

Apologetics

Introduction

Over the years I have had to give a defense of my faith on many different occasions. Most of the time it has been a defense of some of the doctrines of the faith, not a defense of the gospel itself. I have not had too many people ask me about evidence for the crucifixion. I have had quite a few people, particularly in the oil and gas industry, that do not believe that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh. They have bought into the secular evolution theory that the world was formed over millions of years. Most of the scientists and engineers do not even question their belief; they know it happened over millions of years. Their carbon dating of rocks, fossils, etc. is all they need. Their theories of the continental divide require millions of years at the current rate that the platelets move. Our topic in this session is apologetics, which means to give a defense or proof of Christianity. I have not had to give much defense.

However, I have had quite a few Jehovah Witnesses come to my door, or Mormons come to my door. I have had to give a defense of the deity of Christ, which I believe is an essential doctrine in Christianity. I have had to give a defense for the trinity. For me, these defenses have been far more common, and useful to me.

There are a number of resources available for defending creation. There are many apologetic organizations with websites that offer materials to defend your faith. There are books like *Evidence that Demands A Verdict*, *Answers To Tough Questions*, *A Ready Defense*, and *More Than A Carpenter* by Josh McDowell that are excellent resources to help us defend our faith. In addition to the books, Josh has 120 excellent apologetic videos on his website that are free to watch. (www.josh.org) Christian Equippers International (www.equiper.com) has a lot of gospel tracts and many of them are apologetic. Francis Anuso, a five-fold evangelist, wrote many of those tracts. He has a tract on “I Believe In Evolution.” There is another one on “I Don’t Believe The Bible...” I am not going to be covering the material in those books. I suggest reading those on your own to become knowledgeable in those areas. I want to focus this session on defending a couple of key doctrines. Before I get into those defenses, I want to first define apologetics, then give a brief overview of the various types of apologetics. Finally, I want to talk about some attitudes that we must have as ambassadors for Christ.

1. Defining Apologetics

In 1 Peter 3:15, Peter wrote that we must sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts and always be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks us to give an account for the hope that is in us. Not only are we to be ready to make a defense, but we are to do it with gentleness and reverence. The Greek word that is translated as defense is *apologia*, which is where we get our English word apologetics, which means a defense or proof of Christianity. In keeping true to the definition, the goal of apologetics is to persuasively answer honest objections that keep people from faith in Jesus Christ.

(1 Pet 3:15) “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;”

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Personally, I don't like to argue with non-believers about the gospel. Notice that Peter said to give a defense with gentleness and reverence. Many times people want to argue and have heated exchanges to prove their points. They have no intention of hearing from you; they have already made up their mind. In our relational evangelism, we have seen that evangelism is a process. There is a sowing process, There is a growing process, and there is a time for reaping the harvest. Usually, the people that want to have fiery debates are not genuinely interested in hearing truth, but in sharing their views. I prefer to give testimonies to them. I prefer to serve them and show them the love of Christ. I prefer to pray for them until they ask me to give an account for the hope that is in me. I think that apologetics should be used at the right time in a person's search for God.

2. Branches Of Apologetics

There are different branches of apologetics. For example, in Steven B. Cowan's book, "Five Types of Apologetics," he shares the following types of apologetics: 1) Classical Method, 2) Evidential Method, 3) Cumulative Case Method, 4) Pre-suppositional Method, 5) Reformed Epistemology Method.¹ Here is a brief summary of each of the methods from his book.

THE CLASSICAL METHOD: "The classical method is an approach that begins by employing natural theology to establish theism as the correct worldview. After God's existence has thus been shown, the classical method moves to a presentation of the historical evidences for the deity of Christ, the trustworthiness of the Scripture, et cetera, to show that Christianity is the best version of theism, as opposed to, say, Judaism or Islam. This school is called the "classical" method because it is assumed that this is the method used by the most prominent apologists of earlier centuries."

THE EVIDENTIAL METHOD: "The evidential method has much in common with the classical method except in solving the issue concerning the value of miracles as evidence. Evidentialism as a apologetic method may be characterized as the "one-step" approach. Miracles do not presuppose God's existence (as most contemporary classical apologists assert) but can serve as one sort of evidence for God. This method is fairly eclectic in its use of various positive evidences and negative critiques, utilizing both philosophical and historical arguments. Yet it tends to focus chiefly on the legitimacy of accumulating various historical and other inductive arguments for the truth of Christianity."

THE CUMULATIVE CASE METHOD: "The third of the Big Four is the cumulative case method. The term "cumulative case" is used by apologists in ways different than we are using it in this context, but Basil Mitchell, an early proponent of this view, gave this method that name, and so we will use it here. The careful reader will no doubt note that this method belongs to the same broad family of methods as does the evidential (and perhaps classical) method. However, it will also be apparent that as an argumentative strategy, the cumulative case method has something distinctive to offer. Indeed, this approach to apologetics arose because of the dissatisfaction that some philosophers had with these other evidential-type methods (i.e., the first two of the Big Four)."

¹ (Cowan, Steven B. Editor, Five Views on Apologetics, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000. Pages 15-20)

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“According to advocates of cumulative case apologetics, the nature of the case for Christianity is not in any strict sense a formal argument like a proof or an argument from probability. In the words of Mitchell, the cumulative case method does “not conform to the ordinary pattern of deductive or inductive reasoning.” The case is more like the brief that a lawyer makes in a court of law or that a literary critic makes for a particular interpretation of a book. It is an informed argument that pieces together several lines or types of data into a sort of hypothesis or theory that comprehensively explains that data and does so better than any alternative hypothesis.”

THE PRESUPPOSITIONAL METHOD: “Due to the noetic effects of sin, presuppositionalists usually hold that there is not enough common ground between believers and unbelievers that would allow followers of the prior three methods to accomplish their goals. The apologist must simply presuppose the truth of Christianity as the proper starting point in apologetics. Here the Christian revelation in the Scriptures is the framework through which all experience is interpreted and all truth is known. Various evidences and arguments can be advanced for the truth of Christianity, but these at least implicitly presuppose premises that can be true only if Christianity is true. Presuppositionalist attempt, then, to argue transcendently. That is, they argue that all meaning and thought – indeed, every fact – logically presupposes the God of the Scriptures.”

“John Frame represents presuppositionalism in this volume, and he puts the matter this way: “[We] should present the biblical God, not merely as the conclusion to an argument, but as the one who makes argument possible” (...). By demonstrating that unbelievers can not argue, think, or live without presupposing God, presuppositionalists try to show unbelievers that their own worldview is inadequate to explain their experience of the world and to get unbelievers to see that Christianity alone can make sense of their experience.”

THE REFORMED EPISTEMOLOGY APPROACH: “Since the Enlightenment,” Clark says, “there has been a demand to expose all of our beliefs to the searching criticism of reason.” (...). We are told that if a belief is unsupported by evidence of some kind, it is irrational to believe it. Reformed epistemology challenges this “evidentialist” epistemological assumption. Those who advocate this view hold that it is perfectly reasonable for a person to believe many things without evidence. Most strikingly, they argue that belief in God does not require the support of evidence or argument in order for it to be rational. The Reformed epistemology apologist will not necessarily eschew making positive arguments in defense of Christianity, but will argue that such arguments are not necessary for rational faith. If Calvin is right that human beings are born with an innate *sensus divinitatis* (sense of the divine), then people may rightly and rationally come to have a belief in God immediately without the aid of evidence.”

“For the Reformed epistemologist, then, the focus will tend to be on negative or defensive apologetics as challenges to one’s theistic belief are encountered. On the positive side, however, the Reformed epistemologist will, in the words of Clark, “encourage unbelievers to put themselves in situations where people are typically taken with belief in God” (...), attempting to awaken in them their latent sense of the divine.”

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3. Defending Essential Doctrines

A. Foundation Of Christ

In 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, Paul tells them that he laid a foundation and another is building on it. The other person he is referring to is Apollos. He had said that he planted and Apollos watered. People in the church were taking sides and some identified with Apollos and some with Paul. He tells them that they are just servants to whom God gave an opportunity. It was God who was causing the growth. Next, Paul tells them that he laid a foundation, and another is building on that foundation. He cautions us to build carefully on the foundation. What is the foundation? Paul tells us, “for no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. The foundation of the church is Jesus Christ. I cannot think of a single doctrine that is more essential than the foundation of Christ.

(1 Cor 3:10-11) “According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. {11} For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

In Matthew 16, Jesus asked His disciples, “who do people say that the Son of Man is?” They answered that some say He was John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others said He was Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

(Matt 16:13-14) “Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" {14} And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”

Then, Jesus gets more personal. He asks them who they think He is. Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus responds back to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church...”

(Matt 16:15-18) “He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" {16} Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." {17} And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. {18} I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”

I had a next door neighbor in Orlando, Florida who was a pastor of a church. The foundation of their church was prophecy and they emphasized prophecy. They used this verse in Matthew 16 to say that the church would be built on revelation. They missed the point. The church would be built on Christ. God the Father revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Prophecy and revelation are not the foundation of the church. Christ is the foundation of the church and it is being built on the revelation of who Christ is. I believe in prophecy. I earnestly desire the greater gifts, and prophecy is one of those greater gifts. We welcome prophecy, but prophecy is not the foundation of the church. Christ is the foundation of the church.

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The Catholic church uses this passage to say that the foundation was Peter, the first pope. At the time Pope Francis was in office, and he was their 266th pope. They say the Catholic church is the final authority on all matters of doctrine and practice. They have missed it. Christ is the foundation of the church.

Isaiah prophesied about this rock and foundation. The Lord God said, "behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed." Jesus is the costly cornerstone. We must believe in Christ, the Corner stone.

(Isa 28:16) "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed."

Peter also quotes Isaiah and expounds on the application of the verse: we must believe and accept this rock.

(1 Pet 2:6-8) "For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." {7} This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone," {8} and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed."

Therefore, this rock that Jesus refers to is not revelation as my neighbor thought. And, this rock is not Peter, as the Catholic church believes. This rock or foundation is Jesus Christ. The revelation that Peter had was that Jesus was the Messiah or Christ. This is exactly what Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 3, that the only foundation is Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the foundation of our individual lives and He is the foundation of the church, the assembly of the individual believers. When the foundation of our faith is in Christ, we can stand up in all the storms. Jesus said that there is a foundation that He has laid that all the forces in hell cannot come against. It is a solid foundation. It is a sure foundation. It is a tried stone, a precious cornerstone.

B. Deity Of Christ And The Trinity

Some of the forces that try to come against this foundation come in the way of false religions and cults. The early church in the New Testament had a problem with people attacking the identity of Christ. In Paul's letter to the Colossians, he warns them against being taken captive or deceived about Christ. He makes it very clear that Jesus is God. He says, "for in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority."

(Col 2:8-10) "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. {9} For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in

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bodily form, {10} and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;”

Christ is not just a prophet as the Moslems say. He is God. He is not just a good man who came 2,000 years ago. Jesus is God in the flesh, Immanuel. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be born, and that “His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” Jesus is the eternal Father, even though He was given to us as a Son. The deity of Christ is a foundational teaching. It is an essential doctrine of the Christian faith.

(Isaiah 9:6) “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”

Some of the cults agree that Jesus is the Son of God, but do not accept that He and the Father are one. In this prophecy, Isaiah calls Jesus, “Eternal Father.” He and the Father were one. As we looked at what Paul said in Colossians, “the fullness of deity dwelt in Him in bodily form.” Jesus was fully God who had come in the flesh. The Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses do not accept that Jesus is God, and that is why they are considered cults.

In John 14, Jesus tells His disciples that since they know Him, they know the Father. He said if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father. He said the He is in the Father, and the Father is in Him.

(John 14:7-10a) “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.” {8} Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." {9} Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? {10} "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me...”

In John 10, Jesus said that He and the Father were one. The Jews picked up stones to stone Him. He asked them for what good works were they stoning Him. They answered that it was not for His good works, but it was because He said that He was God. Jesus was very clear that He and the Father were one.

(John 10:30-33) “I and the Father are one.” {31} The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. {32} Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" {33} The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.”

In John 1, John the Baptist tells us that Jesus existed before him, even though in the natural, John was born six months earlier. Jesus existed in the very beginning. He is the Eternal Father.

(John 1:30) “This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’”

When we planted the East Mountain Vineyard Church, a very nice couple began coming to our services. They were tenants of a rental house that one of our members owned. We had a potluck

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supper after every service, and at one of the luncheons I sat next to them. As we dialogued, I discerned that they were involved in a cult called "The Way." The Way does not accept the deity of Christ or the deity of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures are very clear about who Jesus Christ is. He and the Father are One. This question that Jesus asks is very important to our salvation. Their winds of doctrine have tried to weaken the very foundation of our faith.

John began his gospel account by stating that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."

(John 1:1-3) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} He was in the beginning with God. {3} All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."

In Paul's defense of who Christ is, he wrote, for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him." Paul mentions a number of other attributes of Christ in Colossians 1 that also speak of His deity.

(Col 1:16) "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him."

In both of these accounts, John and Paul are writing about creation. We find in Genesis 1 that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Well, who created it? Did God create it or did Jesus create everything, as John and Paul both write? The answer is that God did create everything that was created, and Christ created everything that was created. Jesus is God, and so both are true. The trinity is made up of God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All three are God. In this passage in Genesis, the word for God is Elohim, which is the plural of El, which means God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all involved in creation. As we read verse two, we find that "the Spirit of God is moving over the surface of the waters." All three were actively involved.

(Gen 1:1-2) "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. {2} The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters."

In Acts 5:1-4, the account of Ananias and Sapphira, they each lied about the amount of money that they received from the sale of their land. They kept back some of it for themselves, but said they gave the whole amount. Peter, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, asked Ananias why he had lied to the Holy Spirit. Then, in the next verse, he says, "you have not lied to men, but to God." When you lie to the Holy Spirit, you lie to God, because they are one and the same.

(Acts 5:1-4) "But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, {2} and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. {3} But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? {4} "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not

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under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”

In discerning false religions and cults, pay close attention to what they say about Jesus. Notice what John says in 1 John 2:22. He said, “the liar is the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.” One of the ways that John gives us to discern the true from the false is what they say about Jesus.

(1 John 2:22) “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.”

Later on in 1 John 4, he tells us to test the spirits to see whether they are from God. We are not to believe every Spirit; we must test them. What is the test? The test is what they say about Jesus. If they confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is true.

(1 John 4:1-3) “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. {2} By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; {3} and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.”

C. Authority Of The Scriptures

Another essential doctrine is the foundation of God’s Word. I have found that if people do not accept the authority of the Scriptures it is very difficult to defend any doctrine, belief, or practice in the Christian life. Everything that we do is based on the Word of God. Secularism has tried to remove the Word of God from the schools, the courts, and the government. If they remove the Word of God, they feel that they can do whatever they want to do. Situation ethics and individual choices become their authority. The word of God must be the foundation that we build our lives upon.

In Matthew 7, we have the very familiar story of the wise man who built his house on the rock and the foolish man that built his house upon the sand. When the rains came down and the floods came, the house on the sand fell flat, but the house built on the solid foundation of the rock stood firm. What was that solid foundation? Jesus said that His words are the solid rock that we must hear and act upon. The foolish did not listen to God’s words and act upon them. We must build our lives on the Word of God. We must build our church on the Word of God. The foundation of God’s word is an essential doctrine. The church today is under great attack and a growing number of pastors and congregants do not believe in the authority and inerrancy of scripture.

(Matt 7:24-27) “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. {25} And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. {26} Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. {27} The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

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A few years ago I had to confront a couple of families that were coming to our church. They wanted to join, but they disagreed about our doctrinal statement about the authority of the Scriptures. Our doctrinal statement also said, “The Bible is our final authority in matters of faith and practice.” These two families said that we are in error by saying that God’s word is the final authority in matters of faith and practice. They said that Yahweh is the final authority. We must obey the voice of Yahweh and not the Scriptures. If Yahweh tells you to do something, you must obey Yahweh. There are numerous problems with that theology. First and foremost, it contradicts what God says about the Scriptures. Let’s take a look at what the Scriptures say. We said earlier that Jesus was in the beginning and that everything that was created came into being through Him. In that same passage we find that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Jesus is the Word. The word of God is eternal. It was in the beginning. These two families did not accept that the Word was God.

(John 1:1-3) “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} He was in the beginning with God. {3} All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”

Even though the Word of God was in the beginning, it had not been revealed to us. Peter wrote that “no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” God revealed His Word to us through men, who were moved and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

(2 Peter 1:20-21) “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, {21} for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

In 2 Timothy Paul writes that “all Scripture is inspired by God...” The Greek word for inspired is theopneustos. Theo is the Greek word for God and pneo means to blow. Pneuma is the word for Spirit or breath. Theopneustos means God-breathed or inspired. Men were moved by the Holy Spirit and wrote the Scriptures.

(2 Tim 3:16-17) “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; {17} so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

Paul goes on to say that “all Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.” We base our teaching or doctrine on the Scriptures. It is profitable for teaching. We base all reproof on the Scriptures. How do we know when we have gone astray? We know by looking at the Word of God. We use it for reproof. Scripture is profitable for correction. The Scriptures help us find our way back God and His ways; they correct our attitudes and behavior. The Scriptures are to be used for all training in righteousness so that we are adequate and equipped for every good work. That is why we say that the Scriptures are our final authority for all matters of doctrine and practice. This is an essential doctrine in the church.

The two families that we met with would not accept this essential doctrine. If they had been open to changing their position, they could have stayed. However, they said that Yahweh had sent them to us to bring correction to our theology. They were going to teach their false doctrine to as

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many people as possible in our congregation, which we could not allow. Therefore, they are no longer with us. We are charged by God to watch out for the flock and to protect the flock from wolves and false teachers. In essential doctrines, we take a much firmer stand than on the non-essentials.

In Psalm 119, which is about the Word of God, a question is asked about how young men can keep their way pure. He says, “by keeping it according to Your word....Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.” Not only does the Word of God teach us, reprove us, correct us, and train us, it protects us. It keeps us from sinning. When we keep our ways according to God’s Word, we keep away from sin. Therefore, the Psalmist says that he has done several things. First, he has sought after God with all his heart. One of the ways that we seek after God is spending time in His word. How is your pursuit of God going? Are you spending time in God’s Word?

(Ps 119:9-11) “How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. {10} With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. {11} Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.”

The Psalmist also said that he treasured God’s word in his heart. We treasure the Word in our heart by memorizing and meditating on Scripture. How is your Scripture memory going? How is your Scripture meditation going? Do you have a time set aside to meditate on God’s word? Let me encourage you to accept the Scriptures for what they really are, God’s word to us. We need to treasure His words in our hearts. I encourage you to memorize and meditate on Scriptures on a regular basis.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:13 Paul wrote, “For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.” The Scriptures are not just words of men. The Scriptures are the word of God, and it performs its work in our lives. At our church, we accept the Scriptures for what it really is, the Word of God. It is an essential doctrine.

(1 Thess 2:13) “For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.”

The Word of God performs its work in us because it is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword. It is piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. When we meditate on His word, it becomes active in our lives. It helps us separate our thoughts from God’s thoughts. It helps us discern God’s will from our own will. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

(Heb 4:12) “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

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4. Attitudes In Apologetics

Earlier we saw that Peter gave two principles to follow in defending our faith. He said to do it with gentleness and reverence. I must admit that when some of the cults show up at my door and want to start arguing, I tend to start leaning. That is a term that Karen came up with when I start speaking more authoritatively and forcefully. Peter’s word is a good reminder to me that I must be gentle and patient when speaking with the cult members.

(1 Pet 3:15) “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;”

Ravi Zacharias, an apologist, gave some practical guidelines to use when giving a defense of the gospel. In his list of things not to do, he said, “Do not argue.” If people are not ready, you can’t force them. Be aware at what stage of the evangelism process they are in. Many of them want to argue with you, but avoid arguing. Second, he said not to be rude or condescending. Third, he said not to make up answers. If you do not know the answer to something, tell them that you will find out and get back to them. Making up answers diminishes our credibility.

Ravi also gave some things to do. First, he said to pray for people. No matter what stage of the process people are in, prayer is a good thing. I keep a prayer list of people I am reaching out to and I pray for them regularly. When I learn things about them, I write it down under their name so that I remember it. Second, be a good listener. Don’t interrupt them. Listen to them and their questions. Third, season your words with grace (Col 4:6). Fourth, let them see and experience genuine Christianity. Fifth, be patient with them. Don’t give up on them. In 2 Peter 3:9 we see that the Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” God is patient about His return because He wants more people to come to repentance and to be saved. We should be patient with the people God puts in our lives, patient for the sake of the gospel.

(2 Pet 3:9) “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

Ravi’s “Do Not Do” List	Ravi’s “Things To Do” List
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do not argue2. Do not be rude or condescending3. Do not make up answers	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Pray for people2. Be a good listener3. Season your words with grace4. Let them see and experience genuine Christianity5. Be patient with them

R.E. Session 8 – Apologetics

Small Group Break-Out

Sharing: Share one thing that you learned tonight that stood out, or one thing that you can apply in your own life.

Prayer: Pray for one to three people in your family or in your “oikos” that is not a Christian.
Pray for the CCA Relational Evangelism training to bear much fruit.
Pray for one another’s needs.

Scripture Memory Assignment For Session 8: 1 John 5:11-13