



## ***Apologetics***

By Kurt von Schleicher

Christian, may I ask you a few important questions?

Do you know why you believe what you believe? Do you know why the Gospel and Christianity are true?

Throughout the history of the Church, Christians of various backgrounds have been called upon to explain why we believe what we believe. Paul the apostle described his ministry as *"the defense and confirmation of the Gospel."* The apostle Peter felt strongly that you need to *"Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you"* (1 Pet. 3:15). Yes, this activity of believers has come to be known as apologetics which means "defense."

*O that my life may useful be.. as I serve Jesus faithfully; and may the world see Christ in me—this is my earnest plea! ~ Hess*

It's such a fantastic privilege for each of us to daily bear Christ's Name and to unapologetically demonstrate the life and love of Jesus before a watching world... as we walk in close union with our incredible Savior. **It's my amped-excitement about and adoration of Jesus that spurns me towards learning apologetics!** But it's sad that 95% of Christians have never won one person to Jesus, when God could use them in this. And all of us should feel totally stoked-out about that possibility. Think about it, to be able to witness to a person of our saving faith in Him... the angels don't even get to enjoy that privilege!

I like what Philosopher William Alston of Syracuse University once said, *"The final test of the Christian scheme so to speak, comes from trying it out in one's life, from testing the promises this scheme tells us that God has made, from following in the Way enjoined on us by His Church, and from seeing whether it leads to the new life of the Spirit!"*

Please NEVER get the idea that because you aren't a recognized college scholar or seminary grad that you can't be an effective apologist. **You indeed can test the promises and use reason to get through to people (not relying solely upon your mind). You can fish for souls enthusiastically with good deeds, common sense and clean conversation; bearing witness to the truth and the power of the Gospel. YOU CAN REVEL IN THE JOY OF JESUS BRAGGING ON HIM! Your holy life can be your best argument—your best defense!**

But the lack of biblical literacy and basic knowledge about apologetics among Christians today is really sad. Many Christians don't grasp or realize it, but the growth rate of pseudo-Christian-cults and false religions are growing at an incredible and unprecedented rate. It's scary, to say the least. We don't want anyone to pass up God's only Solution to their sin problem – the resurrected Person of Jesus Christ. We must be ready to engage them in a way that will resonate.

I've watched my wife prepare herself. And I love to hear her reaching out and ask unbelievers: Why opt poorly for Hell when the only entrance into Heaven though the Son of God is free? She is in the Word daily and it shows. She lives the life with balance. But some of the Mormons she talks with have done their homework too, and they try to divert her onto worthless rabbit tails. It can be challenging when they use Bible terms but pour in different meanings. That's why we must first pray and study.

But it makes you wonder... if the enemies of the cross are willing to do so much for a lie that they've committed to, then how much more should we believers be willing to do on our knees and on our serving feet for the truth? Check out what God in the Bible has to say about apologetics...

- **God doesn't need us defending Him. He's real big, but He does expect you to give a defense of the Gospel without getting harsh with the sinner He loves.** You are to, *“sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed”* (1 Pet. 3:15-16, nkjv).

- **Study the Bible often and be ready in Christ's readiness,** *“Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings...”* (2 Tim. 2:14-16).

- **We're to fight for the faith, but not in the flesh.** Paul said, *“I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Jude 3 and 4).

- **By faith use apologetics to kill all the doubts in the minds of new converts, without ever killing your friendships with them...** for *“the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ”* (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

- **False teachings and ideas (inside and outside the Church) must be properly addressed using Scripture...** for the Bible commands men of God to love what's good (rather than money), and be hospitable, sober, just, holy, self-controlled, *“holding fast the faithful Word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain”* (see Tit. 1:8-11).

• **God reasons with people, and He expects us to pray and use courage, reason and logic to accurately argue His case of truth, so that people won't get ripped off.** He says, "*Rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow*" (those who false teachers target inside churches), "*'Come now, and let us reason together,' says the Lord, 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'*" (Isa. 1:17-18 injected emphasis mine).

What apologetics activity have you been involved in lately? Have you been wisely fishing for souls? When Jesus Christ walked on this dusty planet, He was very concerned for people in need and He never showed preferential treatment to anyone. He went to them to build a never ending friendship. You see, He loves us all the same and still cares for those He can reach through us who believe. Today, you are to be His hands, His feet, and His spokes-person who doesn't play fast and loose with what's real like some flashy televangelists do. God wants to use you with accuracy and respect to help people understand and break free from all their personal doubts about what His trustworthy Word says. And He desires for you to have a heart to protect people from danger—from real spiritual wolves who would gladly have them for lunch. Jesus wants you to view people accurately with compassion the same way He does as He sees potential in them.

It's also time for Christians to get their own doubt out regarding the Bible ...for, "**He** [Jesus] **said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?'**" (Lk. 24:38). Christian, God wants to use you and me to help those in His Church walk in victory, in love and in confidence – yup, in His Spirit. How?

### **Here are some basic apologetic guidelines to remember...**

#### **1. Pray, Believing**

1. It is the Lord who opens their heart and mind and then saves sinners... not you (see Acts 16:14). Do ask God for His guidance (Jn. 14:14). Seek Him expecting Him to bless your understanding with His discernment (Jam. 1:5) and your bold speech with His gentle tactfulness (Col. 4:6). Ask the Lord to also open the eyes of their understanding to God's Word as you clearly articulate the Gospel in an interesting way (Lk. 24:45).

#### **2. Memorize Evangelistic Bible Verses**

1. What's as powerful when defending the faith as passionately using the sword of the Spirit, all prayed-up in Christ, and being able to accurately cite the chapter and verse of a particular soul-winning verse (see Ps. 119:11; 2 Tim. 3:16)?

#### **3. Memorize The Locations Of Helpful Pertinent Information**

1. Whether it be sound cult material from a Christian perspective, or general secular research material that's factual, or from any other non-liberal good source that you find in a college library or you've got on hand and know where to find it in a pinch (trying going to search the field at: [www.equip.org](http://www.equip.org) or [www.watchman.org](http://www.watchman.org)). It is extremely valuable to know factual material that exposes the error in other worldviews or world religions. They might use some true statements, but real Christianity is completely true! Of course, who can know everything, but we can memorize some pertinent facts about the error of Mormonism, or evolution, Unity, scientology, or whacked philosophy, or in whatever else needs to be refuted. You will also learn what you need as you witness. Learn by doing—be a wise doer of the Word, not one who misapplies it. Lifeguards prepare near the water and then learn more in *on the job training*. Be

rightly busy about your Father's business and be thorough in learning all the counsels of the Word verse by verse ..yes, learn the Bible so well that you will be able to detect all error and heresy immediately when it even begins to raise up it's ugly little head.

4. ***Listen Carefully To What Is Being Said*** (and this is where I personally need to focus)
  1. Attentively respond to what is being said to you respectfully. Don't be distracted. It is by carefully listening with some silent prayer that you will then know what to say. Be natural, not all spooky or religious. Listen for errors in their logic and do commend them for the true statements they make. If they ask a hard question that you don't know how to answer, don't fake it. Tell them you don't know, but you will go find out. Listen for motives, for hurts, for intent. Listen well!
5. ***Don't Interrupt Or Cut Them Off***
  1. Be patient. When foolish interruptions become the norm, learning is then thrown out the window. This is just common courtesy in showing them respect. It's important because so many are not polite anymore. You need to build a bridge, find common ground and first earn the right to be heard. Just because you have an answer doesn't mean it must be heard right away. *Be anxious for nothing!* You don't have to give everyone all nine yards of what you know and overwhelm them. Give God some room to work. It's His deal after all. Why force your advice and opinions on someone who doesn't even want them yet? I like to ask permission to share something with them. Do give them the Gospel and an opportunity to come to Christ right there on the spot, but if they are a bit reluctant and not yet ready, try to leave them wanting to hear more from you. Get their number and set a time to meet. I want to do my best if at all possible ..to close the deal so to speak, but I also like to give people an easy out when they are "closed" and might desire one.
6. ***Don't Be So Afraid To Flub It***
  1. One of the best ways to improve is to discover your weaknesses and make them a matter of study and focused attention as you practice. The best way to discover your weaknesses is simply to casually get out there with lost people and kindly interact with them. Doing your best, commit the rest! Memorize the Bible verses that address your particular weakness for next time you are witnessing. You will know when your mistakes uncover your weakness for you. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher. None of us are perfect, but when you run into something you don't know, just fall back on what you do know (from the Word). Bring them back to the Gospel and point to Jesus as the Answer.
7. ***Constantly Study What You Discover About Apologetic Issues That You're Ignorant About***
  1. Hey, we live in the information age and we love Christ more than data. But great books on truth, cults and world religions are [available](#). If you don't know something, then go study it. Be a bookworm, a tapeworm, a CD-worm and an iPod junkie—read, read, read! Write down what you learn and please do come away from the computer and out of the prayer closet. Go to where the sinners are and build relationship.
8. ***Don't Be Afraid To Step Out And Take A Chance***
  1. This takes biblical faith and a heart towards God and ministry, but you can follow Jesus closely in this. Be caring, genuine, sincere and available. Speak up clearly when the time is right, and God will simply anoint you in defending the Christian faith—in defending those people in danger's way. Expect miracles to happen in their hearts, minds or bodies. And if you mess up at all, don't worry – just review guideline number six above.

## 9. *Rehearse It Some*

1. Relax, be yourself with unbelievers, enjoy the good things they say. Many do have a bit of clean humor to laugh at (not all of them). Perhaps the best place to practice apologetics early ...is in your head or with a Christian friend. Think of a situation, a street witnessing or jobsite scenario where you really need to have an answer for a person, and develop a Bible answer in advance. Maybe find and use some scientific facts or stats or quotes. Have evangelistic tools, like sound tracts in your pocket. Yes, pray and practice some in your mind. Maybe allow an intelligent friend to corner you and then try to get out of it right.

## 10. *Read Sound Christian Books That Deal With The Non-sound Subject You're Approached With.*

1. The knowledge of others and what they believe or trust in is invaluable. Lots of people simply vote in an election or practice the religion that their beloved parents chose, but they themselves never think it through for themselves. We don't have to put their relatives down when separating them from the error. Why make enemies? Fill you mind with the Word each day and pour over edifying literature—your own doubts, ignorance and confusion will quickly evaporate. Isaac Newton said, "*If I have reached the stars, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants.*" In other words, he learned from others.

Jesus, "***said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?'***" (Lk. 24:38). Beloved child of God, do seek the Lord to get all your own doubts out first! You can't remove a speck from a willing sinner's eye, when there's a California redwood tree blocking your vision in your own eye. God can easily remove that thing from your life. He wants to use you and me to help sinners find Jesus He longs to minister through you to other Christians *one-on-one* as well, to walk in victory, in love, and in confidence as they daily influence others in a positive biblical way. Nothing on this earth beats walking in His Spirit! But maybe you're wondering what's involved in a legitimate form of *one-on-more-than-one* apologetic pulpit ministry that Christian ministers can and should take part in.

Well, this involves pretty much the same elements we've discussed minus the same kind of eye contact and feedback, as you're refuting those who contradict (Tit. 1:9, 13); reproving the worldly deeds of darkness (Eph. 5:11); shunning false teachers (2 Jn. 10–11); casting down false arguments (2 Cor. 10:5); exposing the doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1, 6); calling sinful dissenters to repentance (2 Tim. 2:25; Tit. 3:10); and warning apostates of the certain and terrible judgment that awaits them if they don't repent (Matt. 23; Heb. 6:4–8; Jude 8–13).

Such fearless ministry speech was not only modeled by Jesus, but it was by every Old Testament prophet and every New Testament writer. That's straightforward speech that contends earnestly for the faith (Jude 3–4), and as a result denounces every form of deception. Who can complain about that?

Listen, you can do this ..as you depend upon the leading of the Lord! Some might ask, But is the mission urgent?—Is it imperative? Uh yeah, many get mad at me for saying this, but Jesus is the only way for them to avoid God's fierce wrath and the fames of *HE-double-hockey sticks*. Hell is a real place and people (rather than God), in effect send themselves there—it's worse than a nightmarish horrible night where the sun never

rises! Man Kurt, I liked you until you said Hell dude! Well, I never say that four letter word with pleasure believe me. But heaven is also real—better than the most beautiful day where the sun never sets! Opt for Jesus and that locale!

The mandate is mandatory—all Christians are called to be and give witness to the lost, even if they are not called to be a career missionary. Christ said, “Go” so how can we say “No”? We get involved because God is already involved and preparing their hearts on that end. Has he been working on your end, preparing your heart and mind as well? Please allow Him to. After you spend some time on, and then get off of your knees before the Lord, then go out that door and [tell someone the Good News](#) and then see what wonderful things God will do! We'll leave the results up to Him.