

How to Witness to the Intellectual

A FEW INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

1. Christianity is not anti-intellectual. The mind surrendered to Christ is an impressive tool in the hands of the Creator (see Acts 6:8-10; Acts 17).
2. Christianity rests upon a solid spiritual and intellectual foundation.
3. Apologetics helps Christians to defend the faith against “intellectual” arguments.
4. However, the Gospel, rather than intellectual arguments, is what saves.
5. Many arguments against Christianity are emotional or volitional, rather than logical.
6. Cynicism and ridicule are not arguments against Christianity.
7. God requires us to know our stuff (2 Timothy 2:15), but to remain humble (1 Peter 3:15).
8. Our relationship with God will become our most powerful argument for the faith.

SEVERAL FALSE CLAIMS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

1. Science disproves the Christian faith.
2. Religion is just a crutch. God does not exist.
3. People should not take the Bible literally.
4. Miracles are impossible. We should not believe in miracle claims such as the Resurrection.
5. There are many ways to God.
6. A good God would not allow suffering or send people to hell.
7. Christianity is a tool of oppression (African Americans, women).

REVIEWING BASIC CONCEPTS ABOUT APOLOGETICS

Below are some fill-in-the-blank statements to help you understand basic apologetics concepts.

1. Apologetics by itself does not save; the gospel saves. However, apologetics helps to develop a _____ that people can relate to. (one word)
2. True or False. The Christian faith is built upon solid evidence.
3. True or False. Belief in the Bible requires us to dismiss the conclusions of science.
4. Briefly state one reason for belief in God mentioned in this session.
5. Briefly state two reasons for belief in the authority of the Bible mentioned in this session.
6. Which argument for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ do you find most convincing?
7. True or False. God does not understand human suffering.
8. True or False. Because God is a God of love, he will eventually send all people to heaven.

APOLOGETICS VERSUS EVANGELISM

- Apologetics is the discipline of defending and establishing the faith. (1 Peter 3:15)
Evangelism is the act of presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 1:16)
- Apologetics = defending the gospel
Evangelism = proclaiming the gospel

APOLOGETICS AND EVANGELISM AS PARTNERS

- ❖ In the New Testament, argumentation often accompanied proclamation. (e.g., see Acts 2:22-41; Acts 6:8-15; Acts 17:2-4)

How to Witness to the Intellectual

- ❖ Even though apologetics and evangelism are technically different, they are inextricably linked. Conversations about apologetics can provide opportunities to share the gospel. Also, sharing the gospel often sparks questions within the minds of hearers that must be dealt with using apologetics, so the two go hand in hand.
- ❖ Apologetics is the servant of the gospel message. Apologetics can prepare the way so that the message is properly presented. Apologetics often finds the right “language” for the communication of the gospel.

THREE IMPORTANT EVANGELISM PRINCIPLES

1. Principle #1: Our lifestyles, rather than our arguments, are our best witness.
2. Principle # 2: Effective evangelism requires preparation.
3. Principle # 3: Christian apologetics is more than an intellectual exercise. It is a relational discipline.

APOLOGETICS AND EVANGELISM (PRACTICAL ADVICE)

1. Pray for God to remove hindrances to the advance of the gospel.
2. Actively fish for people.
3. Show genuine interest in people (listen, ask questions, develop relationships, care for hurts).
4. Keep discussions focused and on topic.
5. Stick with what you know.
6. Address intellectual and emotional barriers.
7. Minister to the whole person.
8. Keep up with current events.
9. Share your personal story of faith.
10. Give people the opportunity to accept Christ.
11. Follow up with people to monitor their progress.