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SESSION 5 | Answering Tough Questions in Evangelism

I. INTRODUCTION TO APOLOGETICS: WHAT IS “APOLOGETICS”?

- A. What comes to mind when you think of “Apologetics”?
- B. A Working Definition: Apologetics is the gospel-oriented application of Scripture to doubt and unbelief.¹
- C. Apologetics and Evangelism

- 1. Evangelism answers “what” questions.

“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” (Acts 16:30-31)

- 2. Apologetics answers “why” questions.

II. APOLOGETICS: EVERY CHRISTIAN’S CALLING

- A. “Set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.” 1 Peter 3:15
- B. “Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.” Jude 3
- C. I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. Philippians 1:7
- D. “Though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10: 3-5

¹ Adapted from John Frame's definition in *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 87.

III. WHAT IS KEEPING THE UNBELIEVER FROM BELIEVING?

- A. An Anti-God View of the World (Genesis 3).
- B. A Willful Suppression of the Truth (Romans 1:18-23).
- C. Self-Deception (1 John 1:8; James 1:14-16).
- D. Hostility Towards God (Romans 8:7; cf. Romans 3:10-18).
- E. Not A Lack of Evidence (Psalm 19:1-6; Luke 16:27-31).

IV. HOW TO DO APOLOGETICS: THE NUTS AND BOLTS

- A. Two Foundational Principles:
 - 1. Principle 1: The No Neutrality Principle
 - Remember the Lord: We honor Christ as Lord over our apologetics (1 Peter 3:15)
 - Remember the Bible: We don't abandon the Bible in our apologetics (Romans 3:1-20; Acts 17:22-34)
 - 2. Principle 2: The Gospel-Oriented Principle.
 - Remember the Power: The gospel alone has the power to save (Romans 1:16; James 2:19)
 - Remember the Mission: Our goal is to win people, not arguments (Matthew 28:19-20; cf. Proverbs 29:9; 2 Corinthians 10:5).
- B. The Two-Step Method (Proverbs 3:5-8; Proverbs 26:4-5; 1 Corinthians 3:18-20; Colossians 2:1-23)

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.
Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.
It will be healing to your flesh,
and refreshment to your bones.”
Proverbs 3:5-8

1. Step 1: Show to the unbeliever the foolishness of their unbelief (Proverbs 26:4-5; 1 Corinthians 3:18-20)
 - Are they being arbitrary?
 - Are they being inconsistent?
2. Step 2: Show to the unbeliever the wisdom of the biblical worldview, calling them to repent and believe the gospel.
 - How does the Bible address their questions?
 - How can I appeal to them intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually?
 - How do their questions show they are made in the image of God?
 - How does the gospel relate to their questions?

V. PRACTICAL APOLOGETICS: ANSWERING OBJECTION

A. The Problem of Evil in a Pandemic:

Your atheist friend says to you, “If God really exists, how can still believe that he’s good after all this?”

B. How can I sympathize with him? How can I show that I take his questions seriously?

C. Apply the Two Step Method

1. Step 1: Show to the unbeliever the foolishness of their unbelief.
 - Given atheistic presuppositions, why is COVID-19 evil? A person cannot make a moral judgement without first having a moral standard.
2. Step 2: Show to the unbeliever the wisdom of the biblical worldview, calling them to repent and believe the gospel.
 - Two foundational ideas in answering the problem of Evil
 - Sin
 - Providence
 - How does the Bible answer his question?

- It gives a meaningful definition of evil
- It gives an account for the presence of evil
- It gives an account for the enigma of evil
- It gives endurance through evil
- It give great hope in the midst of evil
- How can I appeal to the way he has shown he is made in the image of God?
- How can I show him the gospel is the answer to his question?

VI. HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR APOLOGETIC ENCOUNTERS?

- A. Study the gospel.
- B. Come to church on Sundays.
- C. Read the Bible. Pray Every day.
- D. Read Christian Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms
 - 1. The New City Catechism
 - 2. The Apostles Creed
 - 3. The Nicene Creed
 - 4. The Athanasian Creed
- E. Recommended Resources on Apologetics
 - 1. Tactics, 10th Anniversary Edition: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions by Gregory Koukl
 - 2. Every Thought Captive: A Study Manual for the Defense of Christian Truth by Richard Pratt
 - 3. Expository Apologetics: Answering Objections with the Power of the Word by Voddie Baucham Jr.