

Apolo – What?

As Christians begin learning evangelism techniques, they encounter systems that teach them how to witness a certain way. These are helpful for beginners, but many do the thinking for you. But learning how to defend your faith is always a trustworthy endeavor. When people come to you with questions you don't know how to answer, what can you do?

What Is Apologetics?

This is where apologetics comes in. This discipline will prepare you to answer the tough questions skeptics will ask. When they ask questions to catch you or seek to understand Christianity better, apologetics will help you.

The word apologetics comes from two Greek words meaning “to return a word” “to answer back.” Apologetics is the discipline of using Scripture and reason that defend the Christian faith against ideas that challenge its principles. Whether someone asks trick questions or they are curious about Christianity, this discipline will teach you how to converse with them.

Matching biblical knowledge, theological ideas, logic and argumentation, apologetics uses many intellectual exercises, its power for witnessing makes it well worth our efforts. The study of logic teaches us how to produce coherent understanding. Argumentation is the study of structuring arguments in debate for maximum impact.

A Reasonable Faith

Apologetics presents a more palatable faith for many in our culture today. We are inundated with scientific theory and Western expectations. We expect well-crafted, logical and coherent explanations. Faith has not escaped this demand. Although faith tends to be defined differently, there is an aspect of faith that is logical.

Logic and reason have entered the realm of spirituality. Most types of spirituality have a basis in reality. Christianity is no different. God has inserted himself into human history and culture. God inspired humans to write the Bible, tied to human history, geography and culture, and mostly from human perspective. Because of these connections to our world, faith incorporates human reason. We could verify that nations, cultures and technologies mentioned in the Bible existed. God's interaction with humankind is logical and yet parts of faith will never fit into our logical categories.

For example, if God is all-powerful, he can defy natural laws. If God is all-knowing, there are scientific planes of existence he already understands. If God is the creator of the universe, he has

complete control over this world. If these things are true, it is reasonable to operate according to these truths.

Watch the Speed Limit

When we drive we must observe many rules. The same is true when we use apologetics to witness to people. Apologetics has limits. People do not come to Jesus based solely on our arguments. Debate only goes so far. Because faith is partly logical, there are elements that don't fit into logical boxes.

Our attitude as we debate changes everything. Apologetics must be used with kindness, respect and love. We must be peaceable when we use logical constructions to help others understand our faith. Without these characteristics in our witnessing, we will lose the platform to speak to others.

We must allow the Holy Spirit to convict people and apply the discussion to their heart and life. Many times people will raise issues simply to evade the truth. Perhaps their hang-up with accepting Christ is not an issue of logic, but an emotional issue. Many who do not believe in Christ have been emotionally scarred by the church or Christians. No argument will change that.

However, arguments tend to disarm excuses people use so that they may avoid considering Christianity. The information gained from apologetics must not be used to satisfy our egos. The goal of apologetics is to remove logical fallacies and misinformation about Jesus so people must make a choice. We cannot force them to listen or agree with us. We only present the evidence.

Although apologetics cannot solve every problem, it is an effective tool to add to your toolbox. No tool is designed to fix every problem you will encounter. No discipline is a magic fits-all-sizes solution. It is better to have these tools, they are available to you as needed.

Reap the Benefits

Although studying apologetics can prove difficult, the benefits extend beyond this discipline. These benefits will give you strengths in areas used by other disciplines. Apologetics will exercise these benefits in your life and are excellent witnessing resources.

Empower Debate Skills. The skills gained with apologetics will also make you better at arguing your point in debating. You will find yourself debating other issues with greater efficiency and more solid structure to your arguments. Apologetics helps you to build logical structures that can become undeniable in and of themselves. It will also help you to do this in other debates that do not contain

Master Critical Thinking. Apologetics forces you to think critically. Although the groundwork +can be laid with memorized logical constructions, much of apologetics teaches you to think on

the fly while you were actually debating the opposition. This ability to problem solve and think critically will aid you in other disciplines. It will cause you to create constructions which apply specifically to the new situations you encounter.

Strengthen Your Faith. The study of arguments for the faith will also increase your own faith. Everyone has questions that they may not have even considered asking. Apologetics by its nature answers questions that even you may have. A lot of the information you will learn when you read authors who have defended the faith in their particular fields will give you the information you need to trust more in God. You will find that you understand your faith in a deeper light and how it applies to different facets of your own life. For all these reasons and more apologetics is worth studying because it yields such great results.