

DEFENDABLE FAITH - ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

Why Ask and Answer Tough Questions?

I. BECAUSE WHEN THE QUESTIONS ARISE, _____, PERSONALLY, _____ THE ANSWERS.

- When _____ strikes.
- When problems overwhelm.
- When we are shocked with the unexpected.
- Questions we have heard others express, or _____ raised in our reading or listening to media, often arise.

If we have not stored up some answers, carefully considered and hidden in the recesses of our mind, we can quickly yield to doubt and allow it to become _____.

Even men and women of _____ faith, arrive at times when they need answers. Remember John the Baptist sent two messengers to Jesus.

Luke 7:19–23 NKJV 19 And John, calling two of his disciples to *him*, sent *them* to Jesus, saying, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?” 20 When the men had come to Him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’ ”

21 And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.

22 Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that *the* blind see, *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed, *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised, *the* poor have the gospel preached to them. 23 And blessed is *he* who is not offended because of Me.”

If John the Baptist sometimes needed answers, so do we.

II. AS BELIEVERS, WE ARE ACTUALLY COMMANDED TO BE READY WITH ANSWERS!

1 Peter 3:15-16 NKJV 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and **always be ready to give a defense** to everyone who asks you a reason **for the hope that is in you**, with meekness and fear; 16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

The text says to be ready to give a defense of the reason we have hope in Christ, a defense of our faith. The word for defense is apologia or _____, a reasoned _____ that defends what we believe.

III. THERE WAS A TIME THAT I SERIOUSLY NEEDED ANSWERS.

When I went to college, I believed, but I was unable to _____ what I believed. Quickly, skeptic professors and students wreaked havoc upon my faith and my life. The primary result was that it caused me to doubt parts of the _____ and to decide that certain things in it were not true.

- I ceased to believe in _____ and instead believed in evolution.
- I did not believe that the flood covered the _____ earth and destroyed all land life except for those in the ark.
- I did not believe God _____ back the waters of the Red Sea and many other things the Bible says.

Praise God, years later, some damage done, God rescued me and brought me back to a place to have complete _____ in His Word through providing me with answers during a period of careful, diligent study. Now I believe _____ word of it is true, and that confidence and security has refreshed and revitalized my life. Along with that, God then helped me learn how to give a _____ of my faith, my reason for hope in Christ.

IV. WHAT APOLOGETICS (FINDING THE ANSWERS) CAN DO FOR YOU.

A. What apologetics cannot do for you.

Apologetics is not a substitute for _____.

Ephesians 2:8 NKJV For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God,*

A person cannot be saved by merely coming to a reasoned _____ about Christ and salvation. Faith goes beyond an _____ to the facts. Faith originates with God and is exercised by people by _____, depending, leaning, and committing to the object of faith, namely Christ.

James 2:19 NKJV You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

B. What apologetics can do for you.

1. It can _____ your faith.
2. It can increase your confidence in the _____.
3. It can decrease your _____ of witnessing.

V. LEARNING THE ANSWERS CAN HELP OTHERS ALSO.

- A. It can strengthen the faith of other _____ as it strengthens your own faith.
- B. It can destroy some of the _____ Satan has planted in their lives that hinders their coming to faith in Christ.
- C. It can create an _____ in which people more easily put their trust in Christ.

A great example of this is Dr. Francis Collins.

Many consider Dr. Collins to be one of the most effective and ground-breaking _____ in the world. Collins graduated with a degree in chemistry from the University of Virginia. He earned his PhD in chemistry at Yale and then decided, for good measure, he would go to medical school at the University of North Carolina. From there, he returned to Yale and later, the University of Michigan.

He is most noted for having been chosen to chair the _____ Genome Project where, in 2003, he led an international collaboration of two thousand

scientists in sequencing the human genome. More recently, he was appointed by President Obama to be the Director of the National Institutes of Health.

Clearly, he is a prominent scientist, but what is perhaps even more interesting is his spiritual journey. He began this journey as an _____.

In his third year of medical school, while he was working in the hospital, he was attending a woman who had exhausted her options for treatment. She suffered from a heart condition and was going to die soon. Collins was moved by this kind and faithful woman. She had a strong faith, and she shared it with him. She said, "You know, I'm ready to go. Don't worry about me."

And then she said, "Dr. Collins, you've been so kind to listen to me and care for me and listen to me share with you about my faith. Tell me about _____ faith. Tell me what _____ believe."

Collins later wrote: "Nobody had ever asked me that question before, not like that, not in such a simple, sincere way. I realized I didn't know the _____. I felt uneasy. I could feel my face flushing. I wanted to get out of there. The ice was cracking under my feet. All of a sudden, by this simple question, everything was a muddle." (Taken from Francis Collins, *A Place for Truth: Leading Thinkers Explore Life's Hardest Questions* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 77.)

Collins began to wonder if he was an atheist because he had chosen the position of reason or because it was the answer he wanted. Finally, it came to him: "As a scientist, I had always insisted on collecting rigorous data before drawing a conclusion. And yet, in matters of faith, I had never collected any _____ at all. I didn't know what I had rejected. So, I decided that I should be a little better grounded in my atheism. I better find out what this is all about.

So, I challenged a patient of mine who was a Methodist minister. And, after listening to my questions and realizing that I was not dealing with a very full deck of information, he suggested that I read the Gospel of _____, which I did... I found the scripture to be interesting, puzzling, and not at all what I had thought faith was about... then I began to read C.S. Lewis and realized there was a great depth of thinking and reasoning that could be applied to the question of God." (Francis Collins, *Mere Christians: Inspiring Stories of Encounters with C.S. Lewis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 79.)

Lewis convinced him that reason and faith go hand in hand, though faith has the added component of revelation—the _____.

Collins had previously believed that Jesus and the stories of the Bible were nothing more than mere _____. Again, as he studied the historical evidence,

he was stunned at how well documented and how historically accurate the Bible is. He also saw a surprising fidelity of the transmission of the manuscripts that were passed down over the centuries. And, over time, Francis Collins, based on the accumulation of the _____ that he observed, concluded that God exists, and that Jesus is the Son of God.

He also concluded that most of the religious skeptics that he knew and that he meets today are just like he was. That is to say, they didn't want to think about these things and never looked at any evidence, never drawing conclusions from the real evidence that was available. (Richard E. Simmons III, *Reflections On The Existence Of God: A Series of Essays* (Birmingham: Union Hill Publishing, 2019) Essay 1.2.

Francis Collins is not the _____.

A number of years ago, Encyclopedia Britannica published a 55-volume series entitled *The _____ of the Western World*. This series presented the most important ideas that scholars and intellectuals have considered and investigated over the course of recorded history. The longest essay was on _____. When noted philosopher, author, and co-editor of the series, Mortimer Adler, was asked the reason behind this, he replied, "It is because more consequences for _____ follow from that one issue than from any other." (Hugh Ross, In a personal interview with Rice Brooks, October 26, 2012. Essay 8.2)

"The best _____ agree with the best defenders of faith [in God] on one crucial point: that choice to believe or disbelieve is existentially the most important _____ of all. It shapes one's whole understanding of human life and purpose, because it is a choice that each must make for him or herself." - Adam Kirsch (Contemporary poet and literary critic)

CONCLUSION: While we come to Christ by faith, it need not be a _____ faith. Faith in Christ is not a leap into the dark but a leap into the light. Christianity can be defended with reasoned arguments because it is _____. Jesus said that _____ is truth. He said that God's _____ is truth. He said, "The truth shall make you _____."

NEXT WEEK: The bedrock question – "Does God Exist?" How can we know?