

† **1 Peter 3:15** – “... and always be ready to give a **defense** [or **answer** in some [translations](#)] to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.” Defense/Answer: is the Greek apologia, from which we get our word “apologetics,” meaning the careful, logical defense of the Christian faith showing its validity as the true saving gospel of God, our Creator and Savior. In effect Peter is admonishing believers to be always prepared to give an apologetic for the faith, especially when confronted by those who deny it and would destroy it if they could.

† **Jude 3** – “although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to **contend** for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.” Contend: Should be “earnestly contend.” The Greek, eponizomai, refers to athletes intensely agonizing in the grueling training for a coming contest. Thus Jude graphically stresses the urgency of defending the faith. The defense of the gospel is no indifferent matter to be left to a few specialists, but one to which all believers should be trained and committed.

† **Philippians 1:7** – “...whether I am in chains or **defending** and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me.” Defending: A legal term referring to a formal defense as in a courtroom. Many modern evangelicals think the gospel does not need to be defended — just preached. Paul and Timothy are saying different here.

☆ “I suspect that most of the individuals who have religious faith are content with blind faith. They feel no obligation to understand what they believe. They may even wish not to have their beliefs disturbed by thought. But if God in whom they believe created them with intellectual and rational powers that impose upon them the duty to try to understand the creed of their religion. Not to do so is to verge on superstition” (Morimer J. Adler, “A Philosopher’s Religious Faith,” in, Kelly James Clark, ed., [Philosophers Who Believe: The Spiritual Journeys of 11 Leading Thinkers](#) [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993], 207)

1) Apologetics helps with correct belief (truth) and in this regard is very important:

Believers may not fully comprehend or may have genuine misunderstandings or even limited exposure to and about Christian truth, but there are doctrinal parameters outside of which a person cannot cross without suffering apostasy and divine judgment. Embracing a false Christ and/or a false’ gospel leads to dire consequences. Paul’s warning to the Galatia church concerning a different gospel dramatically underscores the importance of sound (biblical) doctrine: “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! (Gal. 1:8)

2) Christianity as a truth position, a worldview, necessitates an apologetic response:

Christian apologists must take the religions of the world seriously. The effective apologist will come to know other religions and their adherents with an insider's mastery. Only then can he or she graciously expose a given religion's flaws in light of essential Christian truth. Not an easy task for the apologist for sure, however, a well-done expose can have a powerful effect. This endeavor seems to be what Scripture calls for in terms of the apologetics enterprise. "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

3) Apologetics offers People, deservedly, the proper respect:

As creatures of God, all people bear the imago Dei and therefore have inherent dignity and moral worth. Every person consequently deserves respectful treatment regardless of race, sex, social class, political, or religious belief. Christians are called by God to guard the individual right of others to believe what they choose, whether their particular beliefs are wrong, absurd, or contrary to Christian truth. This regard basically amounts to respecting human personhood, volition, and individual moral responsibility. Christians should even tolerate the practices (religious and otherwise) of others, so long as those practices are legal, moral, and prudential. However, respecting another person's beliefs must not be misconstrued as approving those beliefs. Christians are responsible to use their powers of persuasion to convince others of truth, especially the ultimate truth of, Jesus Christ. While being socially tolerant, Christians must at the same time be intellectually intolerant of conflicting truth claims.

#s 1-3 are from: Kenneth Richard Samples, *Without a Doubt: Answering the 20 Toughest Faith Questions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 178-180.

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They offered no Bible quotes. No sharing of how 'God had worked in their lives. No appeal to my happiness or peace of mind. What, then? Philosophy. Ideas. Dialogue.

The upshot was that, right there in that noisy, neon-glittering casino coffee shop, I experienced a radical turnaround from my previous perspective on all things God-related. As yet I didn't know if the idea of God were true or false, but I discovered that "faith" wasn't anything like I thought it was. It could be based on Reason.

I swiftly discovered that Josh knew what he was talking about: whenever I challenged a point, he had solid information and clear reasoning to back up what he'd said. What's more, he respected my intellect by not letting me get away with vague generalizations or unchallenged assumptions. That was refreshing. It was, in fact, the same kind of give-and-take as in my fencing lessons: he knew what I was capable of, and so he wouldn't permit lazy thinking any more than he'd permit sloppy technique.

But also—again, just as in my fencing lessons—he challenged me exactly at the limits of my comfort zone, where I had enough to work with that I wasn't lost, yet was stretching myself past where I was really comfortable.

[...]

As we wrestled with these ideas, Josh answered my questions—not the questions that an evangelist might think I ought to have, but the ones I actually did have.

Though a lot of Christians probably haven't thought of it that way, talking about Jesus as Savior involves many assumptions—for instance, that you already believe in a Creator, not just an impersonal force but an actual Person, who is wholly good and who interacts with humanity. Miss one of those links, and the whole thing falls apart.

I needed to start at square one. For me, the term "God" was heavily loaded, so we used a safer term—the neutral, philosophical "First Cause"—and began with a basic question: can we even know, reasonably, that there is a First Cause of the universe? I'd always held to the belief that the universe just "happened." I knew that I couldn't back up that assertion, but I also thought that the religious take was simply to assert the opposite. I say no God; you say God; great, we're done.

>> Holly Ordway, *Not God's Type: A Rational Academic Finds Radical Faith* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2010), 45-46.

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Ravi Zacharias tells a story that is worth repeating, it is called "The Bell Tower":

☆ There's a story of a man who used to go to work at a factory and every day would stop outside a clockmaker's store to synchronize his watch with the clock outside. Seeing this routine, the clockmaker finally asked the gentleman, "Excuse me, sir, I see that every day you stop and adjust your watch with my clock. What kind of work do you do?" The man replied, "I'm embarrassed to tell you this, but, I keep the time at the factory nearby, and I have to ring the bell at four o'clock every afternoon when it is time for the people to go home. My watch doesn't work very well, so I synchronize it with your clock." The clockmaker sheepishly responded, "I've got bad news for you. My clock doesn't work very well either, so I synchronize it with the bell that I hear from the factory at 4:00 every afternoon." .... Even a clock that doesn't work may show you the right time twice a day...but it's not because it's keeping time. (Adapted from Ravi Zacharias, "Address to the United Nations' Prayer Breakfast.")

Apologetics is analogous to wearing a pair of glasses:

☆ The right eyeglasses can put the world into clearer focus, and the correct worldview can function in much the same way. When someone looks at the world from the perspective of the wrong worldview, the world won't make much sense to him. Or what he thinks makes sense will, in fact, be wrong in important respects. Putting on the right conceptual scheme, that is, viewing the world through the correct worldview, can have important repercussions for the rest of the person's understanding of events and ideas. (Ronald H. Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992], 17-18.)

Apologetics also helps define and articulate concepts (remember, it is a tenant [sub-set] of theology):

☆ Certain words can mean very different things to different people. For instance, if I say to an atheist, "I have faith in God," the atheist assumes I mean that my belief in God has nothing to do with evidence. But this isn't what I mean by faith at all. When I say that I have faith in God, I mean *that I place my trust in God based on what I know about him*. (William A. Dembski and Michael R. Licona, *Evidence for God: 50 Arguments for Faith from the Bible, History, Philosophy, and Science* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010], 38.)

#### **BOOKS:**

1. Unshakable Foundations: Contemporary Answers to Crucial Questions about the Christian Faith;
2. Is God Just a Human Invention? And Seventeen Other Questions Raised by the New Atheists;
3. Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels;
4. Holman QuickSource Guide to Understanding Creation (Holman Quicksources Guides);
5. Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions;
6. More Than A Carpenter

#### **OTHER VERSES:**

- *John 20:30-31;*
- *Acts 2:14-16 and v. 22-24;*
- *Acts 17:22-31;*
- *1 Corinthians 3:8-10*