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**How to Organize Discipleship Training - Part 6**  
**How to Defend the Faith**

By Freddy Davis

Over the years, I have had a lot of different people attack me because of the content of various articles and videos I have posted on social media and the MarketFaith Ministries website. Since all of the things I post are specifically explanations of a biblical worldview, or of why non-biblical beliefs are not true, the attacks are, almost without exception, attacks on the Christian faith. These attacks come in different forms, but mostly they are either personal insults or attempts to make me defend why I believe the Christian faith is true.

When it comes to insults, I generally deflect them by insisting that the insults a person expresses to me are not an argument, and that insulting me without explaining why they believe what I have said is wrong is not helping their case. Generally this causes them to start sharing what it is that they don't believe about biblical faith. At that point, I actually have something substantive to respond to. Many others get straight to the attacks on the Christian faith without having to go through the insult phase.

The most common way Christians respond to those who attack their faith is by trying to give reasons why the Christian faith is true – all in an effort to convince the other person that they are wrong. There is certainly value to doing that, and there is a time and place where that kind of response is appropriate and important. When people are genuinely interested in knowing a biblical response to questions, being able to answer them can be very helpful.

But I have found that it is typically not that useful when dealing with people who are attacking. Those folks are generally not looking for answers, they are looking to tear down my faith and vindicate theirs. Under those circumstances, I find a different response to be more appropriate – one that uses a worldview paradigm to put them on the defensive.

**What is Apologetics?**

While most Christians do see value in knowing how to defend their faith, it can safely be said that very few actually acquire the knowledge and skills that allow them to effectively do it. Most see it as something that is beyond their competency. But why is that? Let's begin looking into that matter by defining more carefully what we mean by apologetics.

Simply defined, in Christian circles, apologetics is the defense of the Christian faith. The word is derived from the Greek word *apologia*. Originally it was used in a more secular sense, as part of the normal judicial process, to refer to a "speech of defense" in a courtroom. The word later came to be used by Christians to express the idea of defending the faith.

But apologetics should not be thought of merely as an intellectual pursuit. In fact, the ultimate goal of every use of apologetics for Christians ought to be to lead non-Christians to faith in Christ.

The word *apologia* is used in the New Testament to refer to "a reasoned defense of the faith." We find it used in Philippians 1:7, 16; and most notably in 1 Peter 3:15 where believers are admonished to be ready to give a reasoned defense of their faith. It

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wasn't until the second century A.D. that the word began to be used in an academic sense to refer to writers who defended the beliefs and practices of Christianity against various attacks. It was much later still, in 1794, that it became an actual theological discipline.

There are several different ways people use apologetics to defend the faith. These different ways have been used by Christian apologists throughout church history. The various approaches that we will look at here include: vindication or proof, defense against attacks, and refutation of opposing beliefs. The first two are specifically defensive in that they try to deflect attacks people make against the Christian faith. The third approach goes on the offensive, and an understanding of worldview principles is particularly helpful for engaging this one. Here is how we define the three approaches:

1. Vindication or proof - This use of apologetics involves using philosophical arguments, scientific evidences, and historical proofs to demonstrate why the Christian faith is true.
2. Defense against attacks - This use of apologetics refers to defending Christianity against the various attacks made against it by critics of the faith.
3. Refutation of opposing beliefs - This use of apologetics has its focus on responding to the arguments non-Christians give as they try to support their own beliefs.

### Defensive Apologetics

Apologetics, as it is typically dealt with in Christian circles, is almost exclusively defensive in nature. It generally assumes that people who are not believers will question the Christian faith, and it attempts to come up with responses that give

logical and reasonable replies to the questions. Some of the questioning is absolutely sincere as people seek to learn more about the Christian faith. On the other hand, some questioning is utterly antagonistic. This type generally comes from people who wish to catch Christians off guard and, in the process, demonstrate that the Christian faith is false.

As this article is not about defensive apologetics, we will not delve deeply into it here. However, it is helpful to at least possess an understanding of the scope of this discipline in order to have a big picture understanding of what we are dealing with.

There are actually quite a number of approaches to defensive apologetics. Each one deals with particular types of questions, or represents different ways of answering people's questions. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but some of the more prominent approaches to defensive apologetics include the following:

**Biblical Apologetics** - This approach tackles issues related to the authorship and date of biblical books, the biblical canon, and biblical inerrancy.

**Creation Apologetics** - Creation apologetics includes the topics of young Earth creationism, old Earth creationism, and theistic evolution.

**Experiential Apologetics** - This branch of apologetics asserts that human experience itself is evidence for the validity of the Christian faith. It tends to reject rational arguments and factual evidence, in favor of a more spiritual, self-verifying experience.

**Legal Evidentialism** - Legal evidentialism presents a case for the historicity of the resurrection of Christ using modern legal standards of evidence.

**Historical Evidentialism** - This approach attempts to counteract the nat-

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uralistic hypothesis (usually based in modern social sciences) for the origin of Christianity.

**Moral Apologetics** - Moral apologetics asserts that the human sense of moral obligation is an objective fact of human experience, and uses arguments that stress man's sinfulness and need for redemption.

**Defense of Miracles Argument** - Here, apologists argue that if an all-powerful Creator actually exists, miracles are plausible and reasonable.

**Philosophical Apologetics** - Philosophical apologetics primarily focuses on arguments that support the existence of God. This approach uses numerous philosophical arguments:

- **Cosmological Argument** (study of the universe) - The cosmological argument uses various rationale derived from cosmology to demonstrate that God exists.
- **Teleological Argument** (study of design and purpose in the material world) - This argument focuses on the truth that the design that is evident in the universe demonstrates that a designer is necessary.
- **Ontological argument** (study of the nature of being) - The appeal of the ontological argument is that the very concept of God requires the actual existence of a God.
- **Moral Argument** - The moral argument promotes the belief that objectively real moral values exist, and that they require an absolute source.
- **Transcendental Argument** (focus on matters that exist beyond the natural universe) - This argument asserts that the existence of God is necessary for the existence of the human ability to think and reason.
- **Presuppositional Arguments** – Presuppositional arguments contend that the existence of God is necessary in order for the basic beliefs of

both Theists and non-theists to make sense.

## **Presuppositional Apologetics** -

This methodology, promoted by some Reformed Protestant apologists, asserts that there is no such thing as "neutral" assumptions that allow Christians and non-Christians to come to common ground. As such, presuppositions are necessary for every philosophical position.

**Prophetic Fulfillment** - Prophetic fulfillment promotes the belief that fulfilled biblical prophecies offer compelling evidence for the truth of the Christian faith.

**Scientific Apologetics** - The contention of scientific apologetics is that there is no contradiction between science and the Bible, and that, in fact, science supports Christian apologetics.

While each of these approaches focus in different arenas, they all begin in the same place. They begin with the assumption that the Christian faith is true, then give reasons why it is true based on their particular philosophical beginning point. In that sense all of them are defensive in nature.

## **Apologetics on the Offense**

Apologetics on the offense is the process of discerning the belief system of those who might try to put you on the defensive, and turning things around so that you are putting them on the defensive based on the flaws in their worldview beliefs. Using this approach requires a person to figure out what worldview an antagonist is arguing from, then use the weaknesses of that worldview to question the legitimacy of their argument.

Since every non-biblical belief represents false teachings, it is necessary to learn where the false beliefs reside and why they are false. For every

non-theistic belief system, that weakness is going to be found in the worldview beliefs themselves. For every non-Christian theistic belief system, the weaknesses will be found in the flaws of each of the various belief systems.

### ***Naturalism***

Naturalistic belief systems assume that the natural universe is all that exists, with the corresponding notion that all of reality can ultimately be understood using the scientific method. This is not true, of course, and pointing out the places where Naturalism cannot stand up to its own belief requirements will show its falsehood.

### ***Animism***

Animistic belief systems assume that there is a spirit world and material world that interact with each other in a symbiotic relationship. There is no objective means, however, to determine that to be true. The spirits have left no revelation, and science does not support it. Individuals must believe it based purely on their acceptance of traditions handed down from previous generations. Explaining its complete lack of support will show its falsehood.

### ***Far Eastern Thought***

Far Eastern Thought belief systems believe that ultimate reality is a transcendent life force that is both immaterial and impersonal, and that the natural universe, as it is both material and personal, is an illusory expression of that life force. This belief also has no objective means of support. Since it does not acknowledge that anything in the natural universe represents ultimate reality, it is dependent upon subjective human experience to validate its beliefs. Explaining how there is no way to arbitrate between conflicting human experiences will demonstrate its falsehood.

### ***Non-Christian Theism***

Every non-Christian theistic belief system asserts belief in a transcendent creator God, but each one has its own understanding of the nature and character of God. Since God can only exist as one of these, every belief about God is false except for the one that is true. Thus, in order to determine which one is true, it is necessary to dig into the beliefs of each belief system. Every false belief will have some kind of disqualifying issue such as historical inaccuracies, internal contradictions in its holy writings, or logical contradictions within its theology. Discerning these problems will be the key to demonstrating the falsity of these belief systems.

### ***Hybrids***

While hybrids do not comprise an actual worldview category, there are numerous belief systems that are hybrids, so it is important to understand these, as well. Hybrid belief systems are attempts to take essential beliefs from two or more worldview categories and combine them into a single belief system. Since every worldview literally contradicts every other worldview, every hybrid belief system has irreconcilable internal contradictions. Pointing out these contradictions is the key to showing the falsity of these kinds of belief systems.

## **A Method for Doing Apologetics on the Offense**

Using the steps below, it is possible to engage people regarding their faith using offensive tactics.

### ***1. Deconstruct Opposing Belief Systems***

Deconstructing an opponent's beliefs must often be done before one is in a position to explain Christian beliefs for their consumption. This can be done based on the above explanations regarding the weaknesses of various worldview and belief systems. The truth is, if people don't see a problem with their own beliefs, they will have no reason to listen to an alternative belief. Every non-Christian belief system represents a faith point of view that does not reflect the truth about the nature of reality. And every one of them can be deconstructed in a way that shows why it is not true. When opponents make incorrect statements, we can point these out and reply with a correct one.

### ***2. Don't Allow People to Evaluate the Christian Faith Based on Assumptions from Other Worldview Systems***

Most people have no inkling that there is a way to understand reality other than the one they already know. Thus, whenever they hear beliefs that do not fit their worldview assumptions, they will evaluate those beliefs

based on their own understanding of reality. For example, a person who holds naturalistic worldview beliefs will inevitably evaluate Christian beliefs based on naturalistic assumptions. So when a Christian shares an instance of a miracle – the miracle of the resurrection for example – Naturalists will dismiss it out of hand because they believe the very concept of miracles is a fantasy.

A person cannot become a Christian without believing in the faith's core beliefs – which includes a belief in miracles. If someone begins with non-Christian beliefs about how reality is structured, they will, inevitably, attack the Christian faith based on their beliefs. In that case, it will probably be necessary to deconstruct their worldview platform and show how their beliefs are not true before it is even possible to have a respectable dialogue.

### **3. Hold People Accountable for Their Attacks on Our Faith**

When someone attacks our Christian faith, it is important to make them back up their attack. The assaults can come from numerous directions, but, regardless of any particular point they make, we must make them explain why they believe their point of view is valid. Some of the arguments they try to make might include besmirching the validity of the Bible's teachings, putting down Christians as hypocrites or ignoramuses, accusing Christianity of being anti-science, and the like. It is important to recognize, though, that every attack can be intelligently answered. Before accepting their assumption that our beliefs are wrong, we should make them defend the validity of their assaults.

### **4. Argue to the End to the Highest Degree Possible**

Sometimes a discussion can become tedious or uncomfortable for any of a number of reasons. If that happens, we should not fall prey to the temptation to simply cut out of the discussion. If we do, it is quite possible that our discussion partner will think they have won. We need to stick with them until they finally give up – or at least acknowledge that their arguments do not necessarily hold up.

This attitude of sticking it out to the end is not for the purpose of simply winning an argument. Rather, it is to make sure that our opponent recognizes that he or she cannot avoid the ultimate truth.

Additionally, it is also important to understand that the person attacking may not be your main audience. It is not unusual at all for other people to be observing the conversation – particularly if it is taking place on social media or in some public place. Your persistence is important to help those bystanders also understand the truth of the gospel.

If we are adequately prepared, we cannot be outmaneuvered because the Christian faith really does represent the truth about the nature of reality. The truth always rises to the top when given the opportunity. If issues come up that one personally doesn't know how to deal with, it is essential to seek out the answers. Don't give up!

### **5. Never Make Personal Attacks on Opponents**

It is important to not miss opportunities to point out the flaws and inconsistencies of attacks against our beliefs – even strongly if necessary. But it must never become personal. That is, we must not call our opponent ugly names or impugn their character. Even if they begin throwing insults at us, we should never insult back. Simply point out that their personal insults do not contribute to making their point.

Our ultimate goal is not to beat people down, but to share a witness for Jesus Christ. How the witness is received is ultimately up to the person we are interacting with, not ourselves. But if offense is taken, it should not be because we have made a personal attack. It may be that we have pinned them into a corner and they are mad that they are unable to give a valid reply. Even though they may accuse us of a personal attack, or themselves lash out in a personal attack on us, that is okay. We can gently point out that we have not personally attacked them and that they should not do it to us either.

### **Using Apologetics in Daily Life**

In today's society, you will run into applications of false beliefs everywhere. You will find people promoting them in regard to politics, sexual morality, science, life, environment, education, social values, economics,

business, health and healthcare, and on and on. Every time you run into someone trying to apply non-biblical worldview principles to any issue in life, you are presented with an opportunity to express a Christian witness if you have prepared yourself to communicate biblical beliefs. These are prime opportunities to use your understanding of apologetics to share Christ. Here are some examples:

- Abortion - When someone promotes abortion as a valid practice, you have an opportunity to share the value of life based on a biblical worldview.
- Sexual Morality - When you see sexual relations outside of marriage being accepted and promoted (fornication, adultery, homosexuality, polygamy, etc.), you have an opportunity to share why biblical morality is true.
- Science - When the theory of evolution is promoted as science, you have an opportunity to share why it is a naturalistic (faith) construct that is not empirically proven by science.
- Social Justice - When you see the news media promoting social justice causes, you have an opportunity to share how the concept of social justice is different from the biblical teachings of actual justice.
- Liberal Christian Theology - When you hear people teaching non-biblical principles in the name of Christianity, you have an opportunity to share what the Bible really teaches.

We could go on and on with examples regarding other issues such as various political policies, the meaning and value of citizenship, the importance of liberty, the philosophy of law, environmental stewardship, education practices and policies, approaches to economics, the proper use of media, business values, health and healthcare, and so on. Each and every one of these has a non-biblical expression in modern society that is leading people to death and destruction – both physically and spiritually. Taking advantage of opportunities to share a biblical worldview approach to dealing with these issues is a profound way to use apologetics to share Christ in our rapidly decaying society.

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