

## What is Apologetics?

### Course Outline

#### What is Apologetics?

- I. God's Mission and Apologetics
  - A. The world needs to be set aright because of sin
  - B. God's mission is to restore the knowledge of God by bringing reconciliation and restoration through the Gospel
  - C. This involves explanation, proclamation, and defense
  - D. My mission as a philosopher to explain, defend, and apply the Christian message. I haven't disproven it so far
  - E. We defend the message through apologetics
  - F. Apologetics: the defense of Christianity as objectively true, compellingly rational, and pertinent to the whole of life
- II. Biblical Basis for Apologetics
  - A. Purpose: bring unbelievers to conversion; build up doubters (Matthew 11:1-11)
  - B. Classic text on doing apologetics:

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander (1 Peter 3:15-16)

    - i. Jesus is Lord: reverence and worship and service
    - ii. Be prepared with an answer (*apologia*), with a reason
    - iii. Do this with a good character: gentleness and respect, humility and love
  - C. Jesus as an apologist and philosopher

This course is offered through Our Daily Bread University. To learn more, visit us at [odbu.org](http://odbu.org).

## *What is Apologetics?*

- i. Out-argued everyone and amazed the crowds with his authority
    - ii. Matthew 22: church and state, marriage and the afterlife
    - iii. Love God with heart, soul, strength, and mind (Matthew 22:37-38)
  - D. Paul was a masterful apologist with both Jews and Greeks (Acts 17:16-34)
- III. How Should We Defend the Faith?
  - A. We should defend what the Bible teaches when it is attacked in various ways.  
Good theology
  - B. We give logical arguments for the Christian worldview (more in lecture 3).  
Philosophical analysis
  - C. Two kinds of apologetics
    - i. Constructive apologetics: arguments for God, Bible, Jesus
    - ii. Negative apologetics: refute other worldviews: atheism, pantheism, polytheism
  - D. Apologetic method
    - i. Not fideism
    - ii. Cumulative case: history, science, philosophy, human experience.  
Bring various witnesses to court
    - iii. Show that Christianity is
      - 1. Internally consistent: key worldview assertions don't contradict each other
      - 2. Factually accurate where Bible touches humanity and the cosmos
      - 3. Existentially viable and meaningful: gives a rational basis for life and hope

### **What is Truth for Apologetics?**

As Jesus spoke these things, many believed in Him. So He said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:30-32).

- I. What is Truth?
  - A. The concept or theory of truth

This course is offered through Our Daily Bread University. To learn more, visit us at [odbu.org](http://odbu.org).

*What is Apologetics?*

- i. Are we “post truth”? *Oxford Definition*: “Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”
    - ii. Postmodern view of truth: depends on individuals or culture
  - B. Christianity has a particular view of truth: objective or correspondence view. Paul:
 

14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. . . 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. . . 20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:14, 15, 17, 20).

    - i. Faith based on facts of history.
    - ii. Believing does not make it so.
    - iii. Consensus does not make it so.
  - C. Do we want to be people of truth?
    - i. Blaise Pascal, “Truth is so obscure in these days, and lies so well established, that unless we love the truth, we shall never know it.” *Pensées*
    - ii. “So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter” (Isaiah 59:14).
- II. The Truth about Truth: Two Theories in Conflict
  - A. Postmodern view of truth: contextual, communal, or personal
  - B. Case against postmodernist view of truth
    - i. Postmodernism often refutes itself:
      1. All truth is relative
      2. There are no absolutes
      3. There is no universal truth
      4. There are no propositions
    - ii. Counter-examples showing universal, objective truths

This course is offered through Our Daily Bread University. To learn more, visit us at [odbu.org](http://odbu.org).

## What is Apologetics?

1. Laws of logic: identity ( $A=A$ ) and non-contradiction ( $A$  is not non- $A$ ). Necessary truths, truths of reason, true in all possible worlds.
  2. Moral goodness: Mother Theresa is better than Hitler; altruism is better than selfishness.
  3. Moral evil: female genital mutilation; sadistic torture; terrorist attacks against innocent civilians, human trafficking
- C. Realist view of truth, truth claim
- i. True statements correspond or match reality; false statements do not do so:  
And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins (1 Corinthians 15:17).
  - ii. This is our tacit or commonsense view; we presuppose it even in negating it: "Realism is false."
  - iii. *Truth-bearers*: statements: God exists. Jesus is Lord. Bible is factual
  - iv. *Truth-makers*: objective facts that make statements true (or fail to do so if statements are false)
    1. Truth-makers are not a matter of personal conviction or group agreement
    2. Correspondence to reality makes statements true: history, science, religion

### The Christian Worldview

- I. Apologetics and Worldview
  - A. We defend Christianity as objectively true, compellingly rational, and pertinent to life
  - B. How to summarize the Christianity we defend?
    - i. Creeds and confessions
    - ii. Theologies
    - iii. Worldview: philosophical summary
- II. What is a Worldview?

This course is offered through Our Daily Bread University. To learn more, visit us at [odbu.org](http://odbu.org).

## *What is Apologetics?*

- A. A set of assumptions about the basic makeup of the world
  - B. A philosophy of life, deepest values and understanding of existence
  - C. All worldviews cannot be true, given the objectivity of truth
  - D. We defend the Christian worldview as the most rational and worth believing
- III. Religion and Worldview
- A. More to religion than worldview, but not less
  - B. More to Christianity than worldview
    - i. History of Christianity
    - ii. Developed Christian theology
    - iii. Worship of God
    - iv. Symbols for Christianity: the cross, liturgical symbols
    - v. Religious experience of God: Isaiah, Pascal
- IV. The Christian worldview
- A. Set of statements about reality
    - i. Source of authority: Bible
      - 1. Confluent inspiration
    - ii. Ultimate reality: Triune God
      - 1. Eternal
      - 2. Self-existent
      - 3. Infinite-personal
      - 4. Holy and just
      - 5. Transcendent and immanent
      - 6. Incarnational
    - iii. Human beings
      - 1. Image of God: relational, rational, creative
      - 2. Fallen in every way
    - iv. Salvation: From God, for Us

This course is offered through Our Daily Bread University. To learn more, visit us at [odbu.org](http://odbu.org).

## *What is Apologetics?*

1. The church as body of Christ
- v. Source of morality: God's character
  1. Natural law
  2. Bible
- vi. History and the afterlife
  1. The kingdom and mission of God
  2. Eternal destinies
- B. A meta-narrative approach
  - i. Creation
  - ii. Fall
  - iii. Redemption
  - iv. Consummation
  - v. Christian existence: living in the truth  
Four freedoms in Christ (p. 93)
    1. Self-deception
    2. Tyranny of self
    3. Self-dependence
    4. Death or nonbeing
  - vi. The adventure of defending the Christian worldview  
When we understand our calling, it is not only true, but beautiful-and it should be exciting. It is hard to understand how an orthodox, evangelical, Bible-believing Christian can fail to be excited. The answers in the realm of the intellect should make us overwhelmingly excited. But more than this, we are returned to a personal relationship with the God who is there. If we are unexcited Christians, we should go back and see what is wrong.

This course is offered through Our Daily Bread University. To learn more, visit us at [odbu.org](http://odbu.org).

## *What is Apologetics?*

### References

- Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (InterVarsity Press, 2011).
- Douglas Groothuis, *On Jesus* (Wadsworth, 2003).
- Millard Erickson, *Truth or Consequences* (InterVarsity, 2001).
- Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay* (InterVarsity, 2000).
- Os Guinness, *A Time for Truth* (Baker, 2000).

This course is offered through Our Daily Bread University. To learn more, visit us at [odbu.org](http://odbu.org).