

Christian Apologetics (Part 43)  
(Review)

Introduction: Definition; Reasons to Study; Task; Tension Involved; Overview

I. The Premises of the Christian Apologist

- A. Epistemological Premises (Rationality - Logic and the Law of Noncontradiction, The Law of Causality, The Analogical Use of Language; Empiricism - the basic reliability of sense perception; Revelation - God's self-disclosure to humankind)
- B. Anthropological Premises (Humans are fallen image-bearers of God, subject to the effects of sin.)

II. The Character of the Christian Apologist

-Seven Character Traits That Make For an Effective Defense of the Christian Faith: 1) A Love of Knowledge (Proverbs 10:14; 13:16; 15:14, 28; 18:15); 2) A Passion For Holiness (1 Peter 1:15, 16); 3) Wisdom From God (Colossians 4:5, 6; Proverbs 2:6; James 3:13, 17); 4) A Humble Heart (Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 15:9, 10; 2 Corinthians 12:11; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 3:2); 5) A Life of Prayer (Psalm 1:2; Proverbs 2:3-6; John 3:27; 15:5; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 1:11; James 4:2) 6) Love for God and People (1 Timothy 1:5; Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 13:10; Psalm 119:136); 7) Zeal For God's Glory (Psalm 119:53, 126; Ezekiel 9:4)

III. The Strategy and Tactics of the Christian Apologist

A. Methodology (Classical; Historical/Evidential; Presuppositional)

- Reason and use evidence within the bounds of biblical presuppositions.

- The Basic Structure of a Biblical Defense of the Faith: Argument by Truth; Argument By Folly (Proverbs 26:4, 5)

B. Paul at Athens (Acts 17:16-34): Paul's theology in Romans 1 and 2 in action

C. Strategic Objective: to plant a seed

D. Asking Questions (gather information, shift the burden of proof, steer the conversation)

E. Finding Flaws (Logical Fallacies, Practical Fallacies, Polemical Inconsistencies, Grounding Problems, Reduction to Absurdity)

F. Dealing Wisely With People (resistance for emotional reasons, prejudice, rebellion; bulldozers)

G. Challenging the Experts (misapplied appeals to scholarship; opinions that lie outside the scholar's area of expertise; erroneous facts; philosophical biases)

H. Getting the Facts (Identify the claims of others, then determine whether those claims are factually accurate.)

I. Concluding Counsels (Be ready. Keep it simple. Avoid religious language and spiritual pretense. Focus on the truth of Christianity, not merely its benefits. Give reasons. Stay calm. If they want to go, let them leave. Don't let them leave empty-handed. Don't retreat in the face of opposition.)