

Disciples Church

A Firm Foundation

Structure of a Biblical Defense

Week of July 18, 2018

**Handout Notes**

**For audio of previous lessons, please visit**

[**http://discipleschurch.com/summer-apologetics-series/**](http://discipleschurch.com/summer-apologetics-series/)

*This audio/link is intended for Disciples Church MidWeek participants only.*

**To submit questions for consideration for our upcoming Q&A night, please email to** [questions@discipleschurch.com](mailto:questions@discipleschurch.com)

**Structure of a Biblical Defense**

1 Peter 3:13-17

1. **Attitudes and Actions:**

Have no fear of man.

Those who would persecute us need to hear why we believe!

Those who persecute us need to be treated with gentleness and respect.

1. **A Consistent Life**

If you live an inconsistent life, you will absolutely ruin your testimony and hamper the effectiveness of your defense for your faith.

One of the main points that we make to unbelievers is the inconsistency in their lives between their professed worldview and the way they actually live. If you, Christian, live inconsistently, then what reason would they have to even consider your argument?

Here are a few areas in which you should strive for consistency:

1. Study: You should be studying regularly.

Psalm 1:2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

1. Prayer: Prayer is a way for us to communicate to God our desperate need for Him.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 pray without ceasing

1. Community: We need our brothers and sisters in the Lord to hold us up, to correct us when we are off, and to join us in prayer and study. When you are rightly in community, the consistency of your life and testimony are always strengthened!

Colossians 3:16 or Hebrews 10:25

1. **A Careful Approach**

If we are not careful in our approach, we will not honor God because God is never flippant.

Colossians 4:5-6 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Do you see a repeating pattern? If you are consistent in study, prayer, and community, then this careful approach should be something you are well prepared for.

A careful approach includes:

* + - 1. **Gentle Firmness**

A careful approach begins with a gentle firmness. We must speak the truth in love!

Ephesians 4:15

* + - 1. **Respectfully challenging**

Our approach should be respectfully challenging.

We must challenge false worldviews. God does not delight in falseness or lies; however, we must do it respectfully, knowing that it will be a very difficult pill to swallow, and we truly want to make the most of every possibility to rightly represent God and love our enemies.

* + - 1. **Directed Answers**

We must have directed answers. When it comes to the conversation, we need to have a good idea of the **direction** we want to go in, and we need to be prepared to help lead the conversation that way.

2 Timothy 2:23-26

We must be prepared and willing to answer the questions of unbelievers but careful to avoid the sort of questions that lead to nothing but useless arguments. We want to have directed answers, so we can get to the gospel in hopes that God may grant repentance.

1. **A Biblically Correct Procedure:**

* Biblical apologetics constructs a method based on Scripture.
* A **biblical** defense must be rooted in Scripture.
* The believer must be confident that his faith is true and defensible.
* There are zero instances in Scripture where God’s word says, “I could be wrong …”
* Biblical apologetics must keep the Creator-creature distinction.
* Biblical apologetics recognizes the effect of sin and applies proper theology to our defense of the faith.
* Biblical apologetics seeks to show the non-Christian the truth that he is made in God’s image as an unescapable fact. Our aim is to lead him to his desperate need of a savior and share the gospel!

1. **Basic Structure of a Biblical Defense:**

If you have given up the necessary precondition to knowledge; which is God, then all the worldly wisdom and knowledge that you claim to have rests upon your finite independence, mere chance, or proclaimed deities that do not exist.

**Proverbs Don’t Answer, Answer Strategy:**

Proverbs 26:4-5 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

1. **Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself:**

* If the unbeliever is being rude or harsh, we don’t want to act toward him/her in a way that would not glorify God. Don’t be rude simply because the unbeliever is.
* In regards to apologetics, we don’t want to answer unbelievers on their terms. God has said His word is truth. Do you really want to give up truth to convince them of …TRUTH?
* God’s word is our only source of certain truth. If we set the Bible down, we are assuming a position that says we can have truth apart from God.

Ex. “I don’t agree with you that God’s word is not true. It is in fact the standard of truth, so I must use it to show you how flawed your worldview is. Also, though there is great evidence that warms my heart as a believer, God’s word says you are not capable of understanding this evidence, nor are you the judge of God.”

1. **Answer the fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes:**

Ex. “I don’t agree with you that God’s word is not true. It is in fact the standard of truth, so I must use it to show you how flawed your worldview is. Also, though there is great evidence that warms my heart as a believer, God’s word says you are not capable of understanding this evidence, nor are you the judge of God. However according to your worldview, what is truth? How can you account for truth according to what you believe?”

Ex. Unbeliever: “You can’t trust your Bible; it’s full of contradictions.” Believer’s response: “I deny your claim that the Bible is full of contradictions. The supposed contradictions come down to the reader misunderstanding Scripture and/or having a lack of biblical knowledge. However, for the sake of argument, if your worldview is right and God doesn’t exist, why would it matter if the Bible were full of contradictions?”

The beauty of knowing the truth is that the Christian worldview is never inconsistent. It is never arbitrary, and it can justify all the prerequisites needed to have the society that we have and live in. In fact, it is the **only worldview** that provides the necessary preconditions for the world we live in.

If you do not start with God, then you have no foundation for truth. We can be prepared to give a defense to **anyone** who asks us for the hope that is in us because we have truth.

1. **The A.I.P. checklist:**

You want to look for these three things when addressing an unbeliever:

1. Arbitrariness
2. Inconsistencies
3. Preconditions

* + - 1. **Arbitrariness**

Arbitrary defined: subject to individual will or judgment without restriction; contingent solely upon one's discretion: capricious; unreasonable; unsupported.

If an unbeliever’s justification for his unbelief is arbitrary (ex. because he personally doesn’t see how it could work), it is not actually a good reason for unbelief.

Ultimately, the unbeliever is always his own ultimate standard, and if you can help the unbeliever see that he is **always** his **own ultimate standard,** and in his limited knowledge he is an arbitrary standard, it will be a great tool for you in defending the faith and evangelism.

* + - 1. **Inconsistency**

Statements that are self-refuting or contradict themselves are inconsistent. If something is inconsistent, it cannot be true. This happens a lot in false worldviews. Another area where you will find inconsistencies is the way unbelievers live in light of what they claim to believe. In other words, they should live according to their worldview, but they won’t indeed they cannot.

Richard Dawkins- “The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.”

* + - 1. **Preconditions For Intelligibility.**

Below are three examples of preconditions for intelligibility.

* + - * 1. **Laws of Logic**

Laws of logic are certain necessary laws we use to reason with each other in an intelligent way. They are universal and objective.

* 1. **Uniformity of Nature**

Our universe is uniform. Gravity works the same today as it did yesterday. If it didn’t, we could not function properly.

* 1. **Absolute Morality**

A society where there is intelligent interaction between human beings must have an objective standard for morality. If morality were based upon the culture’s ideas, then we could not say that the holocaust was wrong or that slavery was wrong or that abortion is wrong.

These standards are made by God because of His character, and we who are made in His image must obey them or face the penalty of denying them.

These are necessary preconditions for intelligence, and the Christian has a valid reason for these to exist. However, we must show unbelievers that they cannot account for these preconditions unless they borrow them from our worldview.