Disciples Church

A Firm Foundation – Lesson 6

Week of July 18th, 2018

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Presuppositional Apologetics lecture 6: Structure of a biblical defense**

Welcome I’m glad you are all here tonight and I am excited to continue digging into our series on Presuppositional Apologetics. Tonight we are going to spend the bulk of our time unpacking the structure of a biblical defense for the faith. Before we get to that part we have a few smaller points to make to really set the stage well.

1 Peter 3:13Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? 14But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, 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, 16having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. 17For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil.

**Attitudes and actions:**

Peter encourages us here to have no fear of those who would persecute you and don’t be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone… Even those who would persecute us need to hear why we believe! Even those who persecute us need to be treated with gentleness and respect.

So before we dive into the structure of the biblical defense lets lay some ground work in regards to our attitudes and actions!

1. **A consistent Life**

This point is huge! If you live an inconsistent life you will absolutely ruin your testimony and hamper the effectiveness of your defense for your faith. I do not mean you must live a perfect life to defend your faith but if you live like an unbeliever and yet argue like you have been saved by God you’re functionally living in such an inconsistent way that you remove the rug from underneath yourself.

One of the main points that we make to an unbeliever is the inconsistency in their life between their professed world view and the way they actually live. If you Christian, live inconsistently, then what reason would they have to even consider your argument? Just look at the proceeding passage from the verse we are living in when it comes to apologetics. Verse - 16having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. When those who you give a defense to persecute you or slander you, they will eventually be put to shame **as long as you** live a consistent life by good behavior in Christ and a proper representation of Christ.

Just in case it’s helpful let me give you a few areas that you should strive for consistency in:

1. Study: You should be studying regularly Psalm 1:2but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.
2. Prayer: Prayer is a way for us to communicate to God our desperate need for Him. 1 Thess. 5: 17pray without ceasing,
3. 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 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Hebrews 10:25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

So we start with a consistent life and the next thing to consider is:

1. **A careful approach**

If we are not careful in our approach we will not honor God because God is never flippant. Remember our hope in defending the faith is to rightly honor God **and** if **He wills,** we may find favor with the unbeliever when sharing the gospel!

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

This passage begins with walking in wisdom. We must know and understand God and His word at least enough to represent Him wisely.

We must be thoughtful and careful in how we approach those who do not believe. We see this really all throughout scripture. We must be prepared to answer them and to make the best use of our time with them. Now if you are consistent in study, prayer, and community then this careful approach should be something you are well prepared for. So what does a careful approach look like?

* **Gentle Firmness**

First a careful approach begins with a gentle firmness. Unfortunately there has been a failure with some people to do this particularly well. Many well-meaning Christians when defending the faith will sometimes fall onto one of two sides of the spectrum. They will either be too gentle/passive giving up ground that should never be an uncertainty (they will literally say, “No I’m not certain that God exists), or they will be way over bearing/firm and rude with an attitude that really just displays arrogance and lack of love. Instead of these two errors, we need to find Christ’s way so that we rightly honor God without giving up things that are certain, and simultaneously be bold, gentle, and respectful to the unbeliever so that we are obeying God’s word. According to the Colossians passage our speech needs to be gracious seasoned with salt! However it doesn’t say we don’t speak or don’t answer. We must speak the truth in love according to Eph. 4:15.

* **Respectfully challenging**

Second our approach should be respectfully challenging. When asked for a reason for the hope that is in you, you must realize that you will be challenging the core of someone’s beliefs. When we do this we are really **destroying worldviews** and that is **no small matter**. If any of you have come out of another religion you understand how hard that can be. How many of you remember what it felt like to have a belief you relied upon all your life and one day to learn this part of your foundation was faulty. 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. If God gives favor to the unbeliever, these conversations will produce fruit.

* **Directed answers**

3rd 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. It can be easy or tempting to get caught up in the foolishness of speculations and theories and arguments that end up going nowhere.

2 Timothy 2: 23Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. 24And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, 25correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, 26and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

You see we don’t want to waste our time (remember the Colossians verse-make the best use of your time, don’t become someone who likes to argue for the simple sake of arguing) and we don’t want to get stuck in foolish ignorant controversies. 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.

There really is a thousand ways to get derailed when having the conversations with unbelievers and defending the faith. Many times the unbeliever will borrow from your worldview to make judgmental accusations against God. For example here is an argument I’ve heard an atheist make, “If God does exist it wouldn’t be the God of your bible who sent a she bear to kill a bunch of kids for mocking someone, who could believe in an unmoral God like that.” Do you see the problem with the quote?

God did send two she bears to tear some youth who were tormenting one of His prophets, so the atheist didn’t make up a story, but the atheist did make a **moral judgment**. According to the atheists worldview what ground does he have to call that immoral? So rather than debate if God is good or if that act was moral you need to be prepared to point out the inconsistencies in the atheist worldview. You’ll see this in more detail later in our lecture. So it would be good to begin your answer by denying their claim that God is bad according to their judgment of what is right or wrong. It could look something like this; I disagree with your comment that God is bad, the scripture makes it clear that He is good and does only good… However we don’t make them the judge by defending God in that moment as if their claim has any validity, rather we show them that according to their worldview they have no ability to make this claim or judgment, it would look something like this; (continuing from the previous statement) however for the sake of the argument, according to your worldview why would sending a bear to kill kids be bad! How can you make any moral argument against God if morals are relative? When someone accuses God of wrong they are foolish and ignorant to who God is and that He cannot do wrong. So don’t get stuck in that argument, point out its flaws according to their worldview and then continue to move the conversation so that you can answer accordingly with the goal of getting to the gospel!

I’m going to read verses 25&26 of 2 Timothy 2 again-25correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, 26and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

This is always our desire, namely, getting to the gospel. We may not be allowed to get to this point but our aim is always defending the faith with the hope to get to the gospel, that God may grant them repentance! Notice something really clear in this passage as well, it reads “God may grant them repentance **LEADING** to a knowledge of truth.” In order for the unbeliever to know the truth of God they must be brought to repentance first! God must grant repentance before the unbeliever can have saving knowledge. We want to have directed answers so that we can get to the gospel in hopes that God may grant repentance.

There is so much more we could say about each of these topics but for the sake of time let’s move to our procedure:

**A biblically correct procedure:**

Biblical apologetics must follow a correct procedure. The way we answer non-Christians is important for our defense of the faith. To develop a proper method we must look to the Word of God and glean from it.

Scripture has a lot to say about how we defend the faith. There’s not only clear instructions on apologetics there are also multiple examples of believers defending their faith. The believer must be confident that his faith is true and defensible. This is vital, if you do not agree with scripture that God certainly exists and is God then what are you defending? The believer must be confident that scripture is true and they must have faith in Christ. Biblical apologetics never gives ground to the possibility that they could be wrong. Church, there are zero instances in scripture where God’s word says “I could be wrong…” So we **must not** be brought to a false middle ground or give up the standards of God’s word when we defend the faith.

Biblical apologetics must keep the Creator-creature distinction. If you allow the unbeliever to “take a throne and judge God” then you are not giving a biblical apologetic. The danger of doing this is you will essentially contradict scripture and foundations within your apologetic. This tactic (allowing people to assume the position of creator and judge for themselves) is not a biblical worldview it is a trap of our culture.

We must realize the effect of sin and apply proper theology to our defense of the faith. We see what scripture has said about those dead in sin and we use that information properly as we defend the faith and share the gospel.

Finally biblical apologetics seeks to show the non-Christian the truth that he is made in God’s image and this is an unescapable fact. Our aim is to lead them to their desperate need of a savior and share the gospel!

So with this summary lets dig into the

**Basic Structure of a biblical defense:**

What the bible declares about those who suppress the truth of God is that they are fools. The scriptures are clear that wisdom and knowledge begin with fearing (rightly acknowledging) God. Now I believe we have laid sufficient ground work to explain what this means but for our sake I’ll summarize it.

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. Therefore though you may have truth and may be right you have no ability to justify your truth apart from God.

Like many other areas of life the scriptures give us guidelines and allow us to work within those guidelines when it comes to apologetics. We do believe that addressing presuppositions instead of giving evidences is the scripturally accurate way to defend the faith but there are different approaches within addressing someone’s presuppositions. SO here’s the outline:

**Proverbs don’t answer, answer strategy:**

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

Proverbs also gives us a key insight in how to answer the fool-unbeliever. In this passage in Proverbs we see two clear ways we must address the unbeliever.

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

What we don’t want to do when we answer an unbeliever is to take up their attitude or worldview and answer as if it is valid.

There’s really two key points to this verse as far as it applies to apologetics.

1st If the unbeliever is being rude or harsh we don’t want to act toward them in a way that would not glorify God. Don’t be rude simply because they are. To be fair you may not experience this a whole lot or you may experience it every time you share with an unbeliever. So simply put, don’t act like a fool when you answer a fool.

2nd In regards to apologetics, we don’t want to answer the unbeliever on their terms. For example, if an unbeliever said, “I don’t believe the bible is true so you have to prove to me in some other way that God is real.” We need to see what they are really saying. There’s two major things that you need to see in this statement. First they presuppose that they are capable of judging things and they claim it by saying Gods word is not trustworthy. Second they say we must prove God according to their standard which in this statement is evidence that is outside of the scripture.

You don’t want to begin this interaction by agreeing to these two standards. Why don’t you want to do that? Because Gods word has said they don’t have the ability to rightly understand evidence unless they repent and they are not the judge of God, also God has said His word is truth do you really want to give up truth to convince them of…TRUTH? Is that even possible? Of course not. God’s word is our only source of certain truth so if we set the bible down we are assuming a position that says we can have truth apart from God. This would however make us a fool just like the unbeliever who says I can have truth and God doesn’t exist.

You see neither their ability to interpret evidence nor their stance that they are the judge and Gods word is not trustworthy are true. So we would respond by saying as much. Here is an example. “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 Gods word says you are not capable of understanding this evidence nor are you the judge of God.”

Now of course I could and would say more here but I want to show you just the first part of our answer. In fact let’s look at our second part so we can see what a full response can look like.

**2nd “Answer the fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.”**

The second step in biblical apologetics is to answer the fool according to their folly lest they be wise in their own eyes. When we answer the fool according to their folly we are not answering them as if their world view is valid. However we do address their worldview in a hypothetical sense and point out to them how it is folly.

Let’s take the same statement I used in our “don’t answer” section. They say, “I don’t believe the bible is true so you have to prove to me in some other way that God is real.”

My response would look something like this, “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 Gods 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?”

Do you see the “don’t answer/answer” strategy here? I first denied their claim that scripture was not true and by doing this I did not accept their terms for the conversation, then I hypothetically entered their worldview to challenge them according to what they claim to believe.

With this don’t answer/answer process we need to make sure that we don’t become fools in our answering and we need to make sure that we address their foolishness in a hypothetical way so that they can see their error. We do this with the aim of helping them to not be wise in their own eyes.

So when we answer a fool according to their folly we are to address their worldview or presuppositions and show them how flawed they are.

Let me give you another example to help.

Ex. Atheist: “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?

Do you see the “don’t answer/answer” process here? I denied the claim that scripture contradicts itself, then I hypothetically challenged them to an internal critique of their own worldview. This is the biblical procedure for answering the fool.

I ***could explain*** how, since God is never inconsistent, it **would** matter if scripture contradicted itself according to **my worldview**, however according to their worldview they have no way to justify the claim that contradictions are wrong. You see I can show them by their own reasoning how they must use the Christian worldview in order to justify their reasoning.

If you pay attention you’ll see the unbeliever borrowing from the Christian worldview over and over again to try and argue against it. Here’s what I mean, an atheist has no objective truth because there are no ultimate standards in their worldview. Therefore they cannot argue against my truth since truth is relative (in their mind).

The atheist would say you can believe what you want and in fact you must because your simply chemicals reacting in your brain and cannot control how or what you believe. If this is true then the atheist has no reason to argue with you in the first place. Your brain is fizzing theistic beliefs and theirs is fizzing atheistic beliefs so neither one, according to their worldview, could be wrong they are simply chemical reactions and just exist. **So for the atheist to argue right or wrong they have to borrow from our worldview.** When we give a defense for our faith we want to point this out. We want to point it out so they can see how faulty their view is and we do not allow them to use our worldview to argue against it.

Here’s why this matters, if the atheist is arguing that their beliefs are true, then why can’t they stay consistent with their worldview to show us our inconsistency? When I challenge an atheist to give me a standard for truth in their worldview I do it because according to my worldview I have an objective standard of truth. Since my worldview is true I must address their worldview according to mine. However since their worldview is false they cannot argue against our worldview without borrowing from it first.

The unbeliever who denies God has no justification for making moral claims or truth claims because outside of the Christian worldview there is no justification for absolute morality or truth. Remember an atheist cannot be certain about anything because they do not have exhaustive knowledge nor do they have revelation from someone who does. So what they don’t know could prove what they think they know to be wrong. The atheist also has no ability to make moral claims. If we are a byproduct of chemical reactions then there is no moral standard everyone just fizzes according to the chemicals in their brain.

You see 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.

Now we don’t have to have be experts in philosophy and laws of logic in order to defend our faith. Those things are benefit but what we truly have to do is rely on our only source of truth which is God’s word.

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.

So what I want to do with the rest of our time tonight is give you a basic tool to help you apply our don’t answer/answer strategy.

This tool will help you see the leaks in the boat of the unbeliever’s worldview and stand as a guide in your mind of things you can be looking for. Jason Lisle in his book “Ultimate Proof of Creation” uses a system called the AIP checklist. You want to look for these three things when addressing an unbeliever.

1. Arbitrariness
2. Inconsistencies
3. Preconditions

Let’s start with arbitrariness.

Arbitrariness

When you are having a dialogue where logical reasoning is involved no one is permitted to be arbitrary.

Here is a definition, Arbitrary is defined as something: subject to individual will or judgment without restriction; contingent solely upon one's discretion: OR it’s defined as capricious; unreasonable; unsupported:

When you argued with your parents as a child and they said, “Because I said so” you would get very upset because you felt like that answer was arbitrary. Now as an adult I realize that God has given me the authority over my children and though I don’t often say “because I said so” I do now know that the foundation of that answer is the God given authority I have been commanded to use to raise my children and therefor it is no longer arbitrary (at least not to me right?).

So if you are asking someone to explain why they believe what they do and their answer is “just cause” (I hope Christian that you never answer that way) we don’t accept this answer because it is arbitrary, it has no weight behind it. If this was truly how we reasoned then we could not have any intelligent conversation. All conversation in this manner would be personal preference without any justification. You see our beliefs must have a justification behind them. And let me add this, the unbeliever will NOT ALLOW you to say JUST CAUSE. So one thing to remember is that we are always asking the unbeliever to apply the same critique they have of our worldview to their own.

When an atheist asserts an arbitrary claim such as “God can’t exist because there is evil in this world” we must ask them why or according to what standard. Why can’t God exist **and** there be evil in this world? What standard do they use to justify this statement?

We must ask according to what standard does evil existing mean that God cannot. If they are unable or unwilling to give a reason then we must point out the arbitrariness of their argument.

Ex.

My response: I don’t accept your claim that God cannot exists because there is evil in this world. According to what standard does the existence of evil nullify the possibility of God’s existence?

Atheist: well if God is good then evil can’t exist!

Me: According to who? The bible does most certainly declare that God exists and that He has a morally sufficient purpose for the evil that exists. So my worldview is consistent when it comes to evil and Gods existence, however according to your worldview, what standard do you have to claim that the existence of evil nullifies Gods existence? For that matter according to your worldview what is evil? What according to your worldview gives you an ability to judge what evil is or make any moral claim at all?

Atheist: Because those two things can’t both exist.

Me: According to who? According to what standard? Are you the ultimate standard? If that’s the case do you know everything exhaustively? If you don’t have exhaustive knowledge then you must admit that what you don’t know could prove what you think you know to be wrong. You make a very arbitrary standard because of your limited knowledge. For the Christian we have the all-knowing God who is the justification for our reasoning, I can have truth because it is revealed to me through the scriptures by the only being that knows all things exhaustively.

You see if their justification is arbitrary (ex. because they personally don’t see how it could work) it is not actually a good reason for their unbelief. Ultimately the unbeliever is always their own ultimate standard and if you can help the unbeliever see that they are **always** their **own ultimate standard** and in their limited knowledge they are an arbitrary standard it will be a great tool for you in defending the faith and evangelism.

So when you’re defending the faith look for arbitrary justifications. These are usually the clearest and easiest to see in my opinion. Let me break it down a little more for you. If the person you’re talking to has denied God then they have become their own ultimate authority. No matter what they claim to use as their standard ultimately it comes down to them deciding that the said standard is acceptable to them. So if they say I use science and reason, I would ask how do they know that science and reason is correct. Basically I’m getting them to see that they are still the ultimate standard. If you can help them see this then they also, if they will be consistent, must give up any ability to have truth for certain. Unless they have an objective standard (without God this is impossible) then the standard must be because they (as the ultimate standard) have decided it. If this is the case then they cannot be certain of any truth they think they have.

Now perhaps they would be sharp enough to say that it is the same thing we are doing. For example we have decided that God is our ultimate standard so we are doing the same thing. Christian you should be prepared to answer this response. This is why theology matters so much. If I had the ability to come to God on my own then this would be an appropriate response to my argument and the weight or validity of my argument would vanish. However what we know about God through His word is clear. I was deaf, blind, and dead. I did not come to God as my ultimate standard because I decided it, God is my ultimate standard because He caused me to believe! It was outside of me therefore I was not the ultimate standard. Do you see why theology matters?!

So that’s arbitrariness what about inconsistency?

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 world views. Another area where you will find inconsistencies is the way the unbeliever lives 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. Why does inconsistency bear so much weight? Well a law of logic called the law of non-contradiction is a key to this. The law of non-contradiction is really simple. It would go something like this; I cannot be here and not be here at the same time. Those two things would contradict making one of them untrue. When we see inconsistency in the unbelievers worldview it reveals that they are contradicting themselves and therefore standing in a worldview that’s false. You see if any part of their worldview is false that makes the entire view as a whole unreliable and false. Can the unbeliever have truth in part of their worldview, of course they can because they are made in the image of God and cannot escape it, however their worldview as a whole will be inconsistent because of this and we should be able to spot this and point it out to them. Remember they will apply this same standard to try and refute our worldview.

Here is an example of what I mean. The empiricist will say all things are only know through what can be observed. If we carry this out however the idea that “all things can only be known through what we observe” is a thought that cannot itself be observed and therefor it would refute itself. This is known as reductio ad absurdum. This is the same for a relativist, they will say truth is relative to the individual unless you disagree with them then you’re wrong, however if truth is relative then can they actually say your wrong, of course not but their worldview is reduced to absurdity if we actually look closely at their claims. Here’s another example, many atheist will admit according to their worldview they cannot be certain they know anything to be true, however can they be certain that they cannot be certain? You see this statement is self-refuting when it is claims to do the very thing it claims cannot be done. Last example, many unbelievers will say there are “no absolutes” in fact last week Scott quoted a famous philosopher who said this very thing. However this statement is an absolute statement and therefore they are absurd to make this claim, if absolutes don’t exist then they cannot make an absolute claim. So this is one way to see inconsistencies.

Let’s look at how the inconsistency of their life lived out vs. their worldview. Here’s what I mean, Richard Dawkins a famous atheist has made this quote,

“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.”

This statement would be consistent with the atheist worldview, however Richard Dawkins and atheist in general don’t live as if this is the case. They look both ways before crossing the street as if life matters, they kiss their wives and kids goodnight and cry when someone they love dies. They are inconsistent.

What’s really astounding is that they will say according to their worldview nothing really matters, but very act of them arguing against your beliefs reveals that they are NOT consistent. If nothing matters and we’re all just chemical reactions then why do they care if they think we are wrong? Better yet why do they think anything is wrong? You see they will admit that according to their worldview nothing matters, however they will not live like that. Here is the problem, even though they have the obvious proof that their worldview is inconsistent, they cannot accept the truth of God because they refuse to bow their knee and give up their supposed throne. As long as they pretend to be god themselves they can live how they’d like and unfortunately in their spiritual deadness they will not see that true life is found only in Christ. This is why we do apologetics this way. We want to show them that they are inconsistent so that we can tell them why. I’ll get to that at the end but never forget why we do this!

So look for these inconsistencies so that you can show them how absurd their worldview is. The last point and this one gets a bit heady is the “P” of the AIP test.

The “P” stands for preconditions for intelligibility. You see for laws of logic to exist and for science to exist and work and for a world with morals to exist there must be a precondition that exists. Namely this precondition is the objective ultimate standard GOD! This is truly where other worldviews fall very, very, short. In fact most will not even get to this point but if you spend some time understanding these things it will be very helpful for you to bring these truths to light.

I’ll give you three examples of preconditions that are necessary for intelligibility.

**1st Laws of Logic.**

Laws of logic are certain necessary laws for us to use in able for us to reason with each other in an intelligent way. They are universal and objective. They don’t change anywhere and they do not come from the subjective feelings of men. So if I’m in China or on the moon the laws of logic are the same. If I am speaking to an atheist or a Jehovah’s Witness the laws of logic are the same. If they were based on subjective (personal thoughts or feelings) standards then we could never accomplish any rational conversation with anyone.

We all live by universal laws of logic and if you ever have a conversation with someone who does not use these laws you’ll quickly become frustrated in your conversation. I’ve spoken about one of these laws before, the law of non-contradiction. In order for this law to exist there must be a precondition met. Namely we must have an objective ultimate standard that made this law. Enter God, the reason why we have the law of non-contradiction is because God who created us does not contradict Himself. We are made in His image so if we are to have intelligence we must apply this law of logic and we must understand where it comes from. This is why the scriptures are so clear that you cannot begin to have wisdom unless you start with God. The scriptures were written thousands of years ago, far before the Enlightenment of the world, far before the scholars of this age, and they have more than stood the test of time! Christian drown yourself in the confidence that the word of God gives for you to be certain of the truth you have AMEN!

**2nd Uniformity of Nature:**

Our universe is uniform, what I mean is when you got up this morning you did not cling to the ground in hopes that you would not be flung off this planet into space right, why? Gravity right but gravity works the same today as it did yesterday. If it didn’t we would not be able to fly planes with any certainty. We would not be able to weigh anything, there is so much that we daily take for granted because of the uniformity in nature. Now what precondition must be met for uniformity? Well we need something to keep things the way they are so that we can basically trust that things will be like they were. Now in a random chance universe that has evolved from nothing into what we have today should we have any reason to believe in this uniformity? Not without first using it to justify it. The problem here is that if the atheist argues that because we have recorded that the past was like the future in the past then we can trust it, what about our life? I didn’t die yesterday so does that mean I will never die? Do you see the hang up? We can trust that the universe is uniform and will remain that way because God has declared that He holds all things together by the word of His mouth, however we also know that our days on this earth are numbered because God has declared this truth as well.

You see we have a valid and dare I say ultimate reasoning for the uniformity in nature that we experience but to the unbeliever they truly have no way to justify why we experience this uniformity.

**3rd Absolute Morality**

Is it wrong to murder people? If you are in China is it wrong? If you are in the deepest remote part of the jungle is it wrong? Why is it wrong? Because mankind was made in the image of God and therefore we are created with a value and worth and God has declared it wrong to murder. Now what reasoning does the unbeliever have for thinking that murder is wrong? Many times an honest unbeliever will say it’s only wrong to them but it may be right to another person. The problem is they won’t live that way, if one of their family members is murdered they will want justice! But why? If the person doing the murdering was just acting out the chemical processes in their brain why would the atheist be upset? You see they do not have a valid answer for why it is wrong but they also do not want to live in a world where it truly isn’t. This is absolute morality.

You see for us to live in a society where there is intelligent interaction between human beings we must have an objective standard for morality. If morality were based upon the cultures ideas then we could not say that the holocaust was wrong or that slavery was wrong or that abortion is wrong. However no one would stand back and say (in regards to the first two examples) that those things were right and good. But according to their worldview it was the culture at large who decided it during those times and approved of the mistreatment of humans made in Gods image. You see if morality were subjective and changed with every culture why do we try to reach tribes that still rape their kids as a tradition and show them that this is wrong? If their tribe, their society, has said it is right then who are we to tell them they are wrong? I guarantee that any atheist with even a hint of morals would not sit by if their plane crashed in the jungle and allow a tribe to rape their daughter or son not without a fight. You see they like to claim that the world is a certain way but they will not living according to their beliefs. They don’t do this because they know that humans have a value and worth because God has created them in His image and has told us that He has a set of standards that the creation must live by. 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.

You see if any of these were not true then we would live in a very unintelligent world that really would be way worse than the one we are in now. These are necessary preconditions for intelligence and the Christian has a valid reason for these to exist. However we must show the unbeliever that they cannot account for these preconditions unless they borrow them from our worldview.

So that the AIP test, look for arbitrariness, inconsistencies, and the justification for the preconditions of intelligibility. In any of these areas we are able to show the unbeliever how their worldview cannot hold up.

Closing

I had mentioned it before and I want to close with this. We do these things so that we can share the gospel with those who ask us for the hope that is within us. Our defense of the faith begins with answering the fool to show them their folly but it also if the unbeliever allows must be your desire to get them to the gospel. One of the main ways that we do this is to help them understand why they live inconsistent lives. This is what I mean.

An honest atheist would say that they cannot be certain about anything only that whatever thing they believe has a high probability of truth. Which in essence means they truly can’t have truth. And so what I aim to do when I point out the inconsistency in their worldview is show them why it is inconsistent. So when they say they cannot have truth, I ask them us that true? Then I aim to show them that the reason they want to make truth claims is because they can have truth because they are created in God’s image and they have had certain truth revealed to them by God. This is what Romans 1 says they suppress the truth they know and that’s why they are guilty.

I want to show them that they can have truth and that’s why they are guilty before a righteous God but I don’t want to stop there, I want to tell them of the beauty and hope in Christ Jesus our Lord and savior! I want to share the gospel and call them to repentance and faith in Christ. I want to call them to stop living inconsistently and embrace the truth they know but suppress. I want to encourage them by proclaiming the truth that real true life is ONLY FOUND IN CHRIST and that the very thing they think they are gaining by suppressing the truth and becoming the god of their own life is actually the thing that’s keeping them, from true life. In the end I will and must trust God to do the work of saving faith but I want to get to the gospel because God has said that it must be preached for them to believe! And Christians we must be a consistent people believing in and trusting Gods word AMEN!?