

Confessing the Faith
Class 1 – Introduction to Apologetics – September 9, 2018

Objective: This session will equip the students with an understanding of the Biblical foundation and definition of apologetics, including the Christian’s personal responsibility in this task. It will begin with an introductory video clip exemplifying current atheist/pluralist challenges. It will then engage the Biblical examples of apologetic conversations, as well as human limitations of reason. It will then give a brief overview of the content of full course.

I. Icebreaker Question: “*What are some the attacks against the Christian faith today?*”

II. Examples of Atheist attacks:

- Hannity vs. Hitchens (starting 3:14 “angry with believers”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=We7DyKWw61I>)
- Dawkins- Flying Spaghetti monster <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mmskXXetcg>
 - What were the central arguments in the videos, and how would you respond?
 - New Atheism: Motivated primarily by historical violence done in the name of the religion. The new atheists seek aggressively to evangelize people away from theism because they think it leads to violence.
 - What topics might you need to study further so you could give a better defense of the faith?

III. Basic Apologetics Introductory Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMj3sKKn6a4>

IV. Apologetics Basics

From Greek **ἀπολογία**: “an act of making a defense”

1 Peter 3:15, “**but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense (ἀπολογία) to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.**”

V. A Task Given to all Christians

Peter’s audience not limited to Pastors. Peter directs his comments to the elect (1 Peter 1:1), which includes servants (2:18), wives (3:1) and husbands (3:7). The task of giving a defense to those who want to know about Christian hope belongs to *every believer*.

VII. Overwhelming task?

- a. Not to EVERYONE, not picking arguments, not solving all the problems
 - “*To whoever asks for the reason for the hope that is in you*” = your neighbor
 - Your neighbor will have unique questions, challenges, background, etc.
- b. Love you neighbor by learning his challenges and helping remove barriers to the Gospel

VIII. Role of Reason:

a. You cannot reason/argue someone into the faith.

- 1 Cor. 12:3 “no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit”
- **“I cannot by my own REASON or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him.”** (*Small Catechism, Creed, 3rd Article*)

b. However, reason is a good gift to be used in service to the Gospel: **“I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my REASON and all my senses, and still takes care of them.”** (*Small Catechism, Creed, 1st Article*)

c. Magisterial vs. Ministerial use of reason

IX. Biblical Example of Apologetic Conversation—Acts 17:16-33

¹⁶ Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there... “We wish to know therefore what these things mean.”

- How did Paul use reason to remove hindrances to the Gospel?

X. Real issues

What are some arguments against Christianity/God that you’ve heard?

XI. Class Overview—What’s coming up?

Most helpful thing I learned today:

Homework Option:

Read “Religious Pluralism and Knowledge of the True God: Fraternal Reflection and Discussion” from CTQ, found here.

<http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/facultyreligiouspluralismandknowledge.pdf>