



Over the past several decades, the reasons for people to leave or stay away from religion keep growing and growing. Christians base their beliefs on a book written almost 2000 years ago, and it keeps getting translated and updated. And, outside of the Bible, we don't really know anything about Jesus. Science routinely offers explanations for the universe we live in. Christians are often characterized as judgemental, intolerant, bigoted homophobes who are out of touch with culture. They should stop pushing their views on other people and keep their beliefs out of politics. I mean, wars are started because of religious ideologies. Bombs go off. Planes crash into buildings. All because of religion.

With all that in mind, I'd like to do the right thing here and offer an apology. Because I am a Christian.

Apologizing Doesn't Mean Having To Say "I'm Sorry"

Today, we think of an apology as saying you're sorry for something you did wrong. The "I'm sorry" is usually followed up with reasons on why we did what we did. The word *apology* comes from the Greek word *apologia* which means "to give a defense". To make your case. So, the kind of apology I'm going to offer up isn't on account of any wrongdoing; I'm just going straight to the defense of the Christian worldview using reason, logic and evidence for why Christians believe what they believe. And I also hope to train up other Christians to be able to discuss their beliefs with others and spread the Gospel. So, let my apology begin.

At first, the idea of using reason to talk about our beliefs may seem very un-Christian. The majority of culture (Christians included) have been taught that you have to put your faith in one hand, your intelligence in the other, and never should the two meet. [Christians are supposed to have a "blind faith", right?](#) Where we just close our eyes and leap into the abyss of uncertainty hoping something is there to break our fall. Doesn't God want us to never ask questions and just do as we're told? Aren't we just supposed to be peace loving, non-confrontational do-gooders? We're not supposed to believe all this stuff in the Bible is *real* are we? Isn't it just there to be another way to show how to be a "good person"?

Making The Case For Making The Case

So, is there a Biblical case for making a case for Christianity? Absolutely. The New Testament is full of examples of the Apostles using reason to spread and defend what they witnessed. In Colossians 4:5, Paul instructs the churches in Colossae to "conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity". They had to know how to talk to non-Christians. In Titus 1:9, Paul lists one of the qualifications to be an elder as "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be



able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict". We need to know what we believe so we can tell others about our worldview, be able to correct those who get it wrong, and defend our position when it comes under attack.

Then, there's the book of Acts. I love Acts. You want to see how to spread the Gospel? Read Acts. You want to see apologetics in action? It's all over the place in Acts. In Acts 6:8-10, Stephen is confronted by many factions in Jerusalem. And they began to argue with him. "But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke." They tried to argue him down in public, but his ability to defend what he believed was so good, the only way they could get him out of the picture was to spread lies and plot against him.

While not considered an apologist in the classical sense, Paul gives us many examples of using reason and argumentation to defend the Gospel and help spread the Word. One of the classic examples of this is in Acts 17:17-31. Paul is in Athens. He spends his days reasoning with Jews in the synagogues, and in the marketplace with whoever happens to be around. He's giving arguments and trying to convince people that Jesus was the Messiah. We are told he is even talking with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Philosophers argue. All day. So, Paul was arguing with them on the truth of the Gospel. Finally, Paul is standing before the Greek council of elders (the Areopagus) and makes the case for the Christian God based on their concept of the Unknown God that they have reasoned out and the words of their own poets saying as much.

After Paul leaves Athens, he keeps at it in Corinth. Acts 18:4 says "And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks." Later, Paul is in Ephesus. He continues spreading the Gospel using reason for 3 months in the synagogue, trying to persuade the Jews. Eventually, some of the people get mad, so he left and went to a place where the locals would meet up and debate various topics in their leisure (the hall of Tyrannus). (see Acts 19:8-10)

Another example is Paul in Rome (Acts 28:17-31). He's been sent to Rome to be put on trial by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. The Roman Jews hadn't heard anything bad about him but they had heard people "talking against this sect" (Christianity) and wanted to hear what he had to say. So, they gathered and he tried to "persuade them about Jesus".

These accounts may drum up images of guys standing around in amphitheaters, wearing robes, with flowing white beards and shaking their fists at each other. It all appears very scholarly. To be able to give a defense does require a little extra work on our part. Being able to do this, though, is not a role meant solely for the academics. Every believer is told they need to be able to make a case. A verse many people cite as the basis for us to do



apologetics is 1 Peter 3:15. It says:

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. (NIV)

Notice what Peter is saying here. As a believer in Jesus Christ, you have to be prepared to give an answer (some translations use “reason” or “defense”) for the hope that lies within you. We have to educate ourselves and be able to give good, reasoned, well thought out answers for why we believe what we believe when people ask or challenge us. This requires us to study and think through issues and challenges we are currently facing today.

Clearing The Way For The Cross

Today we live in an ultra-skeptical increasingly secular culture where more and more people don't trust the Bible anymore. Just saying “the Bible tells me so” or “I just feel it's right” isn't enough. We can't appeal to the Bible as an authority when they think of it as an outdated book, written by men of power with an agenda, and it's full of myths and legends. We have to be able to give well thought out reasons for what we believe that both speak God's Truth and communicate it in a language that others are open to hear. The good news is to get the conversation started you don't even have to quote a single passage from the Bible most times. We can give reasons for God's existence, evidence for the life of Jesus and proof we have the right books in the Bible without having to throw out a single verse.

This quote from Dr. Os Guinness is one of my favorites and it just about sums up the reason we, as Christians, need to use apologetics in order to spread the Gospel today:

Apologetics is pre-evangelism, which is communication that clarifies what is obscuring and obstructing the good news. And in this sense, it is the necessary foreword or preface wherever there is indifference or complacency or resistance or hostility. It is the intellectual, moral, spiritual bush-clearing operation that is the preparation for the gospel to come in.

Strengthen Your Own Faith

When I first encountered apologetics, I was a “spiritual” person who still believed in A Something but bought into a lot of clever assertions about how the Bible was put together,



how we didn't really know anything about Jesus outside of the Bible, how everything could be the path to God and Christianity was just some people's way. I thought these things because I had never heard anyone refute them, and they all sounded terribly clever and informed. It wasn't until I started listening to [William Lane Craig](#) and [Greg Koukl](#) that I realized how terrible my arguments and objections were. I was just spitting party lines without really thinking them through. But, once I started studying the issues and arguments, it was like a flood light was being shone on reality and I was finally seeing things as they really are for the first time.

Our faith in God is kind of like standing on a Jenga tower. When we first come to Christ, we're all fired up and nothing can touch us. Over time, we start to have questions. Some of us are taught we can't ask those questions and we should just "have faith". So, some of the Jenga blocks get knocked out from under us. We are still standing, but the tower is a bit more wobbly. Then, we start to see clever slogans on social media, or hear assertions about Christianity that we have no response for. And more blocks get knocked out. Until finally, the whole tower collapses and we fall to the ground - our belief in God completely damaged and maybe irreparable.

For the doubting Christian, apologetics is like building up the Jenga tower and then slathering it in Super Glue. If you've studied how the Bible was put together, you can defend the attacks against it. The most common deal with when it was written, how many errors and contradictions it has, and that the whole thing was a political construct. If you study a little about world religions, you can see how they can't all be true at the same time. Studying these topics will only strengthen your faith and reassure you that the Christian world view is the one that makes the most sense on how the world works.

The good news is that a mountain of resources have been published in the past few decades to help Christians think through these issues and be able to give a defense. I've compiled a short list of [Apologetics books for beginners](#) that will give you a great start. There are also several great organizations like Stand To Reason (<http://www.str.org>), Reasonable Faith (<http://www.reasonablefaith.org>), Cross Examined (<http://www.crossexamined.org>) and Cold Case Christianity (<http://www.coldcasechristianity.com>) that have tons of great resources to help you learn how to reason through topics and make a case for Christianity. I will be drawing on those organizations heavily as I write my articles for this site, and I encourage you to check them out as well.