

GIVE A

Defense

A Bible Study by Ron Turnbow





GIVE A DEFENSE

Introduction

Welcome to our study! Two thousand years ago, the Apostle Peter gave timeless instruction to the Pilgrims of the dispersion in the 3rd chapter of his first letter, “And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you”.

This study is structured to explore the instruction given in 1 Peter 3:15, “...and always be ready to give a defense...”. In the Greek, the word used for defense is *apologia*. This word “apology” is often mistaken for the concept of saying “I’m sorry”. In the Greek, the word meant something very different. An *apologia* is a verbal argument designed to convince others and protect the one giving it. Christians are expected to always be ready with the defense. This defense of hope involves defending doctrinal matters, morality, and personal convictions. Are you ready to give your defense for the hope that is in you?

Purpose: This Bible study will explore what we are called on as Christians to defend, the reason for our hope. Our study will take us through various doctrines and philosophies that will rob us of hope. We will seek to understand the concepts of sanctification, defense, and the various “ism’s” that we must defend against. The purpose of this study is to confirm and strengthen our faith.

Objectives: Our study will seek to accomplish the following four objectives:

1. Understand the concepts of “sanctification” and “defense”
2. Explore doctrines and philosophies that will remove hope
3. Equip us with the information and tools necessary to defend the reason of the hope that is in you
4. Strengthen your faith

Format: Each lesson will incorporate a topic relevant to the instruction given by the Apostle Peter on “giving a defense”. Each lesson contains a series of scriptures and questions related to the topic under consideration. Please read and consider on the scriptures cited during the week. Be sure to explore the context of each passage cited. Our class sessions will center on the questions contained in this outline. Obviously, our time will be best utilized if everyone reads the targeted passages, meditates on the thoughts contained in the text, answers the questions asked in this outline, and come to class prepared to discuss. We will strive to keep our discussions interesting and focused on the subject/questions as outlined in this material. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotes in this workbook and the related PowerPoint presentation are from the New King James Version of the Bible.

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

- 1 Peter 3:15-16

Course Outline/Schedule: The following table represents our plan for the quarter:

Subject
Introduction
Make Ready Your <i>Apologia</i>
Defense with Purpose and Character
Properly Equipped for Defense
Defense against the Works of Darkness
Defense against the New Hermeneutic – Part I
Defense against the New Hermeneutic – Part II
The Rise of Agnosticism and Skepticism
Humanism: The Degrading of God – Part I
Humanism: The Degrading of God – Part II
Atheism vs. God – Part I
Atheism vs. God – Part II
Conclusion

Works consulted in the preparation of this material:

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GIVE A DEFENSE

Make Ready Your *Apologia*

When you **defend** something, what comes to mind? For some, defense is protecting something that belongs to you, your home or property. Imagine the soldier defending the hard-fought hill on which he stands, or the homeowner defending his property and family against an intruder. For others, the concept of defense entails an effort to counter or resist an offense. In our sports culture, we enjoy football where one team defends against the strategies to advance the ball to the end-zone. Another meaning of defense is to provide a verbal case against the offense of the prosecutor, or in support of a concept or idea. In our legal system, we see the lawyer vigorously making a defense using words and evidence. The Apostle Peter understood very well what it meant to defend something of value. An interesting exchange occurred the evening of Christ's betrayal. Following their observance of the Passover supper, the Lord said, "*Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail*" (Luke 22:31-32). This warning came after Peter boldly proclaimed that even if everyone else stumbled, he would not (Matthew 26:33). Peter thought he was confident and ready to make his stand in defense of the Lord. Within mere hours of this exchange, Peter flatly denied the Lord and thus failed in any sense of the concept of defense. This happened three times on that one fateful evening. Peter then realized what he had done and the scripture says that he wept bitterly. We know that Peter learned from this sequence of events. On the Day of Pentecost just a few weeks later, Peter boldly stood before those who had brought about the execution of Jesus and gave a tremendous defense of the hope that he had through Jesus (Acts 2). No longer was Peter's confidence shaken. Peter continued in his bold proclamation of the Gospel to those who would listen. The preaching of Peter was not always well received. Scripture records that he was thrown into prison, threatened, and beaten as a result of his preaching (Acts 4-5). Some three decades later, Peter penned his inspired letter to the Christians of the dispersion. In this letter, he gave exhortations, admonitions, and inspired commands. He wrote:

And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. ¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

1 Peter 3:13-16

In verse 15, the inspired command is to "sanctify" and "defend". The Greek work translated "defense" is *apologia*. This word means "a verbal defense, a speech in defense of, or an answer to"¹ something. That something is the reason for the hope that is in you. Are you able to comply with this command? Can you defend your faith? How deep is your faith? You are called upon to feed and protect our faith. A well maintained faith is one absolutely worth defending. You need to be ready to give a well structured argument for what you believe and why. Can you offer an *apologia* for the hope that is within you? Can you structure your defense in such a way as to convince and exhort others? Let us examine what is involved in "giving a defense of the hope that is in you."

¹ Vine's Expository of New Testament Words, "Apologia"

Preparing for your Defense

1) Preparing for your *apologia* (defense)

- a) Basics of preparation
 - i) Cultivating your heart for defense (Luke 8:8 and 15; Psalm 51:10; 1 Corinthians 6:11)
 - ii) Making readiness to defend your priority (Luke 14:25-33; Romans 8:12-14)
 - iii) Overcoming fear (Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:4-5; John 7:13, 12:42; Galatians 2:12; Hebrews 13:5-6; Revelation 2:10; Matthew 5:10-12; 1 John 4:17-18)
 - iv) Developing confidence and boldness (Proverbs 3:25-26; Acts 4:31, 9:29; 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 3:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:2; 1 Peter 3:14; 1 John 5:14-15)
 - v) Valuing scripture (Psalm 119:97-109; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:3)
- b) Always be ready
 - i) Sanctifying the Lord in your heart (1 Peter 1:13-16; Romans 10:10; Philippians 4:8)
 - ii) Always sober, watchful, and diligent (1 Corinthians 10:12-13; 1 Peter 5:8)
 - iii) Always being ready with your reason for the hope (Titus 3:1)
 - iv) Continuing to grow in your knowledge, which further enables hope (2 Peter 1:5-9; 3:18; Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 1:10)
 - v) Looking for the opportunities to tell others about your hope (2 Timothy 4:1-2)

2) Basis of your *apologia* (defense)

- a) Reason for the hope – worthy of defense
 - i) Source of our hope is the Savior (Psalm 71:5, 119:81; 1 Peter 1:13)
 - ii) Hope that is faultproof and secure (Romans 5:1-5)
 - iii) Hope that produces joy and peace (Proverbs 10:28; Romans 12:12, 15:4, 15:13)
- b) Defending the reason for the hope – verbally and by your example
 - i) Proclamation of Christ as your Lord (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9; 1 John 2:22-23)
 - ii) Presenting a verbal argument for the hope (Acts 2:36, 3:11-19, 4:12, 5:29-41)
 - iii) Living what you preach (Matthew 23:3, 1 Timothy 4:12; 2 John 7-8; 1 John 2:4)
 - iv) Hope that abides “in you” (1 John 2:24; Psalm 119:11; Romans 10:8; Colossians 3:16)
- c) Defending the Truth
 - i) Using your Bible to know the truth (2 Timothy 2:15; Galatians 1:6-8; 1 Peter 4:11)
 - (1) Depth and clarity to share with others and make sense
 - (2) Offer book-chapter-verse as basis/evidence for the hope
 - (3) Establishing proper context of scripture to support your defense
 - ii) Recognize false doctrine (John 8:32; Romans 1:25; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 2 John 9)
 - iii) Ready to stand and deliver your defense (2 Timothy 4:1-4; Jude 3)
- d) Who is to defend the reason for the hope?
 - i) Elders (1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28)
 - ii) Preachers (2 Timothy 4:1-2)
 - iii) Parents (Deuteronomy 6:8; Ephesians 6:1-4)
 - iv) Individuals (1 Peter 3:15)

3) *Apologia*: Examples of defense from Scripture

- a) Peter (Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75; 1 Peter 3:15; Acts 4:8-13)
- b) Stephen (Acts 6:8-7:60)
- c) Paul (1 Corinthians 9:3; Philippians 1:7-26; Acts 17:22-33)
- d) Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:26)

Questions For Discussion

1. Is readiness to “defend the hope that is in you” an option or command? Please explain.
2. How do you “sanctify the Lord in your heart”?
3. How can you overcome the fear associated with giving a verbal defense of your hope?
4. Why is it important to continually grow in your knowledge of scripture?
5. Can you successfully present an effective defense of your hope without knowledge of God’s word? Please explain your answer.
6. Discuss the hope that is considered in 1 Peter 3:15. What it is? Where does it come from? What role should it play in your life?
7. What are two primary ways you can “defend the hope that is in you”?
8. What does it mean to be ready “in season and out of season” (2 Timothy 4:1-4)?
9. When you present your defense of hope, what kinds of responses might you expect to have from others?
10. Discuss one biblical example of someone who defended their hope and the result.



GIVE A DEFENSE

Defense with Purpose and Character

And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." ¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

1 Peter 3:13-16

The Apostle Peter warned that Christians must prepare for suffering as a direct result of their Christianity. During the first century, Peter and the other Christians indeed suffered as a result of their faith. This would continue with increased intensity over the next several centuries. In light of this persecution, Peter said that disciples of the Lord must sanctify God in their hearts, always be ready with a defense, and present such with meekness and fear. There is a voice of urgency in Peter's warning, "always be ready".

Consider the teaching and defense of faith offered by Peter and the other apostles in the days of the early church. In Acts 3, the church continued its initial surge of growth. A defense of faith and truth was presented by Peter, John, and the other apostles. They did so with a sense of urgency. Some of those who witnessed the works of Peter and John were filled with amazement and wonder. Some were persuaded to obey the gospel of Christ. In Acts 4, the record shows that the Jewish elites, the priests and Sadducees, also took note of the vigorous defense presented by the apostles. They arrested the apostles and put them on trial before the Sanhedrin. Even in these circumstances, their defense was articulated and presented with a sense of urgency. The apostles were commanded to cease speaking in the name of the Lord, upon pain of incarceration, or worse. However, the urgency was still there and time was of the essence. Thus, they prayed for boldness. Souls were at stake. Men and women urgently needed to hear the message of the Lord, the reason for the hope that was in Peter and John. In Acts 5, we read that believers were added to the church in multitudes. And once again, the religious elite were enraged at the success of the gospel message. The apostles were thrown into prison and reminded that they were strictly forbidden to give their defense of the Lord and the hope He brings. The basis of the apostle's defense could not be clearer in their reply, "*We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.*" (Acts 5:29-32). The apostles were summoned before the council again, commanded to silence, and beaten (likely given 39 painful lashes). Yet, the apostles continued daily in the temple and in every house making their defense for the Lord.

How urgent is it for you to present "*the reason for the hope that is in you*" today? Do you value the time allotted to present your defense? Do you fully appreciate the stakes for your presentation of the defense, or not? The stakes involved in our *apologia* (defense) could not be higher. Souls of men and women are at stake. Are you ready to make your defense?

Preparing for your Defense

1) *Apologia* with urgency – Always ready

- a) Time is of the essence (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; 2 Corinthians 5:10-11)
- b) Life is short – yours and those who would hear your defense (Psalm 90:12; James 4:13-17; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Ephesians 5:16-17; Colossians 4:5)
- c) Living every day as a Christian (Matthew 5:14-16; Philippians 1:21-26; Galatians 2:20)
- d) Defense through confession (Mark 8:38; 1 John 2:23; Luke 12:8-9; Romans 10:8-10; 1 John 4:15)
- e) Make your defense, now! (Romans 13:11-14; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 3:14-22)

2) Urgency in growing and defending your faith

- a) Defense through preparing your heart with the Word (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 5:12-14)
- b) Tending to the care and growth of your faith (Jude 20-21; 2 Peter 1:5-11)
- c) Actively taking heed! (Proverbs 12:27; Luke 21:34-36; 1 Corinthians 10:12)
- d) Defending with proper armor (2 Corinthians 10:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 5:8-10; Ephesians 6:10-20)
- e) Defending through a vibrant working faith supported by good works (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:6-8, 3:8, 3:14; Hebrews 10:24; James 2:14-26)

3) Urgency in kindling and defending your hope

- a) Kindling and maintaining hope (Proverbs 13:12; Romans 15:13; Colossians 1:23; Hebrews 6:18; 1 Peter 1:13-16)
- b) Hope in what? (1 Corinthians 15:19; Colossians 1:23; Ephesians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:8)
- c) A living hope that does not disappoint (1 Peter 1:3-5; Romans 5:1-5)
- d) Hope that is sustained by being near God, as a priority (James 4:8; Psalm 31:23-24, 39:7)
- e) Hope that enables bold defense (2 Corinthians 3:12)

4) The goal of the “defense of the reason for the hope”: Souls of men

- a) Persuading those who do not believe (Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Jude 22-23)
- b) Preserving those who do believe (Hebrews 3:12-15, 10:25; Romans 15:14; James 5:19-20)
- c) Persuasion born of love (Romans 13:8-10; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; 1 John 3)

5) Defense with character: Meekness and Fear

- a) Defense presented with meekness, or gentleness (Matthew 5:5; Galatians 5:22-23, 6:1; Ephesians 4:1-3; Philippians 4:5; Colossians 3:12-13)
- b) Defense presented with fear, or reverence (1 Timothy 2:2; Titus 2:7)

6) Defense given with limitation

- a) Don't cast your “pearls before swine” (Matthew 7:6)
- b) Decide when to move on (Matthew 10:5-15; Acts 13:49-52)

7) Preparing for:

- a) Battle – Choose Your Weapons and Shield
- b) Questions/Challenges Associated with:
 - i) Unfruitful Works of Darkness
 - ii) The New Hermeneutic
 - iii) Agnosticism
 - iv) Humanism
 - v) Atheism

Questions for Discussion

1. When preparing your *apologia*, why is it essential to live every day as a Christian?
2. Why is it important to have a sense of urgency when making your defense?
3. Discuss how making your defense of the hope is similar to (or connected with) confessing the Lord.
4. How do you maintain faith?
5. What is the connection between having a vibrant working faith and giving your defense?
6. How do you maintain hope?
7. What should be the goals of your defense?
8. Is love an important element in making your defense? Please explain.
9. Why is it important to make your defense with meekness and fear?
10. Discuss how you make your defense with meekness.
11. Discuss how you make your defense with reverence.
12. Is there a time when you should “move on” from making your defense to a given person or group? Please explain.



GIVE A DEFENSE

Properly Equipped for the Defense

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the Wiles of the devil.¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Ephesians 6:10-13

Paul penned these words of exhortation and encouragement to the brethren at Ephesus. In Acts 20:28, Paul exhorted the elders of the Ephesus church to “*shepherd the flock among you...For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.*” Thus, Paul sounded the call to defense. The elders and individual Christians in Ephesus were summoned to “make a defense of the reason for the hope that was in them”. These defenders of the hope were called into action and equipped with the tools to make a worthy defense. Paul enumerated the tools of defense in the next few verses:

“Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the wicked one.¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

Ephesians 6:14-18

The Christian, whether willing or not, will be engaged in a spiritual battle for hope. The archenemy “*walks about seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Peter 5:8). Remember how Peter was told about Satan’s desire for him on the evening of the Lord’s betrayal (Luke 22:31-32)? Peter was not singled out in this regard. All Christians are targets of the evil one. He wants nothing more than to disrupt your faith and displace the hope that dwells in you. He will do so through a variety of ways. Sometimes, he uses outright temptation for you to sin. Other times, he will use false doctrines to distract you. And then, he will sometimes use fear and discouragement to accomplish his goals. Peter learned his lesson exceptionally well that night of the Lord’s betrayal. After that, he grew in faith and service to the Lord. Time and again, Peter eloquently defended the Lord, hope, and his faith. Peter’s defense would ultimately result in extreme hardship. Jesus told him in John 21:18, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.*” Tradition has it that Peter violently died by the hand of Emperor Nero². Paul’s life would also come to a violent end shortly thereafter. Yet, they made their defense!

Are you ready to stand and make your defense?

² Merrill C. Tenney, The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible. p. 739.

Preparing for your Defense

1) A Call to Arms

- a) Watch and stand fast (1 Corinthians 15:58, 16:13; Ephesians 6:18)
- b) Contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3)
- c) For your enemy is formidable (Luke 22:31-33; 1 Peter 5:8; Acts 5:1-11, 7:54-60; 1 Corinthians 5:1-8; Ephesians 2:1-3)
- d) Weapons of defense (2 Corinthians 10:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:8)

2) The Christian's Armor (Ephesians 6:14-20)

- a) "Stand therefore"
 - i) Stand in faith and grace (Romans 5:2, 11:20; 2 Corinthians 1:24)
 - ii) Stand in the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1; Galatians 5:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:15)
 - iii) Stand in the Lord (Isaiah 55:8-9; Philippians 1:27, 4:1; 1 Peter 5:12)
- b) "Waist girded with truth"
 - i) Truth as way of life (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 19:7-11, 119:11, 105, 114)
 - ii) God's word is truth (John 8:32, 14:6, 17:17-19; Hebrews 4:12; 1 John 5:6)
 - iii) God's truth provides all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:2-4)
 - iv) Don't depend only on your own heart (Proverbs 28:26)
- c) "Breastplate of righteousness"
 - i) Hunger for righteousness (Matthew 5:6, 10)
 - ii) Choice of righteousness (Proverbs 2:20, 8:20, 11:1-6, 11:18-19, 12:28, 13:6, 21:1-3)
 - iii) Righteousness, a product of thinking and intellect (Acts 24:25)
 - iv) Practice righteousness, a way of life (Romans 6:18-20; 2 Corinthians 6:1-10, 14; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:29, 3:7-10)
 - v) Bear the fruits of righteousness (James 3:18)
- d) "Feet shod with preparation of gospel"
 - i) Good news about Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:1-3; Galatians 1:6-11)
 - ii) Power of the gospel (Romans 1:16; Galatians 3:8; Hebrews 4:12)
 - iii) Gospel of reconciliation (Luke 4:18-19; Acts 2:37-39; Romans 5:1-2; Colossians 1:21-22)
- e) "Shield of faith"
 - i) Origins of faith (Romans 10:17; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Luke 17:5)
 - ii) Justification by faith (Romans 1:17, 3:21-26, 5:1; Galatians 3:8-9, 26)
 - iii) Living by faith (Habakkuk 2:2-4; Galatians 2:20, 3:11)
 - iv) Obedience through faith (James 2:14-26)
 - v) Shield to deflect the fiery darts (2 Thessalonians 3:3)
- f) "Helmet of salvation"
 - i) Salvation is of the Lord (Psalm 3:8, 18:46; Isaiah 12:1-3; Romans 1:16; Titus 2:11-14)
 - ii) Salvation and endurance (Matthew 24:13; Hebrews 6:15)
- g) "Sword of the Spirit"
 - i) Word of God (Hebrews 4:12)
- h) "Prayer"
 - i) Communication with the Father (John 9:31; Philippians 4:6; Hebrews 4:16; James 5:16)
 - ii) Through Jesus (John 14:13, 15:16, 16:23; 1 John 2:1-2; 1 Timothy 2:5)
 - iii) Pray properly (Matthew 6:9-15; Luke 18:10-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Proverbs 28:9)

3) Being equipped to defend against:

- a) Temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:12; Hebrews 4:15)
- b) False doctrines (Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 4:3-4; Titus 2:6-10; 2 John 9)
- c) Discouragement (Psalm 27:14; Galatians 3:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:16; Hebrews 12:3-6)

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss what it means to “contend earnestly for the faith”. How is this a call to arms?
2. In what does a disciple of the Lord stand while giving their defense?
3. What role does the “truth” play in making the defense?
4. What does Proverbs 28:26 say about depending on your own thoughts when making your defense?
5. Is righteousness an important element in successfully defending your hope? Please explain.
6. How is righteousness or unrighteousness determined?
7. Discuss the power that is in the gospel message. Why is this important to your defense?
8. What is the origin of faith? What does this mean for the defender of hope?
9. What is the purpose of a helmet to a warrior? What is the Christian’s helmet?
10. Discuss why prayer is so important to the Christian, especially when preparing and making the defense.
11. What must the Christian be able to stand and defend against?



GIVE A DEFENSE

Defense Against Works of Darkness

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.¹² For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

Ephesians 5:8-12 NKJV

Peter had first-hand experience with the tug and lure of darkness. Remember, Jesus warned Peter that Satan sought to sift him as wheat. And Satan indeed did just that. Peter forsook the Lord at a very critical moment. One of the primary destroyers of the “reason for the hope that is in you” is the works of darkness. Later on, Peter warned all Christians to be sober and on guard against these unfruitful works at all times. We must stay on guard to know what these things are and how they can ensnare us with little to no warning. The way of the world is toxic to those who are trying to serve the Lord. Just a little dose of darkness can quickly disrupt your service to the Lord. The evil one uses worldly lures that appear enticing, but conceal a deadly hook.

In addressing the spiritual needs for the brethren in Ephesus, Paul exhorted them to have no nothing to do with the unfruitful works of darkness. They were not to participate in them nor desire to be near to them. In defending hope, you are called on to make your choice of participating in the unfruitful works, or having nothing to do with them. In order to make this choice, you have to know what the works of darkness are. The unfruitful works of darkness are evident in worldliness as well as doctrinal deviation from the truth. The problem with the unfruitful works of darkness is multifold. First, these works involve sin. Those who practice sin are not in the light with God (1 John 1:7-10). The wages of sin is spiritual death (Romans 6:23). When a Christian sins, he is separated from God. Participation in these works of unrighteousness will also destroy the Christian influence that you are to have on those around you. Are you able to detect the unfruitful works of darkness and defend against them in your own life?

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

1 Peter 5:8-9

Alternatively, we are called out of darkness and into the light. Works of righteousness are required of the Christian (James 2:14-26). Just as we must be able to identify the dark works of worldliness, we must also incorporate those good and godly traits. This is a daily endeavor.

Further, the call to defense against the unfruitful works of darkness is more than merely abstaining from these deadly works. We are summoned to reprove and rebuke them. The evil one will often use practitioners of worldliness to inflict collateral damage to the Christian. We are subject to the influence of those around us. It is the responsibility of the Christian to effectively use the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit to fend off attacks by those who practice these unfruitful works. In doing so, we must make it known that the word of God condemns these works of darkness. How

we reprove and rebuke is equally important. 1 Corinthians 13 provides a wonderful definition of love. In the first three verses, Paul makes an important point that love must characterize everything we do. This includes reprovng the unfruitful works of darkness. Are you resolved to walk in the light and defend against the damaging effect of the unfruitful works of darkness?

Preparing for your Defense

1) The Problem/Threat to a Christian: Unfruitful works of darkness

- a) Works of darkness defined
 - i) Ways of the "world" (1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4; Jude 16)
 - ii) Works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21; James 3:16)
 - iii) Works of darkness (Romans 13:12-13)
 - iv) Blindness of the heart (Ephesians 4:17-19; 2 Peter 1:9)
 - v) Deviations from truth (John 17:17; Romans 1:25; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Timothy 4:4)
- b) Result of the unfruitful works of darkness
 - i) Spiritual death (Romans 6:22-23, 8:3-6)
 - ii) Condemnation (John 3:19-20)
 - iii) Enmity with God (James 4:4)
 - iv) Vain and empty things that do not glorify God (Romans 6:21; Jude 12-13)
 - v) Hypocrisy (Galatians 2:11-13)

2) Defense through wise choices

- a) Understand the serious nature of sin (Ezekiel 18:19-20; Isaiah 5:20; 1 John 3:4-6)
- b) Examine yourself (Matthew 7:4-5; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 6:4)
- c) Choose to have nothing to do with unrighteousness
 - i) Be transformed (Psalm 1:1-2; Proverbs 4:14-19; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:3-7)
 - ii) Choose light over darkness (1 John 1:5-9, 3:10)
 - iii) Resist the devil and his works (2 Timothy 2:22; James 4:7)
 - iv) Do not be yoked with those who do these works (2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 2 John 10-11)
 - v) Mark those who walk disorderly (Romans 16:17-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-8; 2 Thess 3:6)
- d) Choose the "fruit of the spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:12-17; James 3:17)
- e) Choose to "walk in the light" (Ephesians 2:1-3, 2:11-12, 4:14-18; John 3:19-21; Romans 6:22, 13:12-13; Proverbs 4:16-19; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 1:5-7)
- f) Choose to think about good and holy things (Philippians 4:8-9)

3) Defense through reproof (rebuke)

- a) But rather expose the works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11)
- b) Proving what is acceptable to the Lord (Ephesians 5:10)
- c) God's word as the basis of reproof (2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 2:15; 2 John 9-10)
- d) Reproof exposes sin to save a soul (Ecclesiastes 7:5; Luke 17:3; John 3:20; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:13)
- e) Be prepared for the reactions to reproof
 - i) Negative (John 3:19-21; Acts 19:21-41)
 - ii) Confusion (Acts 14:8-23)
 - iii) Positive (Matt 5:13-16; Acts 2:37)

4) Defense based on love

- a) Love defined (1 Corinthians 13)
- b) Love commanded (Matthew 5:44, 22:39; John 15:17; Colossians 3:14; 1 Timothy 6:11; 1 John 4:7-11)
- c) Faith working through love (Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:8)

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss the kind of things characterized by the “works of darkness” that Paul warned against in Ephesians 5.
2. In what ways are the works of darkness “unfruitful”?
3. What is the result of embracing and engaging in the unfruitful works of darkness in your life?
4. What does it mean to “have no fellowship” with the works of darkness? Please provide one practical example of this.
5. Why is it wise to choose to walk in the light and incorporate the fruit of the Spirit in your life?
6. How important is it to incorporate the fruit of the Spirit in your life? Why?
7. How do you reprove or rebuke the unfruitful works of darkness in others?
8. What is the basis for any reproof that you give? Why is this important?
9. What are the possible reactions to your reproof?
10. What role does love play in dealing with the unfruitful works of darkness?



GIVE A DEFENSE

Threats From The New Hermeneutic – Part 1

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Throughout history, countless attempts have been made to marginalize the sacred instructions given by God to man. One of the primary means to minimize is to suggest that man cannot understand God, he has misinterpreted God's revealed word, and he needs to re-interpret what God has said. All of this is in an effort to distort and twist the scriptures to support the will of man.

Hermeneutics is defined as "the science of interpretation, especially of the Scriptures."³ It is the process of getting to the original meaning of scriptural text. The "old" hermeneutic is widely accepted as interpreting Bible authority based on direct command, necessary inference, or approved apostolic examples. For some, this represents an outdated, outmoded, and highly restrictive means of determining authority. The "new" hermeneutic involves redefining how we should use the Bible.

While some claim that the New Hermeneutic provides much greater satisfaction in living, it simply does not. Peter said in 2 Peter 1:3, that "*His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness*". He gives us all things to have a life that is filled with hope. Thus, the "reason for the hope that is in us" is based in scripture. The New Hermeneutic is simply an effort to strip the Bible as a source of authority. In doing so, it will strip you of hope.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour", Peter warned in 1 Peter 5:8. Throughout the ages, the adversary has sought to turn man away from God. Under the tenants of the New Hermeneutic, proponents claim that the scripture was never intended to instruct or guide man. Using the New Hermeneutic, our adversary creates doubt about the authority in the word of God.

Under the guise of "scholarship", men assert that we should no longer look to the Scriptures as our source of authority. We should rely on feelings and emotion, instead of sound biblical authority for living. To the contrary, the Christian must defend the Bible as essential and integral in determining the authority for everything we believe and practice. Further, we must be able to defend the methods we use to determine authority. In this lesson we will introduce the tenants of the New Hermeneutic. Are you equipped to defend against the New Hermeneutic?

As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2 Peter 1:3-4

³ Dictionary.com

Preparing for your Defense

Claim of The New Hermeneutic	The Christian's Defense
<p>The New Hermeneutic claims that the New Testament was never intended as a “pattern” or “blueprint” for defining authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We should “Preach the Man, not the Plan”. ➤ We should preach the core gospel story of Jesus, not traditional authoritative doctrine. ➤ “Pattern theology” is a product of the Stone/Campbell movement dating to the 19th century. ➤ New Testament canon of scripture was not even completed until the end of the 4th century. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scripture given with purpose (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3) ➤ Preach sound doctrine (1 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 4:1-4; Titus 1:9, 2:1) ➤ Pattern of sound words (2 Timothy 1:13) ➤ Pattern for our salvation, worship, doctrine, and personal conduct (Acts 2:42; 2 John 9-11; Romans 4:15, 6:17; Hebrews 8:5; Exodus 25:9) ➤ Importance of the Man AND the Plan (Acts 2:21; 2:37-38,16:30-32, 22:6-10, 24:24-26; Romans 5:19; 1 Timothy 2:3-4) ➤ Epistles copied and read to the early church (Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; 1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 3:16)
<p>Authority is not established by command, necessary inference, or approved examples. That mode of establishing authority is a product of man, not God.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Christ alone is our example” - Only the gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are valid to establish authority. ➤ The method of authority being derived from commands, examples, and necessary inference is a product of the 19th century and the Campbell/Stone movement. ➤ There is no doctrine more dangerous than elevating inference and examples to the status of God’s commands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scripture is the basis for authority (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; 2 John 9-10; Revelation 22:18-19) ➤ Flow of authority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ God to Christ (Mark 1:27; John 5:19-27; Matthew 17:5, 28:18-20; Hebrews 1:1-2; Acts 3:22-23; Ephesians 1:18-23) ○ Christ to the Apostles (Matthew 16:17-19, 18:18; Acts 16:14; Matthew 15:9, 13-14; 2 Peter 1:16-21) ○ Apostles to the Churches (Philippians 4:7; Galatians 1:8-9) ➤ Examples to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Moses (Genesis 6:22; Hebrews 11:7; Numbers 20:1-13) ○ Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-7) ○ Uzzah (2 Samuel 6:3-7)
<p>The silence of God (scripture) is NOT binding, but rather permissive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ God permits man to “fill in the blanks” with regards to His will not specifically provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17) ➤ We must not exceed what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6, 2 John 9-11; 1 Peter 4:11) ➤ We cannot read God’s mind, only his revealed word (Proverbs 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:11; Isaiah 55:8-9) ➤ Examples to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:3-4)

Claim of The New Hermeneutic	The Christian's Defense
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Moses (Numbers 20:1-13) ○ Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-7) ○ Saul (1 Samuel 13:1-15) ○ Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:16-23)
<p>The Bible was never intended as a book of case law or as a constitution to govern us.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Exposing error is divisive and frowned upon. ➤ Using the scripture as a “constitution” poses a danger of getting into a doctrinal “rut”. ➤ Some people don’t have the Bible, so how could the Bible be that which will judge a person? ➤ Bible does not tell people how to be pleasing to God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New Testament references to “law”: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Of God (Romans 7:22-25, 8:7) ○ Of faith (Romans 3:27) ○ Of the Spirit (Romans 8:2) ○ Of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:19-22; Galatians 6:2) ○ Of righteousness (Romans 9:31) ○ Of liberty (James 1:25, 2:12) ➤ A new covenant (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 8:7-13, 9:15, 10:11-18) ➤ Law vs. Lawlessness (Matthew 7:23; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 John 3:4) ➤ Transgression of law (Romans 4:14-15) ➤ Gospel to govern (Galatians 1:6-9) ➤ Bible teaches us how to please God (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; John 8:32; Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Peter 3:11)
<p>The Epistles were only a collection of “love letters” written to the early Church.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All scripture profitable (2 Timothy 3:16-17) ➤ Scripture to be used as prescription for godly living (2 Peter 1:3) ➤ Epistles authoritative (1 Corinthians 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; 2 Thessalonians 3:14)
<p>Deductive reasoning and logic must not be used when seeking to learn God’s will.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The use of deduction and reasoning are a product of the 17th-19th centuries restoration efforts. ➤ Emotion, not reason, is important to pleasing God. ➤ Fellowship may not be withheld on the basis of doctrinal differences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ God approves the use of our abilities to intellectually reason (Isaiah 1:18; Acts 17:2, 17; 18:4,19, 28; 24:25; 26:24, 25; 1 Corinthians 10:15; 1 Peter 3:15) ➤ Emotion and reasoning (2 Timothy 1:7) ➤ Examples of humans reasoning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peter (Acts 3:1-4, 4) ○ Phillip (Acts 8:26ff) ○ Paul (1 Corinthians 15:12-19) ○ Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)

Questions for Discussion

1. Is it sufficient to just “preach the man, not the plan”? Please explain.
2. How do you refute the claim that the New Testament was never intended as a “pattern” or “blueprint” for living or defining authority?
3. Are the Epistles valuable for establishing authority? Please explain.
4. What is wrong with referring to only the four gospel accounts in order to establish authority?
5. Discuss how we establish authority? Please show how authority flows from God to man.
6. Can you “fill in the blanks” with respect to the silence of scripture? Please explain.
7. Does the New Testament clearly define itself as “law”? In what ways?
8. Were the Epistles simply a collect of “love letters” to the church? What value should they have for Christians?
9. Does God expect you to use reason and deductive thinking skills when studying His will?



GIVE A DEFENSE

Threats From The New Hermeneutic – Part 2

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.⁴ For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude 3-4

In our previous lesson, we explored the claims of The New Hermeneutic as it pertains to the establishment of authority. The goal of The New Hermeneutic is to sweep away the conventional methods of establishing scriptural authority by use of commands, necessary inference, and approved examples. The proponents of the New Hermeneutic teach that establishing a “pattern” for doctrinal authority is the product of the Stone/Campbell restoration movement in the 19th century. The New Hermeneutic marginalizes all of the New Testament, except the Gospels. The movement teaches that the epistles are not intended for purposes of establishing authority, but more like “love letters” written to a by-gone people of a different time and culture. Likewise, the movement teaches that the silence of scripture is not prohibitive, but permissive. Instead of being “speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent”, the New Hermeneutic proposes that the silence of scripture affords man the opportunity to “fill in the blanks”.

While very quick to throw out the establishment of authority by command, inference, or command, the New Hermeneutic is relatively vague in specifics of exactly how and what to replace it with. Therein lies a substantial problem – drifting. Paul wrote to the brethren in Ephesus in Eph 4:14-15 that, “*we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ*”. Removing the pattern for establishing authority sets the Christian adrift and becomes endangered by the trickery and deceitfulness. Rather, we are enjoined to speak the truth in love. The truth includes the ability to defend how scripture should be interpreted. In 2 Peter 1:20, the apostle Peter said that “*no prophesy of Scripture is of private interpretation*”. God’s will for us was delivered to us by means of inspired men. It is indeed possible for us to interpret and understand what God has delivered to us. Let us continue exploring the claims of The New Hermeneutic to further prepare us to deliver our defense.

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;²⁰ knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:19-21

Preparing for your Defense

Claim of The New Hermeneutic	The Christian's Defense
<p>We should increase our focus on God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The New Hermeneutic says we should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shift focus from doctrinal rules to the person and actions of the Godhead. ➤ Less focus on doctrinal law and rules and more on the narrative/spirit of scripture. ➤ “Major in the gospels, minor in the epistles”. ➤ Focus on the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus as presented in the Gospel accounts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Bible does not make any distinction between the gospel and doctrine (Acts 17:18-19; Romans 1:15-16; Acts 2:42) ➤ The epistles originated with Christ (John 14:26; 16:13; Matthew 10:40) ➤ The validity and inspiration of the Epistles (1 Corinthians 14:37, 1 John 4:6; 2 Peter 3:16) ➤ To love Christ is to love His law (John 14:15, 21, 15:10, 14) ➤ Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Circumcision (Acts 15) ○ Jesus physical body (1 John 4:1-3) ○ Resurrection (2 Timothy 2:17-18)
<p>Humans cannot grasp or comprehend the truth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “[Truth in its] fullness and wholeness lies beyond the grasp of the human mind” – Richard T. Hughes (Pepperdine scholar). ➤ We cannot know <i>everything</i> so we cannot know <i>anything</i> for certain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Humans can indeed know the truth (Proverbs 23:23; John 8:32; Colossians 1:10; 1 Timothy 4:3; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 10:26; 2 Peter 1:5, 12; 2 Peter 1:8; 1 John 2:21, 5:18-20) ➤ God expects us to know the truth (Ephesians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:4; John 17:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Hebrews 5:14, 10:26) ➤ Truth should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heard and learned (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 1:13; 2 Timothy 3:1-7) ○ Obeyed (1 Peter 1:22; 2 John 4) ○ Spoken (Ephesians 4:15; 1 Peter 3:15)
<p>Read the scriptures like Jesus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Only provide positive preaching and teaching. ➤ No debating or reasoning about the scriptures is needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Negative preaching by the Lord (Matthew 23) ➤ Sharp rebukes from Paul (2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13, 2:15) ➤ Debating and reasoning as used in scripture (Matthew 22:41-46; Acts 17:2-3, 15:1-5, 18:4, 18:19, 24:25) ➤ Christians told to “test” the doctrines (1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1; John 5:39, Acts 17:11)

Claim of The New Hermeneutic	The Christian's Defense
<p>Fellowship is extended on a short list of beliefs in which the vast majority of Christian people hold</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is impossible for everyone to agree on what the Bible says. ➤ Believe what you want and don't condemn anyone else. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Believe the same things (1 Corinthians 1:10; John 17:20-21; Ephesians 4:4-6; Galatians 1:6-9) ➤ Christians commanded to walk in the light and to have no fellowship with darkness (1 John 1:5-10; 2:3,5,6,17,28; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4) ➤ Problem with believing and doing whatever you want (1 Samuel 15; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Romans 6:16; Hebrews 5:9; Acts 5:1-11; 1 John 1:5-10) ➤ Fellowship with believers (1 Corinthians 1:10; Acts 20:28-31; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15) ➤ Responsibility to expose error (Romans 3:8; 6:1; 1 Corinthians 15:12; Galatians 3:1)
<p>Truth is fluid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "The point is not to correct the mistakes and really be right; rather it is not to think you are right at all" ➤ Out with the old "wineskins" to make new for the new "wine" ➤ Truth determined by culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Truth is ascertainable (John 8:31-32; 17:17; 1 Timothy 2:4) ➤ Contending for the truth (Colossians 2:8; 2 Timothy 4:3-4; Galatians 1:6-10; Jude 3; 2 John 9-11) ➤ Defending the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15; 1 Corinthians 13)

Questions for Discussion

1. Should we interpret scripture only based on what is said exclusively about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit? Please explain.
2. Discuss how people are able to know the truth. Do we need anything else besides the Bible to teach us how to live godly lives?
3. Does the Bible make any distinction between the gospels and epistles? What does this mean about the validity of the epistles in establishing authority?
4. Should the Christian demand only positive preaching and teaching?
5. What is the value of negative preaching or rebuking one another?
6. What is Christian fellowship based on?
7. What does it mean to walk in the light?
8. Why is it improper to extend fellowship to those who are not walking in the light?
9. What is the goal of fellowship?
10. Discuss the concept of “unity in diversity” in matters of doctrine and morality.
11. Does it really matter if your defense of the truth is done in love or not?



GIVE A DEFENSE

The Rise of Agnosticism and Skepticism

Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge --²¹ by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.

1 Timothy 6:20-21

Throughout scripture, knowledge is held as an important and essential part of life. God has given man the intellectual ability to seek and use knowledge throughout his life. God expects man to use knowledge to improve his life. Knowledge is inexorably connected to faith and hope. Peter warned over and over to protect yourself by growing in knowledge of God and the truth. God has revealed Himself to mankind in His word. He also knew that human reasoning could displace the precious knowledge that brings us to Him and salvation. Our adversary often seeks to use our own intellect as a tool to displace hope and faith. He tries to convince men that man should question God and the existence of God, His nature, and His word. This is what got Adam and Eve into trouble as recorded in Genesis 3. It is interesting that the fall of Adam and Eve was associated with the Tree of KNOWLEDGE. All the evil one has to do is get you to doubt God.

History records that the “father of the Theory of Evolution”, Charles Darwin (1808-1882), abandoned his “Christian” beliefs and adopted agnostic beliefs.⁴ Early in his life, Darwin was taught and held Christian beliefs. Darwin then became critical of religious thinking as he developed his scientific knowledge and skill. For most of his adult life, Darwin was agnostic. He would not defend against the onslaught of agnosticism and doubt. Darwin not only embraced the principals of agnosticism, he gave his best efforts to provide others with the benefit of his “knowledge” to create doubt within them.

The term “agnosticism” was coined by Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895), meaning “no-knowledge”.⁵ “A” means without, and “gnosis” means knowledge. Agnosticism is not merely a “lack of commitment”, but an affirmation that there is no certainty about God because we either cannot know God or God cannot be known by man. The agnostic believes that it is impossible to prove that there is a God.⁶ Agnosticism is different from atheism, which is the affirmation that there is no God. Agnosticism is a major threat to the Christian and the Christian’s hope.

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:5-8

⁴ www.conservapedia.com/Charles_Darwin

⁵ Christian Apologetics, Geisler, Norman L., P 13.

⁶ American Heritage Cultural Dictionary

Agnosticism is dangerous in that it seeks to displace faith and hope that one has in God. There are numerous variants of agnosticism. For purposes of this study, let's consider the two primary categories of agnostic thinking. First, "weak agnosticism" asserts that the existence of God and His nature are not fully knowable because scientific "proof" of such does not exist. Second, "strong agnosticism" believes that God cannot be known, bordering on the belief that there is no God at all (atheism). Agnosticism is based on two key principals:

- The concept of God cannot be quantified or measured
- The concept of God does not contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact or existence

The agnostic believes that anything that fails the two principals is meaningless in nature. All statements about God falls outside the two principals. Therefore, human knowledge of God is impossible.⁷

Agnosticism was clearly a threat in Peter's day. It is equally a threat today and agnosticism is on the rise. It can be seen in throughout our secular and higher education systems. It is evident in intellectual religious programming on media channels like "Science Channel", "Discovery Channel" and "History Channel". It is invading the hearts and minds of Christians. Are you able to defend against the marginalizing of faith and hope that comes through agnostic thinking? Can you defend the reason for the hope that is in you?

Preparing for your Defense

Claim of Agnosticism	The Christian's Defense
<p>Agnosticism and Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All knowledge is obtained through physical observation, sensation, experience, or the thought associated with such. ➤ To know a thing, one has to experience the thing fully. ➤ All we know is a series of things sensed. ➤ There are very few things that we truly can know. ➤ Science examines the physical world, religion believes in a non-physical world. ➤ Faith is based on science and scientific explanations are required to establish knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Knowledge gained through observation (Psalm 19:1-6; Job 38) ➤ Enlightenment (Psalm 13:3, 18:28; 19:8; Proverbs 12:1) ➤ Source of knowledge and understanding (Deuteronomy 6:7-9; Proverbs 1:1-7, 2:1-6, 15:14, 18:15, 21:11; Ecclesiastes 2:26; Romans 15:4) ➤ Value of knowledge (Deuteronomy 6:10-25; Proverbs 19:1-2, 28:1-2; Ecclesiastes 7:12; 9:9-10; Romans 15:4) ➤ Challenges of knowledge (Ecclesiastes 1:16-18, 2:21; 9:10; Isaiah 5:13) ➤ Faith and knowledge (Romans 10:10-17; Hebrews 11; James 2) ➤ Doubt (2 Corinthians 4:4; Joshua 24:14-15; Exodus 32:26; Deuteronomy 6:13-14, 30:15-19; Psalm 78:32; Acts 14:15; Hebrews 4:2; Luke 8:12)
<p>Agnosticism and God:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Does not know whether God exists. ➤ God is not verifiable, therefore he is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Existence of God (Psalm 14:1; 53:1, 92:5-6) ➤ God's self-revelation (Romans 1:18-21; Psalm 19:1-2; Amos 4:13)

⁷ Geisel, Norman L, Christian Apologetics, p14.

Claim of Agnosticism	The Christian's Defense
<p>unknowable and inexpressible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Man cannot make absolutely true statements about the nature or character of God. ➤ As God is a supernatural being, it is literally nonsense to even talk about God. ➤ Man cannot have knowledge of God because he cannot touch, hear, see, smell, or taste God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nature of God (Exodus 20:1-3; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10; Mark 12:29; John 4:24; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6) ➤ Knowing God (Romans 1:28; Galatians 4:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-8) ➤ God, the Creator (Genesis 1-2; Nehemiah 9:6; Isaiah 45:18; Ephesians 3:9; 1 Timothy 4:4; Hebrews 11:3, Revelation 4:11)
<p>Agnosticism and Jesus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The life and moral teachings of Jesus as told in the Gospels are admirable, but not necessarily more than those of certain other historic men. ➤ Some place Jesus on a level with Buddha or Socrates (even Abraham Lincoln). ➤ Virgin birth is a doctrine taken from pagan mythology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Jesus, deity incarnate (Genesis 1:26; John 1:1-14; Philippians 2:1-8; John 5:17-18; Colossians 1:15-17; Isaiah 44:6; Revelation 1:17-18; John 14:8-14; Matthew 1:23; John 10:24-38; 1 John 1:1-3; Luke 22:70; Matthew 16:16) ➤ Jesus, born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-7) ➤ Jesus, the propitiation/payment for man's sin (1 John 2:2; Hebrews 2:17) ➤ Atonement through Christ (Romans 5:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-19)
<p>Agnosticism and Morality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Agnosticism does not accept moral "authority" in the sense that religious people do. ➤ Man should think out questions regarding his personal conduct for himself. ➤ Believes that what religious people accept as "God's law" varies from time to time. ➤ Believes that some kinds of conduct are desirable and some undesirable, yet believes that the concept of "sin" is not useful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Man chooses between good and evil (Genesis 3; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Joshua 24:15; 1 Timothy 6:11; Titus 2:12; Galatians 5:19-22) ➤ Sin separates man from God (Romans 3:23, 6:23; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17) ➤ Salvation reunites (1 Peter 1:17-21; Romans 1:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Galatians 1:6; Philippians 2:12) ➤ Steps to salvation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hear (Romans 10:17; Mark 16:15-16) ○ Believe (Romans 10:10) ○ Repent (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:5-18) ○ Confession (Matthew 10:32-33) ○ Baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4; 1 Peter 3:21) ○ Be faithful (Revelation 2:10; James 2:14-26)

Claim of Agnosticism	The Christian's Defense
<p>Agnosticism and the Nature of Man:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One cannot see, touch, smell, or taste the soul. ➤ Therefore, no concrete evidence that the soul even exists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Man created in likeness of God (Genesis 1:27, 5:1; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9) ➤ Man is designed by God (Psalm 139:12-13; Colossians 1:16) ➤ Man sinned and death is introduced (Genesis 3, 5; Romans 5:12; Hebrews 9:27) ➤ Man's purpose (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7; Philippians 1:21-23)

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the source of knowledge and understanding for man?
2. Discuss how doubt can displace hope.
3. What does God's creation say about His nature?
4. How do you respond to the statement, "Man cannot have knowledge of God because he cannot touch, hear, see, smell, or taste God"?
5. What does the Bible say about the existence of God?
6. How do you go about "knowing" God?
7. How do you defend against the agnostic position that Jesus was just a "good man" or "good teacher"? Why is it important to be able to make such a defense?
8. What does the agnostic base morality on? How does the Christian determine morality?
9. What does it mean that man was created in the image of God? How important is this when defending the nature of man according to scripture?
10. Does man have a soul? How do you defend this position?



GIVE A DEFENSE

Humanism: The Degradation of God – Part I

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;³ but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Genesis 3:1-5

Beginning with Adam and Eve, mankind has faced the temptation to downgrade the importance and significance of God. In doing so, he tries to elevate himself above that of God. In the Garden of Eden, the serpent opened the temptation of Eve with the question, "Has God indeed said 'You shall not eat of every tree in the garden?'" Eve tried to defend her position by answering that God had forbidden them to eat of one particular tree. The serpent then appealed to the prospect of being elevated when he said, "You will be like God, knowing good and evil." He planted the temptation for Eve to think more highly of herself than he ought (Romans 12:3). Adam obviously fell for this temptation as well. The old serpent has been using this strategy throughout the ages. On occasion, the Apostles encountered those who tried to worship them. There was, no doubt, an effort to sweep the Apostles away in man-worship. In Acts 10, we read that the Apostle Peter had a man bow down and try to worship to him. Thankfully, Peter stopped Cornelius and explained that he was just a man and not worthy of worship. Only God is worthy of man's worship!

As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him.²⁶ But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man."

Acts 10:25-26

According to the American Humanist Association website, Humanism is "a progressive philosophy of life that, without theism and other supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity."⁸ Notice the statement "without theism or other supernatural beliefs". This is the long form of "without God". The Webster Dictionary defines Humanism as "a doctrine, attitude, or way of life centered on human interests or values; a philosophy that usually rejects supernaturalism and stresses an individual's dignity and worth and capacity for self-realization through reason." Centered on human interests denotes the elevation of man. The AHA website offers an additional definition of humanism, "Humanism is a philosophy of life that considers the welfare of humankind - rather than the welfare of a supposed God or gods - to be of paramount importance. Humanism maintains there is no evidence a supernatural power ever needed or wanted anything from people, ever communicated to them, or ever interfered with the laws of nature to assist or harm anyone. Humanism's focus, then, is on using human efforts to

⁸ www.americanhumanist.org/Humanism

meet human needs and wants in this world.”⁹ In other words, people who subscribe to the humanist way of thinking essentially reject everything that cannot be seen, stressing the only thing that matters is what you can see. They then seek to degrade God and elevate themselves to a state reserved for God. They claim that man has no need for God and wastes his time in serving God.

History is filled with protagonists of the humanist mindset. Pelagius, a 3rd century Roman, taught that man could save himself apart from the death of Christ. Protagoras, a 5th century Greek said, “Man is the measure of all things.” Petrarch, a 14th century Italian poet, wrote what he viewed as two supreme thoughts about the superiority of man: Man’s free will and nature. In 1933, a document was prepared to summarize the doctrine of the humanist movement. It was called the *Humanist Manifesto*. The manifesto has gone through two major revisions, 1973 and 2003. Consider the opening statements of the *Humanist Manifesto*:

“The time has come for widespread recognition of the radical changes in religious beliefs throughout the modern world. The time is past for mere revision of traditional attitudes. Science and economic change have disrupted the old beliefs. Religions the world over are under the necessity of coming to terms with new conditions created by a vastly increased knowledge and experience. In every field of human activity, the vital movement is now in the direction of a candid and explicit humanism...

There is great danger of a final, and we believe fatal, identification of the word religion with doctrines and methods which have lost their significance and which are powerless to solve the problem of human living in the Twentieth Century. Religions have always been means for realizing the highest values of life. Their end has been accomplished through the interpretation of the total environing situation (theology or world view), the sense of values resulting therefrom (goal or ideal), and the technique (cult), established for realizing the satisfactory life. A change in any of these factors results in alteration of the outward forms of religion...

Today man's larger understanding of the universe, his scientific achievements, and deeper appreciation of brotherhood, have created a situation which requires a new statement of the means and purposes of religion. Such a vital, fearless, and frank religion capable of furnishing adequate social goals and personal satisfactions may appear to many people as a complete break with the past. While this age does owe a vast debt to the traditional religions, it is none the less obvious that any religion that can hope to be a synthesizing and dynamic force for today must be shaped for the needs of this age. To establish such a religion is a major necessity of the present.”¹⁰

The Humanist movement keys on the following points:

- 1) Reject supernatural; accept science
- 2) Reject universal morality; accept situational ethics
- 3) Reject God; accept self as only master
- 4) Reject afterlife; accept here and now

Are you prepared to defend your faith and hope against the rise of humanism, the degradation of God?

⁹ www.americanhumanist.org/Humanism/Definitions_of_Humanism

¹⁰ www.americanhumanist.org/Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_I

Preparing for your Defense

Claim of Humanism	The Christian's Defense
<p>Humanism and the Bible:</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 6):</i> We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of "new thought".</p> <p>The Bible is an ancient text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bible is outdated and not applicable in a progressive society. ➤ Bible was written by and for a long gone society. ➤ People today are smarter and more advanced than those of Bible times. ➤ Bible represents a form of tyranny. ➤ Minimal scientific proof of claims of the Bible – accept only science. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Bible is God's revelation to man (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Ephesians 3:1-7; Matthew 13:11-17; Colossians 2:1-4; Jude 3; 2 Peter 1:3; Galatians 1:6-9; James 1:25; John 7:17) ➤ Power of the Bible (Romans 1:16-17; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Hebrews 4:12) ➤ Bible has timeless guidance for man (John 8:31-32; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:3; 2 John 9-10; 1 Peter 1:22-23) ➤ It is foolish to turn away from God's word (Psalm 14:1, 53:1; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25) ➤ Science as a god (Luke 12:54-66)
<p>Humanism and the Origin of All Things:</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 1):</i> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 5):</i> Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values. Obviously humanism does not deny the possibility of realities as yet undiscovered, but it does insist that the way to determine the existence and value of any and all realities is by means of intelligent inquiry and by the assessment of their relations to human needs. Religion must formulate its hopes and plans in the light of the scientific spirit and method.</p> <p>Humanists generally believe in the Theory of Evolution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Origins (Genesis 1-2; John 1:1-14; Romans 1:20; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2) ➤ Universe is the handiwork of God (Psalm 8:3-4, 19:1-4)
<p>Humanism and God:</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 10):</i> It follows that there will be no uniquely religious emotions and attitudes of the kind hitherto associated with belief in the supernatural.</p> <p>Humanism elevates man to a supreme role:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nature of God (Psalm 18:2, 19:8, 54:4; John 4:24, 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Galatians 6:7; 1 Peter 1:15; 1 John 1:5, 4:8) ➤ God is supreme over all earthly societies (Genesis 11:1-9; Daniel 3; Acts 5:29; Romans 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13-17)

Claim of Humanism	The Christian's Defense
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Man is the source of his own happiness. ➤ Man should seek the most fulfilling and gratifying course through life. ➤ God must be removed from the public place. ➤ God must not be associated in any way with the government of the people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Man defining his own righteousness (Psalm 12:15, 16:2; 2 Corinthians 10:12; Revelation 3:17) ➤ Man needs God (Jeremiah 10:23; 2 Corinthians 12:10; Ephesians 2:8-10)
<p>Humanism and Morality and Society:</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 11):</i> Man will learn to face the crises of life in terms of his knowledge of their naturalness and probability. Reasonable and manly attitudes will be fostered by education and supported by custom. We assume that humanism will take the path of social and mental hygiene and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking.</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 14):</i> The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world.</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 15):</i> We assert that humanism will: (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit the possibilities of life, not flee from them; and (c) endeavor to establish the conditions of a satisfactory life for all, not merely for the few. By this positive morale and intention humanism will be guided, and from this perspective and alignment the techniques and efforts of humanism will flow.</p> <p>Humanism rejects universal morality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accepts situation ethics. ➤ Morality is society dependent. ➤ Do what pleases yourself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sin defined (1 John 2:15-17; Romans 1:28-31, 3:23, 6:23; Galatians 5:19-21) ➤ Holiness is defined by God (1 Peter 1:15-16) ➤ Choice between good and evil (Genesis 3; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Joshua 24:15; 1 Timothy 6:11; Titus 2:12) ➤ Vanity of pleasure seeking (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11)

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss how humanism played into the account of Eve being tempted in the Garden.
2. What is the power of the Bible? Why is it important to know this?
3. How do you counter the argument that the Bible is ancient and no longer applicable?
4. What is the person called who turns away from God's Word? Why?
5. How does the claim of a self-existent universe and life seek to degrade God?
6. What does humanism say about the supernatural? What does the Bible say?
7. Should man seek his own happiness as suggested by the humanist? Please explain.
8. Why would the humanist seek to exclude God from the public places and government?
9. What role does God have in public places and government?
10. How does the humanist define morality?
11. How should the humanist define morality? What role do you play in this?
12. Is man best served with morality being defined by society and culture?



GIVE A DEFENSE

Humanism: The Degradation of God – Part II

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.³ For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Romans 12:1-3

In our previous lesson, we examined the history and tenants of Humanism. The Humanist movement keys on the following points;

- 1) Reject supernatural; accept science.
- 2) Reject universal morality; accept situational ethics.
- 3) Reject God; accept self as only master.
- 4) Reject afterlife; accept here and now.

We have seen how the humanist agenda is to downgrade God and His word. We live in a society that celebrates scientific achievement and that is fine. However, when the scientific thinkers embark on the journey of claiming that science is God, we have trouble. We are reminded of a Chaldean king of old, Nebuchadnezzar. He was a very proud individual who elevated himself beyond what he should have. He believed that majesty and prowess of the kingdom of Babylon was his own doing. God told him that his kingdom would soon depart and he would be humbled. Daniel 4:32-33 recounts exactly how the mighty king fell and the result of such. In the latter part of chapter 4, the record shows how Nebuchadnezzar regained his senses and recognized God as the true God of heaven. Pharaoh (Exodus 7-12), King Saul (1 Samuel 15), and Haman (Esther 7) all had similar experiences. The Bible is clear: God does not applaud man elevating himself to the degradation of God.

You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;¹⁸ but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 3:17-18

The humanist with his *Humanist Manifesto* seeks to elevate man well beyond his station in life. The humanist sees man as a product of “survival of the fittest” in Darwin’s story of evolution. The humanist teaches that man does not really answer to anyone for his conduct. Rather, he should seek that which brings him satisfaction and pleasure. In the process, he gives moral definition to the society around him. The man who has faith in God is a weak and pathetic man, says the humanist. The man who practices religious expression is wasting his time, says the humanist. Our adversary is hard at work to disrupt faith and hope under the guise of modernization. Today, humanists spread their teaching through our education system, “intellectual” programming on television, and through the entertainment industry. Humanism is all around you. Are you prepared to defend your faith and hope against the rise of humanism, the elevation of man?

Preparing for your Defense

Claim of Humanism	The Christian's Defense
<p>Humanism and the Nature of Man:</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 2):</i> "Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as a result of a continuous process."</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 3):</i> "Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected."</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 8):</i> "Religious Humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now. This is the explanation of the humanist's social passion."</p> <p>Humanism rejects the afterlife:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Man is a product of evolution and, thus, has no soul. ➤ No scientific evidence of an afterlife. ➤ Accept only the here and now. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27, 5:1, 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9) ➤ Man has a soul (Genesis 1:28; Ecclesiastes 12:1-7; Philippians 1:21-23; Mark 12:27; Luke 12:16-40, 16:19-31; Genesis 35:18; Luke 8:49-56; Revelation 6:9-11; Matthew 10:28, 22:32, 17:1-3) ➤ Man's purpose (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7; Philippians 1:21-23; Galatians 5:22-23; John 15) ➤ Problem with living for today (Luke 12:13-21; James 4:13-16) ➤ Man is mortal (Genesis 3, 5; Romans 5:12; Hebrews 9:27) ➤ Judgment and the here after (Matthew 25:31-46; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; Hebrews 9:27; 2 Corinthians 5:9-11; 2 Peter 3:10-13)
<p>Humanism and Religion:</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 4):</i> "Humanism recognizes that man's religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history, are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment and with his social heritage. The individual born into a particular culture is largely molded by that culture."</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 7):</i> "Religion consists of those actions, purposes, and experiences which are humanly significant. Nothing human is alien to the religious. It includes labor, art, science, philosophy, love, friendship, recreation—all that is in its degree expressive of intelligently satisfying human living. The distinction between the sacred and the secular can no longer be maintained."</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 9):</i> "In the place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nature of religion (James 1:27; Matthew 7:21-22; John 14:15-21; Duet 10:12-22; Ecclesiastes 12:13; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Psalm 78:35-37; Matthew 6:5, Matthew 23) ➤ Man called to worship God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Frequency (John 20:1; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2) ○ Collection (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9) ○ Lords Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11; Matthew 26:26-29) ○ Singing (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; Acts 16:25) ○ Preaching (Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:24; 2 Timothy 4:1-4)

Claim of Humanism	The Christian's Defense
<p>promote social well-being.”</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 12):</i> “Believing that religion must work increasingly for joy in living, religious humanists aim to foster the creative in man and to encourage achievements that add to the satisfactions of life.”</p> <p><i>Humanist Manifesto (Article 13):</i> “Religious humanism maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life. The intelligent evaluation, transformation, control, and direction of such associations and institutions with a view to the enhancement of human life is the purpose and program of humanism. Certainly religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.”</p>	
<p>Humanism and Faith:</p> <p>Religion, particularly Christianity, is considered a crutch for the weak and a means to get through life. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Jesse Ventura (Former Governor of MN), “Organized religion is a sham and a crutch for weak-minded people who need strength in numbers.” ➤ Ted Turner (Media mogul), “Religion is for losers.” ➤ Sigmund Freud (Austrian neurologist), “[Believers] give the name of ‘God’ to some vague abstraction which they have created for themselves.” ➤ Humanist believes that man should be self sufficient and have no need for God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We need God (Genesis 1:26; Romans 1:18–22, 5:10) ➤ God helps us in times of need (Matthew 11:28–30; 1 Peter 5:6-7) ➤ Faith and obedient belief are essential (Romans 10:10-17; James 2; Hebrews 11)

Questions for Discussion

1. What does “man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as a result of a continuous process” mean? Does this align with biblical principles?
2. What is the purpose of man according to the humanist?
3. What is the purpose of man according to the Bible?
4. What is removed if you believe the humanist view of the afterlife?
5. Do religious practices and patterns need to be reconstituted over time? Please explain.
6. Why is it important to worship God the way He prescribes?
7. Discuss how you can be religious AND have a satisfying life.
8. How do you defend against the claims of men like Gov. Jesse Ventura and Ted Turner?
9. Does faith serve as a “crutch” for Christians? Please explain.
10. How is faith connected to the “reason for the hope that is in you”? Is this something to defend?



GIVE A DEFENSE

Atheism vs. God – Part I

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.

Psalm 14:1

Atheism is a system of belief; just as Christianity is based on belief. As such, atheism takes on the attributes of religion. Atheism unequivocally denies that there is an all powerful God that created and controls the universe. Atheism is defined by Webster dictionary as “a disbelief in the existence of deity, the doctrine that there is no deity”¹¹. The word literally means “a” (without) “theos” (God). As with other religions, there are numerous variations in the core beliefs of atheism. The common denominator for all atheistic beliefs is that there is no God today. For purposes of our study, let us consider four key variations of atheism:¹²

- Strong (Traditional) atheism is the belief that there never was, is, nor ever will be a God.
- Mythological atheism is the belief that a God-myth was once alive, but has died and is no longer viable.
- Dialectical atheism is the belief that God once lived, but died when he became incarnate (in the flesh) and died on the cross.
- Linguistical (Semantical) atheism claims that there is no value in any religious talk.

Atheism is a natural extension of the agnostic and humanistic beliefs. Agnosticism is based on the skepticism and uncertainty that God exists. Humanism seeks to minimize and marginalize God and elevate man. Both often lead to the denial of the existence of God and His involvement in the world today. The stakes could not be higher when contemplating and defending against atheism. Blaise Pascal, a 17th century mathematician, offered what is often referred to as “Pascal’s Wager”: “If you erroneously believe in God, you lose nothing (assuming that death is the absolute end), whereas if you correctly believe in God, you gain everything (eternal bliss). But if you correctly disbelieve in God, you gain nothing (death ends all), whereas if you erroneously disbelieve in God, you lose everything (eternal damnation).”¹³

For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.¹⁹ While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.

2 Peter 2:18-19

Some claim that atheism involves and is rooted in the absence of faith. This is an incorrect supposition as the atheist most definitely has faith, albeit a very different faith from the Christian. The faith of the atheist is based on things in the universe, things that can be sensed, analyzed,

¹¹ www.merriam-webster.com

¹² Geisler, Normal L., *Christian Apologetics*, p. 215-216.

¹³ www.infidels.org/library/modern/theism/wager.html

synthesized, and measured. The faith of the Christian is established in the very concept of God, our eternal father and creator. It is the very substance of religion and a belief system founded on the principle that there was, is, and forever shall be a living and eternal deity. Faith is the basis for the atheist's non-belief in God. Faith is the basis for the Christian's belief in God. The Hebrew writer describes faith as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." We are called on to have optimism about our future because of faith. That is the substance of the Christian's "hope". Do you truly believe in God? Are you prepared to defend your faith against the doubt asserted by those who believe there is no God?

Preparing for your Defense

Claim of Atheism	The Christian's Defense
<p>Atheism and the existence of God</p> <p>The atheist will offer the following "proof" that there is no God (summary from Christian Apologetics)¹⁴:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Causality proof: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Everything is the product of "cause and effect". ○ A self-caused being is impossible. ○ No being could ever cause itself to exist. ➤ Cosmological proof: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Universe was not "created" but came to be through the natural cosmological processes. ○ The universe originated by a random process with the world formed by chance. ➤ Ontological (philosophical study of the nature of being, existence, or reality) proof: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Antinomy of Omnipotence</i>: An omnipotent God is a contradiction in terms- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If there were an all powerful being, then he could do anything. ▪ It makes no sense for an omnipotent being to create something he does not control. ▪ The properties of omnipresence and omniscience are impossible. ○ <i>Antinomy of Perfections</i>: A perfect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cosmological proof of God (Genesis 1; Psalm 19:1-4; Job 38; Romans 1:20-21) ➤ Nature of God (Psalm 18:2, 19:8, 54:4; John 4:24, Romans 1:18-19; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Galatians 6:7; 1 Peter 1:15; 1 John 1:5, 4:8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Omniscient (Psalm 147:5; Hebrews 4:13; 1 John 3:20) ○ Omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10; Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 23:24; Acts 17:27) ○ Omnipotent (Psalm 115:3, 135:6; Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27; Revelation 19:6) ➤ Characteristics of God (John 4:24; 1 John 4:7-16; Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 7:24; Isaiah 55:8; Psalm 7:11; 1 Corinthians 1:25; 1 John 1:5) ➤ God allows man to choose between right and wrong (See second lesson on Atheism) ➤ God allows man to suffer (See second lesson on Atheism) ➤ God allows imperfections to exist which further signify the importance of hope (See first lesson on Make Ready Your Apologia)

¹⁴ Geisler, Norman L., Christian Apologetics, pp. 215-223.

Claim of Atheism	The Christian's Defense
<p>being that represents contradictions. How can a perfect being possess both love and wrath?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Antinomy of Time</i>: If the world began in time, then there must have been time before time begun. ➤ Natural proof: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If man is free to choose as he wishes, then there cannot be an all powerful God. How could an all knowing being allow man to have freedom of choice? ○ God is nothing more than a projection of human imperfections. ➤ Practical proof: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The concept of God as presented by the Bible and religion is essentially self-contradictory, and that it is logically impossible that such a God could exist. ○ God does not exist because you can not present empirical evidence that God exists or is detectable. ○ How can a God allow the kinds of immorality that exists exist? God, if he existed, would destroy all forms of evil. ○ If existing, God would not allow the kinds of suffering that is observed in the world. God, if he existed, would end all suffering of mankind. 	
<p>Atheism and Origins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Origins – Big Bang Theory and Theory of Evolution. ➤ The universe formed itself out of random chance. ➤ Complex life forms evolved from simple life forms over millions of years. ➤ Laws of nature are in control. ➤ The universe is 13.7 billion years old. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Before the origin of the universe and earth, God existed (John 1:1, 17:5, 24; Colossians 1:17; Revelation 22:13) ➤ God created the heavens and earth (Genesis 1-2; John 1:1-14; Romans 1:20; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2) ➤ Handiwork of God (Psalm 8:3-4, 19:1-4) ➤ God created life and mankind (Genesis 1:26, 2:7, 5:2; Psalm 8:5, 100:3, 139:14; Ecclesiastes 12:1-7; Malachi 2:10; 1 Corinthians 11:12; John 4:24)

Claim of Atheism	The Christian's Defense
<p>Atheism and Religion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Atheism is not an expression of religion, but a system of beliefs. ➤ There is no practical use for religious expression. ➤ Rejects religious dogma - Better to preach the message of "be good to your fellow man" than to preach the gospel of "believe in God or be condemned." ➤ Atheism places awe and transcendence in nature and natural processes. ➤ Parents who raise their children in a religious environment are committing "child abuse"¹⁵ ➤ Western religions reliance on divine authority lends itself to authoritarianism and dogmatism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ True religion defined (Joshua 24:14; Psalm 145:18; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Mark 12:28-34; James 1:26-27, 4:8; Acts 17:22-34) ➤ Message of the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:18; 15:1-4; Matthew 28:19; Mark 13:10; Romans 1:16-17; Colossians 1:23) ➤ Gospel as power and authoritative (Luke 14:25-33; John 8:31-32, 10:7-10; Romans 1:16-17; Hebrews 4:11-13; 1 Corinthians 1:18-19; 2 Timothy 1:8-12) ➤ Parents raising children in a religious environment (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Joshua 24:15; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:21)

¹⁵ www.creation.com/atheism

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the common claim of all variants of atheism?
2. What threat does this claim have to the Christian and his/her hope?
3. What does the scripture say about God's role in the origin of all things?
4. What does it mean for God to be "omnipotent"? What scriptures defend this characteristic?
5. What does it mean for God to be "omniscient"? What scriptures defend this characteristic?
6. What does it mean for God to be "omnipresent"? What scriptures defend this characteristic?
7. Was the universe and all things formed as a product of random chance and evolution?
8. What is "theistic evolution"? Is it consistent with the principles of the Bible?
9. Define religion. How is atheism a religion?
10. Is the Bible a set of authoritative and dogmatic mandates as suggested by the atheist point of view? Please explain.



GIVE A DEFENSE

Atheism vs. God – Part II

If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"³³ Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."³⁴ Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

1 Corinthians 15:32-33

Atheism, like humanism, has a two-fold agenda. First, as seen in the first part of our study on Atheism, it seeks to prove that God is the stuff of myths and that no such being actually exists. While the atheist point of view regarding God may sound scientific and authoritative, it is in reality a system of beliefs and faith. The second agenda associated with atheism is to answer age-old questions about man. Atheism seeks to define man in a no-God context. Atheism claims to have the scientific and logical evidences to back up the claims about man, his nature, his faith, his behavior, and what happens to man after he dies. The evidences offered are nothing more than theoretical. For the Christian, these arguments are designed to interject doubt and displace your faith. The atheist belief is that the morals of man should be determined by man and his society. The Christian understands the value of a higher calling to moral and ethical behavior. The atheist has confidence in himself while the Christian has confidence in a loving God. The atheist says that there is no such thing as a soul and eternity for that soul to exist in. The atheist takes a finite view of life, defined by breath in the body. One has to wonder in what the atheist "hopes". On the other hand, the Christian has deep hope in an eternity in the presence of God, once the soul has departed from the earthly body. Jesus said in John 14:1-4

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know."

Now, that is a powerful basis for hope.

There are many people in our society who are living without hope. Are you prepared to defend the reason for the hope that is in you?

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.² And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

2 Peter 2:1-3

Preparing for your Defense

Claim of Atheism	The Christian's Defense
<p>Atheism and the Nature of Man:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is no scientific evidence of a soul. ➤ Rejects the notion of the soul surviving for eternity. ➤ There is no credible evidence that human beings are a special creation of a deity. ➤ Man is the product of evolutionary processes and is an example of nature's selection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Man was created in the likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27, 5:1; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9) ➤ Man was designed by God (Psalm 139:13-14; Isaiah 29:15-16; Colossians 1:16) ➤ Man superior over created life (Genesis 1:26-31, 2:19; Psalm 8:4-8) ➤ Man has a conscience (John 8:9; Romans 2:15; 1 Corinthians 8:7-13; 1 Timothy 4:2) ➤ Man subject to suffering and tribulation, but God knows his limitations (1 Peter 1:6-9; James 4:14; 1 Corinthians 10:13) ➤ God allows man to choose between right and wrong (Genesis 4:5; Psalm 1, 15; Proverbs 22:6; Philippians 4:8)
<p>Atheism and Ethics / Morals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Atheists differ on the issue of ethics and morality; some claim that there are absolutes and some do not. ➤ The basis for ethics is that "an action is unethical/immoral if it causes harm to others." ➤ Evil is defined based on personal preferences and viewpoints. ➤ Ordinary people can engage in acts of profound evil. ➤ Moral relativism - no absolute morals exist, God-inspired or otherwise, and thus rely on vague, transient, and corrupting notions of morality. ➤ Moral imperatives and values naturally evolve over time. ➤ The Greek philosopher Epicurus (341–270 BC) stated the classic form of the problem of evil. His syllogism may be stated¹⁶: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If a perfectly good God exists, then there is no evil in the world. ○ There is evil in the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ God determines what is ethical and moral behavior for man (Proverbs 16:25, 20:24; Jeremiah 10:23; Psalm 33:4, 119:9) ➤ Problem with man defining his own righteousness (Proverbs 12:15, 16:2, 20:6, 30:12; 2 Corinthians 10:12; Revelation 3:17; Isaiah 55:8; Hebrews 4:15; John 12:18) ➤ Evil defined (Genesis 2:9, 3:5, 6:5; Psalm 34:14-16) ➤ Satan source of evil (Genesis 3:1-3; 1 Chronicles 21:1; Job 1-2; Matthew 4:1-11; John 8:44-47, 13:2; Acts 5:3; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Peter 5:8)

¹⁶ www.creation.com/atheism

Claim of Atheism	The Christian's Defense
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Therefore, a perfectly good God does not exist. ➤ Atheists deny the existence of Satan. 	
<p>Atheism and Faith / Confidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Believes God is an invention of man. ➤ Fears and respects science as supreme. ➤ Claim that science has disproved the immaterial or supernatural. ➤ Has confidence in the potential of humanity. ➤ Believes religious faith will lead one to falsehood. ➤ Religious faith is a “virus” of the mind. ➤ Atheists argue that miracles cannot happen because the laws of nature are immutable and cannot be suspended, broken, or manipulated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fear and confidence in being held accountable (Job 19:29; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36; Romans 2:16, 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 4:5) ➤ God in the thoughts of man (Psalm 10:4) ➤ Confidence in God (Proverbs 3:26; Matthew 16:13-17; 1 John 3:24; 1 John 4:13; Romans 8:16; Col. 2:2-3; John 20:31; Hebrews 10:22) ➤ Faith (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:1-6; James 2:17; 1 John 5:4; Ephesians 6:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:8) ➤ Confidence in the final revelation (John 13:7, 16:33; 2 Corinthians 3:14)
<p>Atheism and Death/Afterlife:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Death occurs when the brain ceases to function. ➤ All life-forms end in death and the elements of which they are composed return to the earth to be used in some new organism. ➤ Does not believe in an afterlife, Heaven, or Hell. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Death is a separation of soul and body (Genesis 3:19, 5:1-32; Ecclesiastes 3:2, 12:6-7; Luke 16:19-23; Hebrews 9:27) ➤ Judgment (Hebrews 9:27; Job 19:25-27; Ecclesiastes 9:10-11, 12:14; Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:26-29; Acts 17:31; Romans 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:9-11; 2 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 3:1-12) ➤ Salvation of the soul (2 Timothy 2:2; Romans 1:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Galatians 1:6; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Romans 6:1-4; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:5-18; Philippians 2:12)

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss what it means to be created in the likeness of God.
2. How can you have hope based on the Bible teaching on the soul of man vs. what the atheist claims?
3. Is it possible for man to be a product of evolutionary processes and still be in concert with biblical teaching? Please explain.
4. What is moral relativism?
5. How are ethics and morals established in the view of the atheist?
6. How are ethics and morals established in the teaching of the Bible?
7. Discuss how evil exists in the view of the atheist and that of the Bible.
8. In what does the atheist place his/her confidence? What does the Christian place his/her confidence?
9. Has science disproved the supernatural? How do you know for sure?
10. What does the atheist say about faith in God?
11. Discuss the different beliefs regarding death in atheism and Christianity. How is this connected with hope?



GIVE A DEFENSE

Conclusion

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:6-9

Our study has taken us through the preparation for defending “the reason of the hope that is in us”. The hope that is in us is infectious but we can relinquish it very easily. When people observe you full of hope, they will respond. Throughout this study, we have explored what it means to make our verbal argument. This defense designed to convince others and protect the one giving it. We have studied how Christians are expected to always be ready with a defense that manifests itself in matters of doctrine, morality, and personal convictions. We have explored how to make such a defense with character and purpose. Hopefully, you have seen the vital importance of giving your defense in two key areas. First, we defend ourselves and our families from the onslaught of the world. As Christians, we are deeply blessed with the hope of eternity with our God. This hope drives our decisions and impacts our interactions with others. It makes possible enduring persecution for the Lord’s sake. However, our hope may become somewhat complacent or be relinquished over time. It may be weakened by the introduction of doubt. Such doubt often comes through our choices of companions, worldly ideas and ideals presented through our education system, and through our choices of entertainment. We must continually reinforce our defenses to withstand such encroachment. In essence, we use the word of God and His promises to “firewall” ourselves from the world. A second key area of our defense is to enlighten those around us to the reason for the hope that is in us. We let the light of hope shine brightly. Jesus said in Matt 5:14, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.” The Lord expects us to allow the hope that is in us to shine brightly. The result of such is multifold. As a Christian, we are set apart from the world. Either through our actions or words, or both, those around us may respond favorably and seek to understand that which guides us. This may happen with family members, children, neighbors, co-workers, co-students, or virtual strangers. It is a truly beautiful thing when your influence leads an alien sinner to the Lord. However, the response is not always positive. The New Testament has quite a lot to say about such negative reaction to the exposure of sin and walking in darkness. The child of God should expect a negative response and be prepared for it. In New Testament times, people sometimes paid a heavy price for the reason of the hope that was in them. Some were rejected, persecuted, thrown into prison, or ultimately sacrificed their life. Such continues today. You, too, are called to “give a defense for the reason of the hope that is in you”. Are you ready to do so?

Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matt 5:11-12

Preparing for your Defense

1) Defense with a Positive Result

- a) Recognizing error for what it is (John 8:44; 2 Peter 2:1-2; Matthew 15:9; Acts 20:29-31; Hebrews 5:14)
- b) Strengthening and protecting yourself and family (Deuteronomy 6:5-9; Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6; 2 Timothy 1:13; Jude 21; 2 Peter 1:5-11)
- c) Growing in confidence and strength (Deuteronomy 31:6; Philippians 1:27-30; Ephesians 6:10-20; 1 John 4:18; Colossians 3:16; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 Corinthians 16:13)
- d) Influencing and persuading others (Matthew 5:13-16; Acts 4:1-4, 26:28; 2 Corinthians 5:11; Colossians 1:28; 2 Timothy 4:1-2)
- e) Edifying the saints (Romans 14:9-21, 15:7; Ephesians 4:11-16, 29; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 12:12-13)
- f) Being near to God (Matthew 10:32; Acts 5:29; James 4:8; Psalm 73:28, 118:5-9; Hebrews 7:19, 10:22; 1 John 1:5-10)
- g) Examples:
 - i) Peter and the apostles (Acts 2-5)
 - ii) Paul (2 Timothy 1:8-12, 4:6-8)
 - iii) Priscilla and Aquilla (Acts 18:26)
 - iv) Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5)

2) Defense with a Negative Response

- a) Suffering Persecution and Suffering (Matthew 5:11-12, 10:22, 39; Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 1:6-9, 3:17; Revelation 2:8-11; 2 Timothy 1:8-12)
- b) Being despised for your biblical values (Psalm 119:141; 1 Corinthians 4:10-13; Acts 4:1-4)
- c) Breached friendships and fellowship (James 4:4; 2 Timothy 4:3-4; Ephesians 5:11-13)
- d) Suffering physical injury or death (Matthew 10:39; Acts 7, 11:19; 2 Corinthians 4:11, 12:10; Philippians 1:29)
- e) Having to endure (Matthew 10:22; James 5:7-11; 1 Corinthians 4:11-13; 2 Timothy 4:5; 1 Peter 5:10)
- f) Examples:
 - i) John the Baptizer (Matthew 4:12, 14:4)
 - ii) Peter and John (Acts 4-5)
 - iii) Paul (Acts 9:2; 2 Timothy 4:6-8)
 - iv) Steven (Acts 7:59-60)

3) What is expected of us?

- a) Pray for strength and boldness (Acts 4:23-31)
- b) Continued growth in knowledge and ability to stand for the truth (Psalm 19:8, 119:105; Proverbs 2:6; John 8:31-32; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Peter 1:5-11, 3:18; 1 John 2:24-27, 3:24)
- c) Support and strengthen one another (Ephesians 4:2-3, 12-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24; 1 John 1:7)
- d) Do not grow weary (Galatians 6:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:13; Hebrews 12:3)
- e) Rejoice and have joy, even when being persecuted for defending the reason of the hope that is in you (Romans 5:1-2, 11; Philippians 2:19, 3:1; 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16; 1 Peter 1:6-8; 1 John 5:13)
- f) Seize every opportunity to give your defense (Galatians 6:10; 2 Timothy 4:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:11; James 4:13-17)

- g) Make your defense a top priority – Always being ready
 - i) Living every day as a Christian (Matthew 5:14-16; Philippians 1:21-26; Galatians 2:20)
 - ii) Defense enabled through studying and knowing God's word (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:15, 3:16-17; Hebrews 5:12-14; 1 John 2:14, 5:18-21; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 4:12)
 - iii) Defense given through confession (Mark 8:38; 1 John 2:23; Luke 12:8-9; Romans 10:8-10; 1 John 4:15)
 - iv) Defense given through renouncing and rebuking sin (Ephesians 5:11; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:10-16)
 - v) Defense given with love (1 Corinthians 13; 1 John 3:10-23, 4:7-11-19)
 - (1) Love for God and Christ
 - (2) Love for the word of God
 - (3) Love for your family
 - (4) Love for your friends
 - (5) Love for your neighbor
 - (6) Love for those who would persecute and harm you
 - vi) Defense given now! (Romans 13:11-14; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 3:14-22; 1 Peter 3:15)

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss how you giving a defense results in something positive.
2. What can error and falsehood do to the reason for the hope that is in you?
3. Is it easy to have confidence in the promises of the Bible? Please expand.
4. Why is it important to “firewall” yourself from the influences of the world? How do you do this?
5. Can you have hope and live distant from God? Please explain your answer.
6. Discuss how your giving a defense may result in something negative or challenging.
7. Why might others despise you for your hope?
8. Discuss at least one negative outcome that may result from properly defending your hope.
9. How might other Christians assist you when defending your hope?
10. Might you ever expect to be persecuted for your hope?
11. Are you ready to defend the reason for the hope that is in you?