

DEFENDING OUR HOPE: APOLOGETICS AND EVANGELISM (1)

DISCUSS WHILE WAITING TO BEGIN:

Consider the people with whom you talk about (or could talk about) life's bigger issues.
With them in mind...

- note which of the questions below you think would bother them most.
- rank the top three which you would appreciate thinking through.

Exclusivity

Is Jesus the only way to God?

How can you be sure you're right about God?

Isn't it arrogant and dangerous to think you've got the only truth?

Suffering

If God is both loving and powerful, why all the pain?

Why do the innocent suffer?

Apathy

Why do I need to believe anything at all?

Why can't I delay thinking about Jesus until later?

Evidence

How do you know that God exists?

How do you know that Christianity is true?

Why should I believe the Bible?

Judgement

How could a loving God send anyone to hell?

What about those who have never heard, or born in different cultures?

What about hypocritical Christians – are you saying they're OK?

Science

Don't science and Christianity contradict each other?

Doesn't evolution disprove Christianity?

Sexual freedom

Why does God punish people for being gay?

Why do some Christians still hate gay people?

1. INTRODUCTION

- **Definitions**
 - Evangelism = telling people that Jesus is Lord
 - Apologetics = telling people why they should believe that Jesus is Lord. Some of this is defence, some of this is offence.
- **“Not for experts!”**
- **Our aim**

2. THE TASK: DEFENDING OUR HOPE

- **The key verses...**

1 Peter 3:15-16, “but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to **make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you**; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”
- **Part of godliness**
- **A comprehensive duty: always... to anyone**
- **Includes: testimony, telling the gospel, answering common questions**
- **God wants us all to make progress!**

3. HOW DOES SIN AFFECT OUR EVANGELISM?

- **Key verses**

Romans 3:10-12, "as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

- **John 3:5, 3:36, 5:24, 7:7, 8:44, 9:39-41, If you don't trust Jesus you are _____."**

- **sin does something to the mind** (the "noetic" effects of sin)

Ephesians 4:17-18, "Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the **futility of their minds**. They are **darkened in their understanding**, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart."

"Total depravity"

"When people stop believing in God, they don't believe in nothing – they believe in anything." G.K. Chesterton.

"False faith" – Turretin

4. HOW DOES GOD'S SAVING WORK AFFECT OUR EVANGELISM?

- **Key verse**

1 Peter 1:23, "... you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God"

- **The Spirit brings new life by the Word**

- **The Word is enough for belief**
John 20:30-31, “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”
- **Implication:** our method of apologetics in everyday life will be **the relevant proclamation of God’s Word.**

“Whenever I’m asked a question I just want to say something true about Jesus from the Bible.”

Get into the Bible! E.g.

Mark’s Gospel – *Christianity Explored*

Luke’s Gospel – UCCF Uncover material

John’s Gospel – “The Word 1-2-1”