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**Using Worldview in Apologetics**

by Freddy Davis

Many people, when they hear the word apologetics, really don't have much of a sense of what it is all about. And even for those who do have some idea, most see it to be such a complicated and deep topic that they would never really make any effort themselves to engage non-believers in an apologetic process. Beyond that, even most of those who might make some effort are only able to do it at a superficial level.

It seems that, for the most part, those who do engage it are a "special breed" of Christian. So what's going on here? The Bible clearly teaches us that we, as Christians, should always be ready to make a defense of our faith. In 1 Peter 3:15, the apostle Peter tells his readers to, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." So why is this such a difficult thing?

**What Is Apologetics?**

Before we get very deep into this topic, we really need to pause and understand exactly what it is we are talking about. First, apologetics has no relationship to apologizing for our faith. This word comes from the Greek apologia which simply means "speaking in defense of something." Essentially, it is a defense of our faith.

One of the things about this topic that is scary to many people is that, in modern times, apologetics has become an actual academic discipline that has some very deep and complex elements. This is not a bad thing. In fact, it is absolutely wonderful that Christian academics have thought this deeply about why our Christian faith is a reasonable

belief system and have shared this information with the broader body of Christ.

That said, giving an apologia does not have to be that complicated. If you know Christ in a personal relationship, simply sharing how Christ has changed your life and that you know, without any doubt whatsoever, that he is Lord, you have made a step in defense of your faith. As you interact with people, simply learning how to answer the questions they have about our faith moves that process forward even more. You don't have to get into formal debates and academic discussions to be a very effective apologist.

**Traditional Approaches to Apologetics**

That said, as you become more knowledgeable about your faith, you should be able to engage ever more complex elements of that defense. This is where learning some of the more traditional aspects of the academic elements of apologetics can be helpful and useful. Let's take just a moment and look at some of the approaches modern apologists use to defend our faith.

While apologetics encompasses answering virtually every attack that can be imagined against Christianity, there are several major approaches that modern apologists tend to use. They use:

- \* natural theology to establish Theism as the correct worldview,
- \* historical and other inductive arguments to assert the truth of Christianity,
- \* numerous types of data to show that the Christian faith explains reality better than alternative explanations, and

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\* the argument that all meaning and thought logically presupposes the existence of God.

These approaches tend to be the main ones used by modern Christian apologists to defend our faith.

### **How Worldview Interacts with Apologetics**

Interestingly, for the most part, apologetics is associated with a type of argumentation which puts the Christian on the defensive. That is, a skeptic gives a reason why the Christian faith is not true, and the Christian tries to respond with an answer which shows that the skeptic is wrong. Of course, there are times when it is good and appropriate to answer skeptics in this way. The Christian faith is the truth about reality and the arguments of naysayers can be answered logically.

That said, there is another way to deal with the attacks of skeptics, and that is to point out the flaws in the belief system of the skeptics themselves. When a person attacks Christianity, they begin with the underlying assumption that the Christian faith is wrong and that their own belief system is right. Thus, if you can show that their assumptions do not reflect reality, their entire argument goes down the tube. This moves us to an approach which is offensive in nature rather than defensive.

The means for doing this is based on an understanding of the concept of worldview. By understanding the various worldview categories, it becomes possible to dig into each of them and question their assumptions.

Every worldview, without exception, is built on a faith foundation. This does not mean that there is no evidence available to demonstrate the truth of a belief system. It is just that when dealing with religious beliefs,

the evidence is not limited to what can be demonstrated empirically. In fact, a skeptic who attacks the Christian faith is doing so based on the beliefs of a different faith. And if that faith can be shown to be invalid, their attack falls apart.

### **How to Use Worldview Concepts to Go on the Offensive**

Using worldview concepts in the apologetics process begins with identifying the skeptic's authority source. Every person has some reason they believe their beliefs are true, and the source for their reason is their authority source. Possibilities include human reason, human experience, human tradition, and revelation from God. Once you know the authority source, you can begin investigating its truthfulness. Since the Christian faith represents the way reality is actually structured, that means every other belief system in existence is not true. And anything that is not true can be shown to be untrue.

It is not the purpose of this article to go into great depth about how to do this. That would require a prohibitively long explanation about worldview in general, an explanation of the Christian worldview with its strengths, and the weaknesses of non-Christian beliefs. By way of a quick explanation, though, this means learning how to ask questions of the skeptic which will force them to answer in ways which expose the problems in their own belief system. (The MarketFaith Ministries website has many articles and other resources which deal with this more fully, and I recommend that you go and explore what is there. We are also able to do live, in-person training for churches and other Christian organizations on this topic.)

### **Go on the Offensive Without Being Offensive**

There is one more thing that needs to be said as it relates to this topic. In the Christian faith, it is not okay to do the

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right thing for the wrong reason. Wrong attitudes are sin, and sin cannot accomplish the purpose of God. Even if you argue and win your argument, God will not bless you if you do it with wrong intentions. When you engage the skeptic, go for the win, but always do it out of a heart of love for the person who is far away from God.

In the beginning we quoted 1 Peter 3:15 and noted that the apostle admonished his readers to "Always be

prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." But it is important to note that he didn't stop there. He went on to say, "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." We do need to be prepared to stand strong for our faith. And when we do, God will use us to bring even skeptics to himself.

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