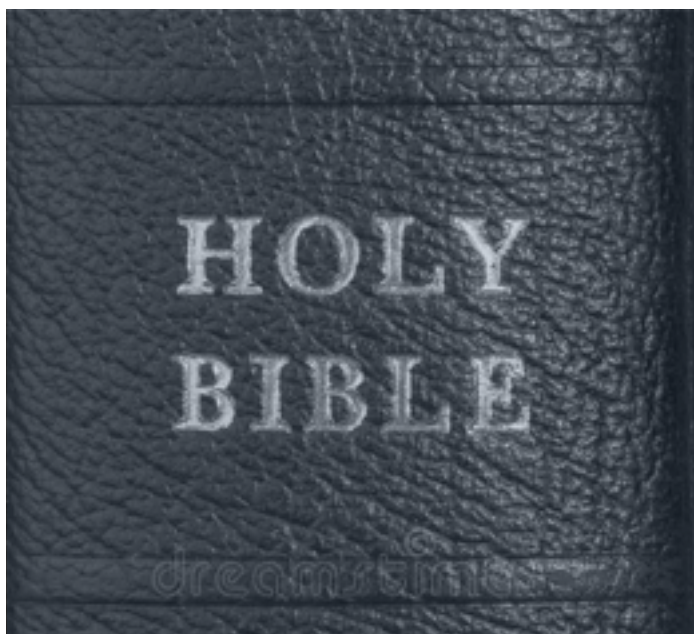


3:15

GOSPEL-CENTERED APOLOGETICS

FAITH



Life Group Curriculum

Introduction to Gospel-Centered Apologetics

Today we're going to look at what we are covering this year. Gospel-Centered Apologetics is our overall choice of topic. Most of you will recognize "gospel-centered" as focusing on the gospel, or the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. The second part may not be so familiar to you. Apologetics is quite simply, defending your faith or beliefs. It is the practice of answering questions and correcting misconceptions concerning Christianity.



Scripture Passage:

15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are

1 Peter 3:15-16 (ESV)



Peter is telling us that we should always be ready to explain our beliefs to anyone who asks. Why does he tell us to do this?

1 Peter

3:15

Notice the end of verse 15 says to do this with gentleness and respect. Many conversations involving beliefs and religion can and do evolve into arguments. These topics bring out passion in people. Feelings can easily get hurt. Peter is reminding us that we must take care to engage in such discussions with a loving heart.

Key Truth

“Every follower of Christ should be able to articulate their beliefs and provide reasons for that faith based upon Scripture.”

Gospel: The “good news” of God’s redemptive plan for reconciling mankind to Himself. Christ paying for the sin debt of the world by being the perfect sacrifice, providing salvation for all who repent and declare Jesus as Lord.

Apologetics: Is the discipline that deals with the defense of the Christian faith. It comes from the Greek word “apologia” which means to give a reason or defense.

Christian apologetics can be summarized in two parts:

- (A) objective reasons and evidence that Christianity is true (it corresponds to reality) and,
- (B) the communication of that truth to the world.

We will seek to answer, “why do you believe what you believe?” Then we will then look at how we can use that knowledge to help others know Christ. The goal is always draw ourselves closer to God and be able to share Him with others..

(Question): In the Bible, this person lived longer than anybody, yet still died before his dad.

Who is he? - Who was his dad?

APOLOGETIC PURPOSE

Why Apologetics? Why does this rate the entire year? The world is full of different religions and beliefs. Furthermore, our world is full of various interpretations and personal variations of “Christianity”. It is the duty of Christians to know truth to effectively share it. In sharing that truth, we must also guard the integrity of the Gospel against false teachings while correcting misconceptions. These curriculum topics have been selected for their popularity and practicality. This collection is not exhaustive, yet it is safe to say most of you guys already have or soon will encounter these topics and discussions. As believers called to be ever ready to defend our faith, it is the goal of these lessons to introduce these issues and ideas. So at least you have been exposed to the ideas and will have at least heard of these topics. If you follow Christ, you will encounter questions both for yourself and from others. We may not know all the answers and should not expect to, but we can know how to engage questions to find answers and we should always be able to discuss questions in a manner that glorifies God.

One Minute Apologist “What is Apologetics?”

A quick (1:28 duration) but very good explanation of apologetics. As with any video, review all materials before presenting to your group.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMj3sKKn6a4&t=5s>

DISCUSSION

Each lesson this year will focus on knowing about faith in Christ. Learning what Christianity is and how this faith differs from other beliefs and religions throughout the world. All with a goal of being prepared to engage our world with the Gospel. Every follower of Christ is responsible for the Great Commission. We are to minister to others and share the good news of the Gospel to all who will listen. Christians are also told they are to always be prepared to tell people why they have faith in Jesus Christ. Every lessons will seek to advance our knowledge and ability to carry out “Gospel-Centered Apologetics”.

Think For A Moment - What is Apologetics?

A quick (1:28 duration) video from apologetics Canada, detailing where the word Peter used came from. Also, a quick explanation of what apologetics actually means.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAFlmuiA-eE>

Let's take a few minutes and look at a few topics that we are going to cover and consider some situations that as believers, we might end up having to “defend” our faith.

note: The next two questions are meant to not only spark discussion, but also to lead students to think in a manner of defending their faith. Many students will have never participated in discussions concerning faith, religion, or God. Discussions like these are designed to open up students to the reality that answers and reasons for faith do exist. Expect some blank stares or guesses, but be prepared to provide the students with possible replies and answers.

Example: 1

You find yourself in a group of people discussing a current news story that involves religious rights. One of the people speaks about how, “All religions should be banned! Every one of them is danger to civilized people. Muslims, Jews, Christians...they're all the same!”

- What do you say?
- Do you say anything at all?
- Are they correct?

Example: 2

A classmate mentions how her grandfather is always quoting scripture and talking to her about God. She says she doesn't know what she believes, but when it comes church and the Bible she says, “I can't really bring myself to believe in something science has totally proven false, you know?”

- How do you respond to her?
- Is she correct about science?
 - If yes? How did science do it, prove God as false?
- If no, how would you show her science has not proven Christianity to be a false belief?

(Answer): Methuselah (969 years!). His father was Enoch. The Bible tells us that Enoch was “lifted up” to heaven and makes no mention to him ever actually dying.

Discussion

COEXIST Sticker: (Show the sticker) Have you ever seen this before? It is a very common bumper sticker. Do you know what it means and what it stands for?

- Are the intentions behind this thought “good” or are they “bad”?
- Is this view of all beliefs living in coexistence even possible?

Explanation: (pass out the printout explanation then begin talking about it) The idea of unity is good and even Biblical. Ironically, it is Christianity that promotes, “loving your neighbor”. The world naturally rebels against this idea.

- What misconceptions exist in this line of thinking?
- This is just one example of misconceptions regarding religion and God. Can you think of any others?

Worldviews: When you see such a sticker on the back of a car, this person is expressing how they see things. They are displaying the opinions which they hold about society, culture, religion, and even life. These positions, ideas, and views are what makes up a persons “Worldview”. Christians see the world though a “Biblical Worldview.”

21 When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. 22 After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. 23 Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. 24 Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away. 27 Altogether, Methuselah lived a total of 969 years, and then he died.

Genesis 5:21-24; 27 (NIV)

PursueGOD Video - Biblical Worldview

A four minute video which explains what a Biblical Worldview is both in idea and through Scripture.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FaSmzet5AcQ>



1

TRUTH: GOD’S OPINION, NOT MINE.

2

SUBMISSION: GOD’S TERMS, NOT MINE.

3

RELATIONSHIP: LOVE GOD, LOVE PEOPLE.

This Biblical Worldview is how a believer evaluates everything. This way of seeing things is also how we develop and present our reason or defense for our Christian faith...or our “Apologetic”.

GOSPEL-CENTERED APOLOGETICS

Gospel Applicaton:

If we are called to be ambassadors for Christ, we must draw people to Him. So many miss the Grace of Salvation and the fellowship of God because they are hung up on misconceptions or false teachings about the Bible, Christianity, or God Himself.

Questions:

- How can you take what they learned today and minister to others for the Gospel?” And
- What are some practical ways I can apply the gospel truths from this lesson?”

Student Final Word:

Each Student is given the opportunity to give a short comment, expressing their thoughts, position, or ideas on the days discussion. Go around the room and give each student a few moments before ending with the leader.

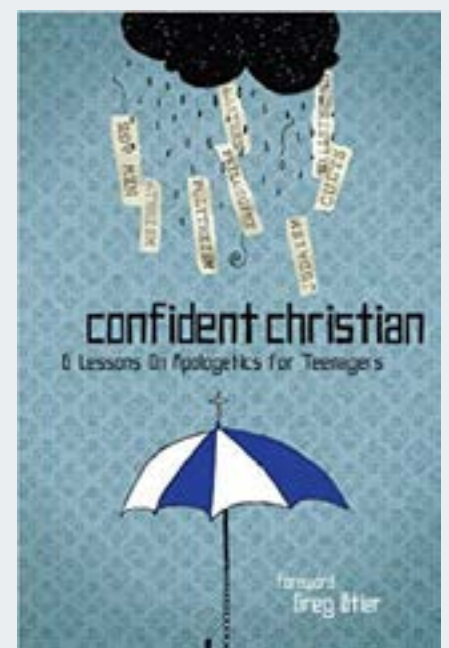
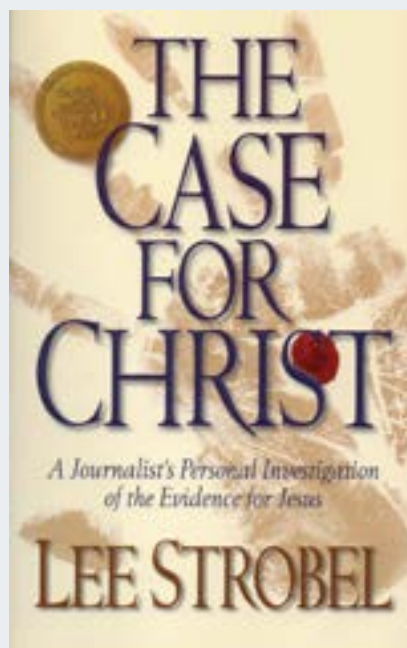
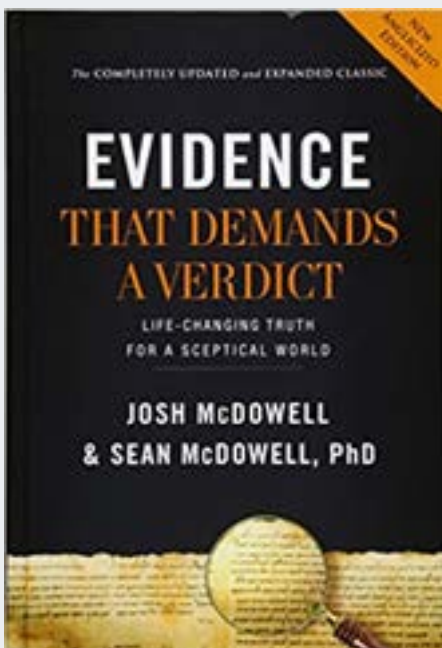
Pray

Guide the conversation to a place of prayer. Pray that God will instill a desire in us all to seek Him more and more. That we will thirst for answers to questions about our faith and long to share the truth with others.

Verse for Next Week:

“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.” Matt. 16:18

Resources



NOTES

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