

# You Better Apologize

## Defense

Christians should engage in apologetics. Some are confused when told they should be able to offer an apology for their faith. The reason for misunderstanding is obvious: “Apologetics” sounds like “apologize.” However, apologetics is not telling somebody you’re sorry that you’re a Christian! Apologetics comes from the Greek word, *apologia*, which means a defense. Apologetics is making a case for the truth of your faith.

## Is Apologetics Biblical?

Some people say that we shouldn’t bother with this because the Bible doesn’t talk about it. They say just preach the gospel. But wait! It is Biblical! There are commands and examples. We are commanded to be ready always: “*sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence*” (1Peter 3:15).

We have the example of Jesus to affirm the value of apologetics. Jesus appealed to miracles and to fulfilled prophecy to prove that His claims were true (Luke 24:25-27; John 14:11).

The apostles, in dealing with other Jews, used fulfilled prophecy, Jesus’ miracles, and especially Jesus’ resurrection, to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. Listen to Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost recorded in the second chapter of Acts. In verse 22, he appeals to Jesus’ miracles. In verses 25–31 he appeals to fulfilled prophecy. In verse 32 he appeals to Christ’s resurrection. Using these arguments, the apostles showed their fellow Jews that Christianity is true.

The apostles dealt with non-Jews, too. In dealing with them, one way they sought to show God was through His handiwork in nature (Acts 14:17). In Romans, Paul says that from nature all men can know that God exists (Romans 1:20). He also appealed to eyewitness accounts of Jesus’ resurrection to show that Christianity is true (1Corinthians 15:3-8).

Apologetics is very Biblical, and we must present our defense in a Biblical way. We can *defend* without being *defensive*. We can *argue* without being *argumentative*. Apologetics the Biblical way, involves “*speaking the truth in love*” (Ephesians 4:15).

## Is it Important?

Some people seem to think that even if apologetics is Biblical, it still is not very important. Don’t forget—Jesus practiced it, the apostles practiced it—it must be important! In fact, it’s vitally important that Christians be trained in apologetics. Why?

*We can help change the culture we are in.* Have you heard of anyone using the phrase, “culture war”? There is a struggle, throughout all ages of man between the culture of darkness and the culture of light. It is no different in America right now. People with a secular mind-set are intent on removing religion from public. New atheists—people like Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, and

Christopher Hitchens—are very aggressive. They want to destroy religious belief entirely. Belief in a greater being is still the norm, but belief in Jesus as the Christ has become politically incorrect.

We must remember that the gospel is never heard in isolation. It is always within the culture in which you've been raised. If Train ourselves to provide solid evidence for what we believe with good answers to unbelievers' questions and objections, and the perception of Christians will change. We must be seen as thoughtful people to be taken seriously rather than as emotional fanatics or buffoons. Arguments and evidence will help to create a culture in which Christian belief is a reasonable thing.

***We can strengthen other believers.*** Knowing *why* you believe as well as *what* you believe will make you more confident to speak with others about your faith. That is huge when you consider the need to teach and make disciples, bringing souls to Jesus to be washed clean in baptism by His blood (**Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16**).

Apologetics can also help you personally, too. It will help you to keep your faith in times of struggle. We all need something more substantial than just emotion. When you're going through hard times, apologetics can help you to remember that our faith is not based on emotions, but on facts and truth. You can hold on to it.

***We can win unbelievers.*** Not everyone will be convinced by evidence. Probably, only a minority of people we meet may actually even be interested in what truth really is. Then, even fewer of those will be willing to hear truth. Why bother with that minority of a minority with whom apologetics will be effective? Because every person is precious to God, a person for whom Christ died. It is not up to us to decide who will listen and who won't. It is our duty live and speak in such a way that others see how wonderful and reasonable it is to be a child of God.

## **It's Logical**

A lot of folks cringe when the word, *logic*, is mentioned. We ***must*** be logical in our presentation of our faith. This is the way that others see how much weight Christianity has. It is the only way for people to see what is more reasonable—belief in God, or belief in no God. After all, logic is an expression of the mind of God—it is based on the Word—*logic* is from the Greek *logos*, which is the same word John uses for the Christ (**John 1:1**). So long as you obey the rules of logic, they guarantee that if the steps of your argument are true, then the conclusion is true as well. We must use the truth of God's word in a logical way to show people the reasonable conclusion. This is what apologetics is. It is only logical that we apologize. If you are a Christian, do you?

[Many of the thoughts in this article are gleaned from, *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision* by William Lane Craig.]