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Defending the Faith



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When I was a young Christian, I used to like to study Apologetics, not because I was apologetic about my faith in Christ but because I had often been called upon to defend my faith.

The study of Apologetics has nothing to do with apology or apologizing for your belief. Rather, it is about defending the faith in the face of objections raised by unbelievers. The word 'apologetics' is derived from the Greek word 'apologia', which means to make a rational defense. In the Christian term, it is about making appropriate intellectual defense for our faith in Christ. According to the Bible, it is being ready to defend the faith to everyone who calls our hope into question.

"but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence," (1 Peter 3:15 NAS).

For example, there are many who question the existence of God because they claim they cannot believe what they cannot see. There are those who feel they do not need repentance because they are not that bad or because they have done a lot of good. Yet others refuse to believe because they saw some Christians whose behavior is horrendous.

What would our answer be when we face people who put our faith into question? Many Christians defend the invisibility of God and explain His existence through His creation: the nature, the trees and the air. For me, I will illustrate my belief of an invisible God through defense. I will present to an audience a piece of paper with an object behind it and ask the audience to guess whether there is an object behind the paper or what object is behind the paper. If the audience does not get the right answer (which is often the case) or if someone or a few people gets the answer, my next move will be to reveal to them what the object is and ask, "Were you able to see the object earlier? Does our inability to see means the object does not exist?" With their answers, I will then defend the existence of God, that in a similar manner as the object behind the paper, God exists, regardless whether we see Him or not.

We know that all men have sinned, and without the redemptive blood of Christ, no man can be saved. If someone tells us he or she does a lot of good or is not that sinful, we know how we can show appropriate verses in the Bible to let him or her know the sinful nature of mankind. That is defending the faith, and the word of God is the best way to defend our faith in Christ. However, in circumstances where there is no explicit indication from the Bible for a defense, the use of logic empowered by the Holy Spirit will be the next best tool for defense, such as the story of the paper and object mentioned above. In the case of unbelief because of certain Christians' behavior, it will be appropriate to explain that how others behave does not determine the truth about God, because it is in Christ we trust. We can show them other Christians who are good, but it is ultimately the word of God that is the best defense, bringing about conviction by the Holy Spirit.

For a deeper study into Apologetics, one good book to read is 'Evidence That Demands A Verdict' by Josh McDowell. Another good resource on apologetics is the web site of the Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry at <http://www.carm.org>.

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