith that can be understood with the head.
    - 1. The faith can be presented with facts, historical data, and a sound moral and philosophical reasoning that follows a clear path of logic.
  
  - B) The Christian faith is presented in a credible manner intellectually in the public square.
    - 1. Paul openly reasoned with the philosophers in the marketplace of Athens by presenting his faith in the same logical arguments they were accustomed to (Acts 17:22-34).
- 2.2 **Aim #2:** To strengthen believers and deepen their walk with Jesus.
- A) The Christian faith is built on your having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
    - 1. Apologetics aims to deepen your belief and intellectual understanding of salvation, your faith, and the Author of your faith—Jesus.
  
  - B) The more you know Christ, the better you can serve Him.
    - 1. The more you know Him, the more you are able to receive from Him.
  
    - 2. The more you know Christ the more you are able to be encouraged by Him.
- 2.3 **Aim #3:** To upset the unbeliever’s worldview and cause them to rethink the Christian faith.
- A) Most unbelievers take pleasure in telling others what they don’t believe.
    - 1. They seldom offer an alternate view to tough questions such as the origin of humanity, etc.
  
    - 2. Putting a wedge in the wheels of their argument forces them to rethink their position or at least reconsider their line of reasoning.

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2.4 **Aim #4:** To win people to Christ by removing their intellectual stumbling blocks.

A) Since our faith is a reasoned faith it appeals to the mind—the head.

1. Through the use of apologetics you can show inconsistencies in the worldview of our secular culture and the errors in other worldviews.
  
2. The aim of apologetics is to break down the intellectual idols and faulty notions used to erect worldviews that purport to be true.

B) The Christian faith can also be understood with the **heart**.

1. John the Baptist appealed to the emotions of his hearers as he persuaded them to repent—turn from their sin to experience salvation.
  
2. Many of the thorny questions that apologetics addresses appeal to the heart.
  - i. The question of the existence of God amidst a society where so much evil exists is not merely an intellectual one, it is also an emotional one.
  
  - ii. Another tough question is the one that asks: How could a good God allow so much pain and suffering?
  
3. How do modern apologists tackle the question of pain and suffering using arguments that appeal to the head and the heart?

**[Watch brief video excerpts.]**