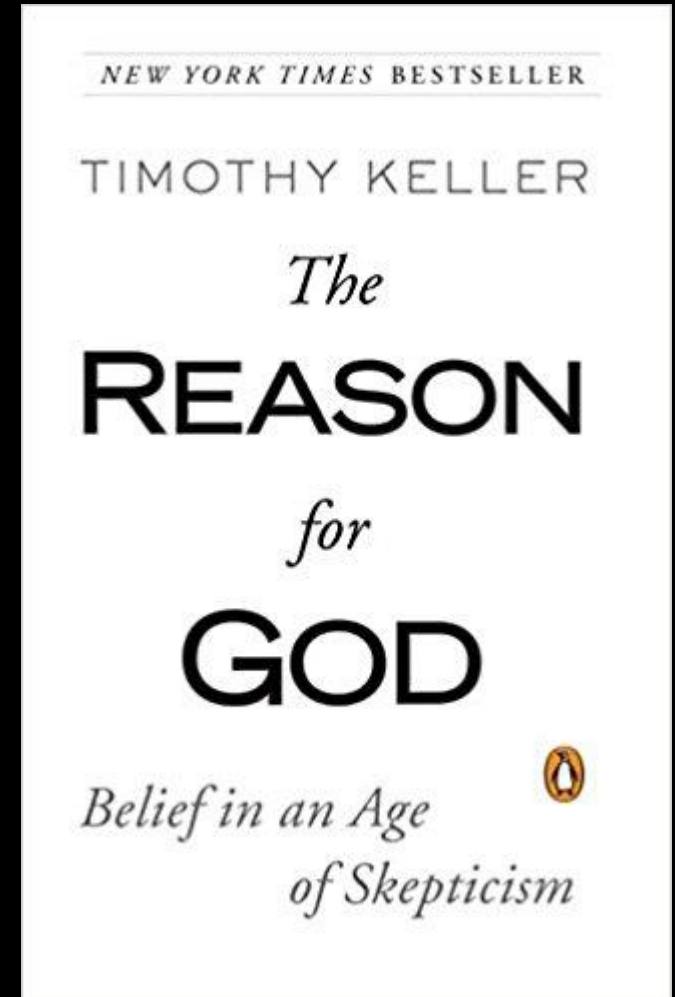
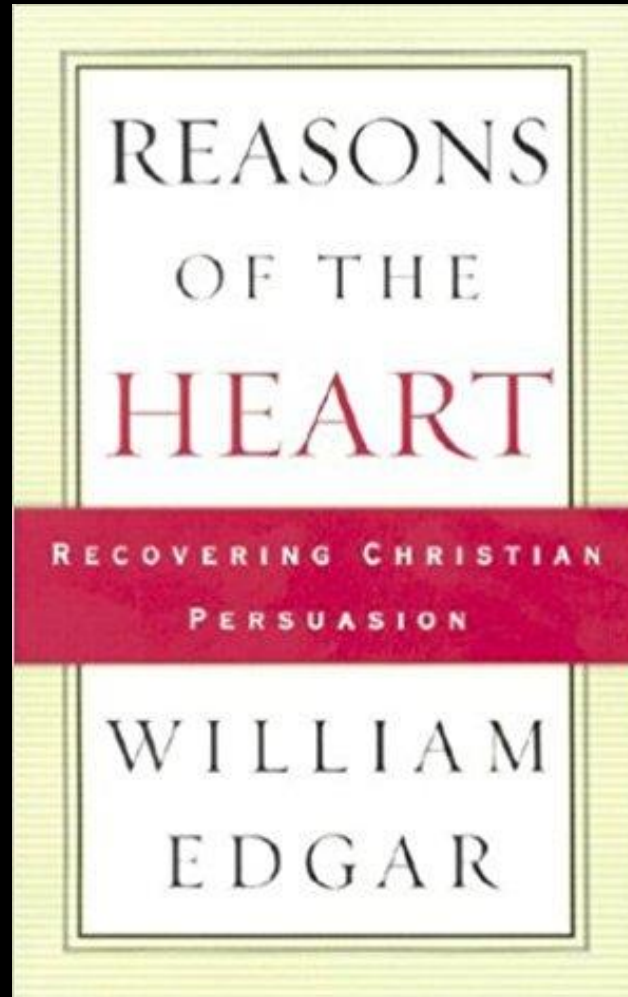
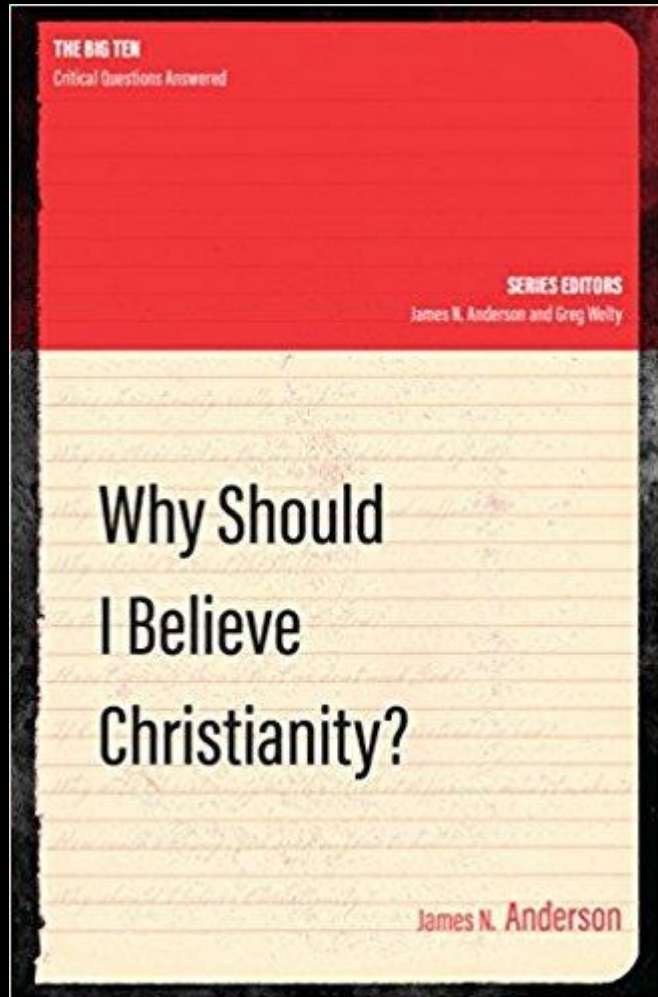


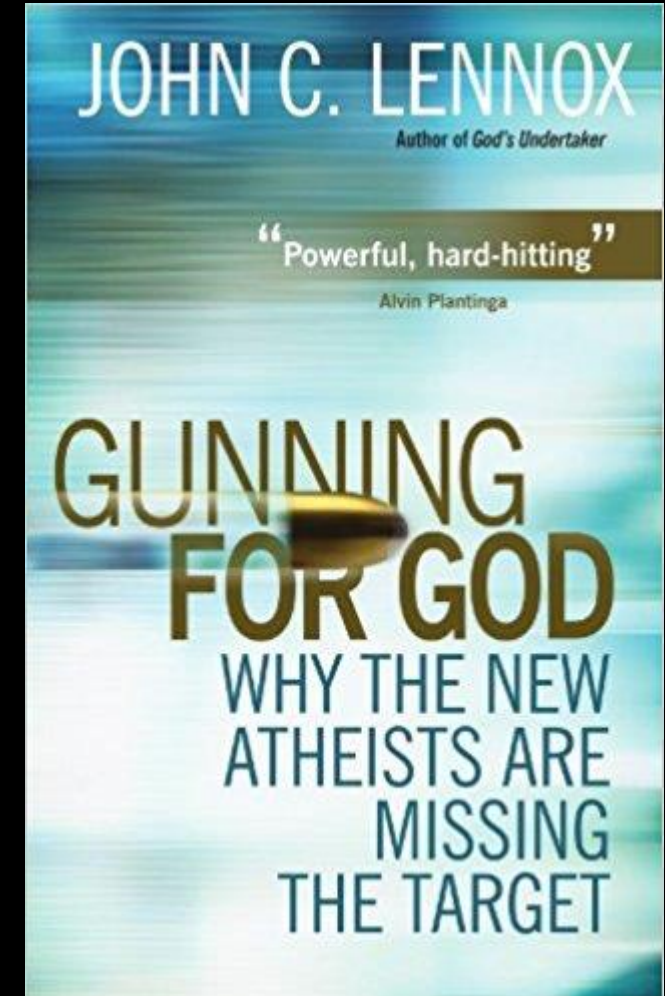
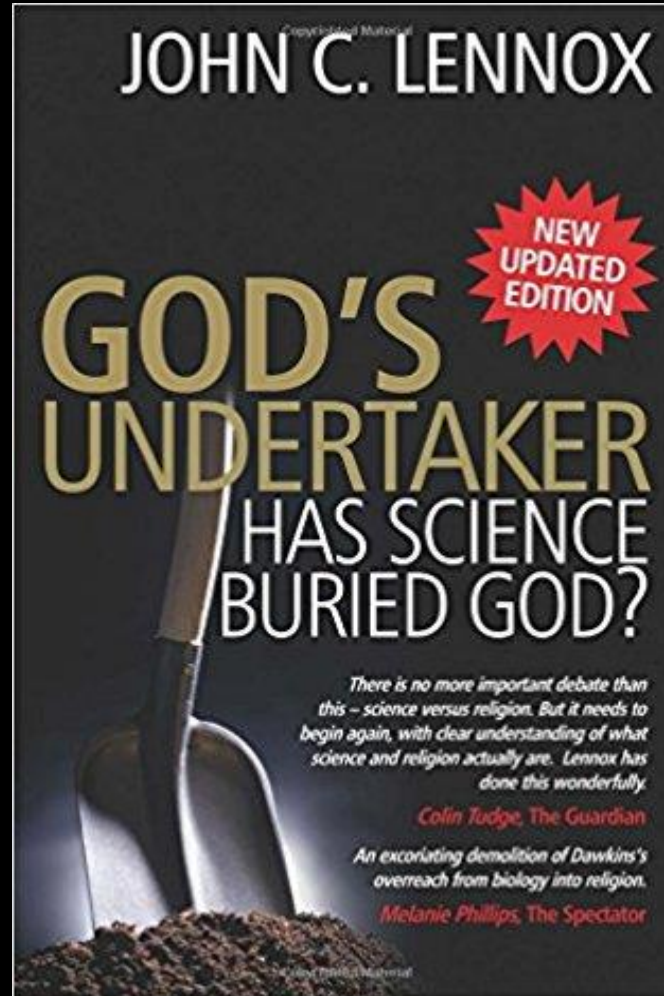
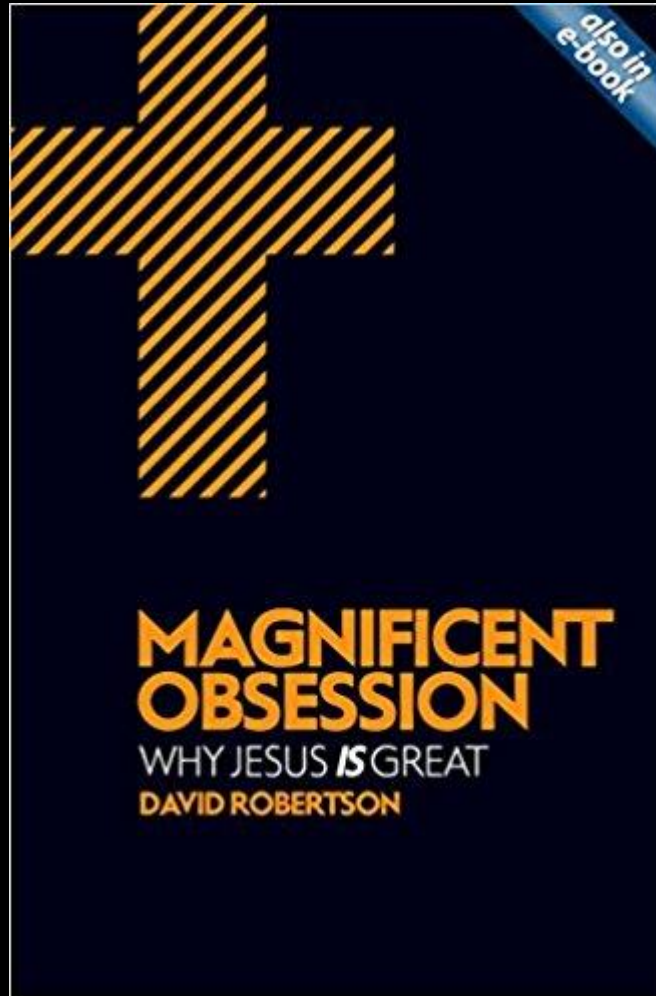
APOLOGETICS: GIVING A REASON FOR OUR HOPE

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCA)
FALL 2017

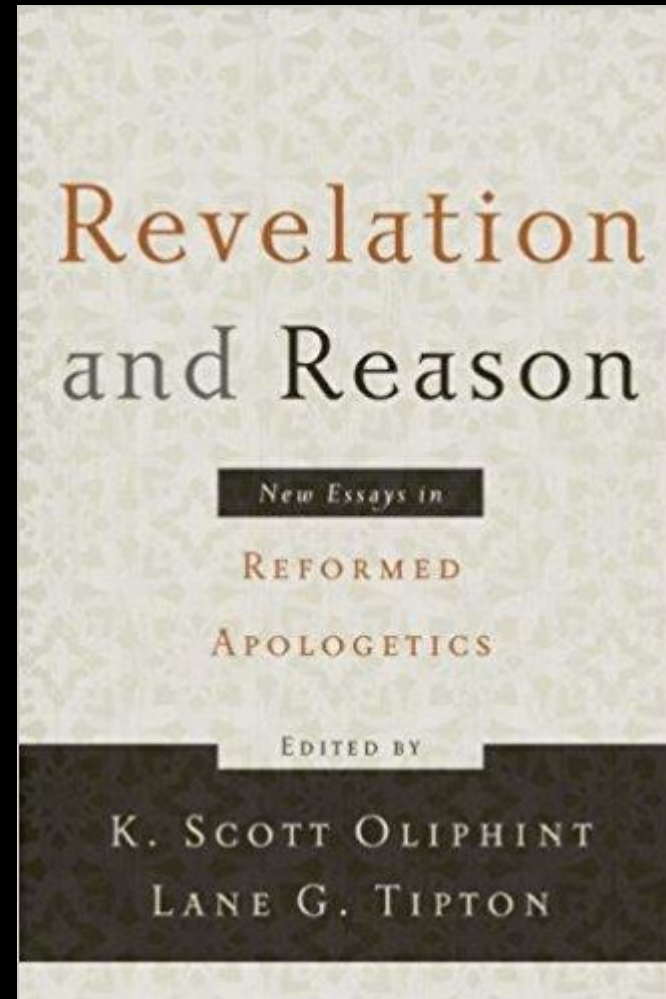
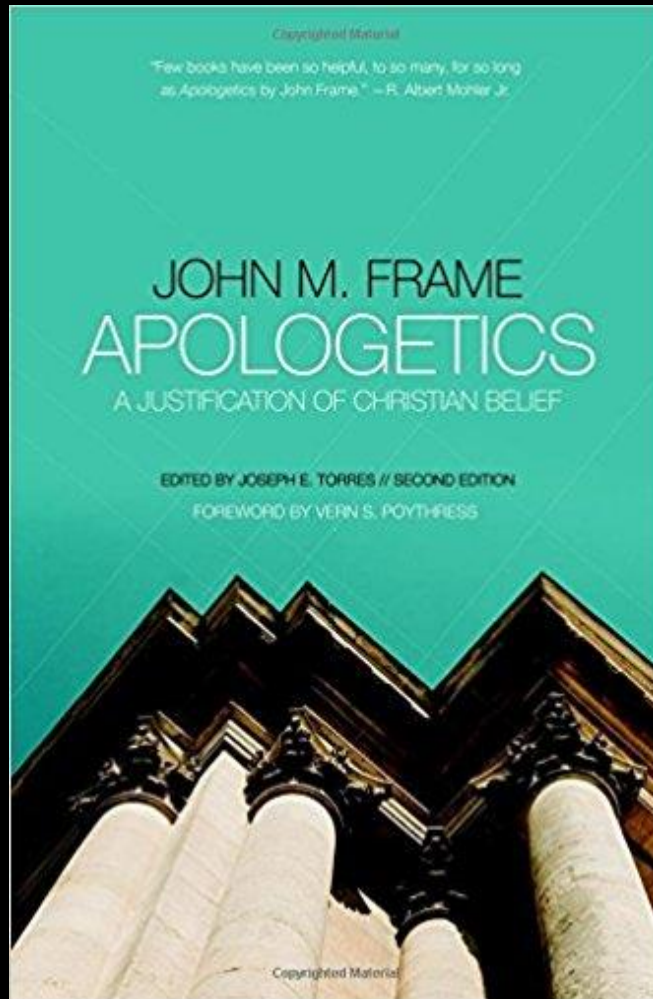
BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



INTRODUCTION TO APOLOGETICS

- *Discussion Question: What do you think of when you hear the word 'apologetics'?*

INTRODUCTION TO APOLOGETICS

- *What Is Apologetics?*
 - James Anderson, “Apologetics is the reasoned defense of the Christian faith.”
 - *Apologia* – giving a reason or defense in a court of law (Socrates, *Apologia* to the Athenians)
 - 1 Peter 3:15: “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”
 - Other definitions
 - Cornelius Van Til, “Apologetics is the vindication of the Christian philosophy of life against the non-Christian philosophies of life.”
 - John Frame, “The discipline that teaches Christians how to give a reason for their hope.” Or, “The application of Scripture to unbelief.”
 - William Lane Craig, “That branch of Christian theology which seeks to provide a rational justification of the truth claims of the Christian faith.”
 - Note the way Christianity is defended
 - Not militarily; not by emotional appeals; it is a reasoned, rational defense of the Christian faith

INTRODUCTION TO APOLOGETICS

- *What Is Christianity?*
 - Many adopt a “mere-Christianity” approach
 - Lowest common denominator Christianity (doctrines Christians have agreed on throughout church history)
 - C. S. Lewis illustration: a courtyard with various doors (Catholicism, Anglicanism, Reformed-Presbyterian, etc.)
 - Reformed-worldview approach
 - Doctrine of Scripture, doctrine of sin (noetic effects of sin), doctrine of God’s sovereignty and Christ’s Lordship – all have implications for apologetics
 - Reformed theology yields a Reformed approach to apologetics

INTRODUCTION TO APOLOGETICS

- *What Is Christianity?*
 - Christianity isn't merely a collection of religious doctrines or religious practices (though it includes both of those things)
 - Christianity isn't merely a particular lifestyle (though it entails a certain lifestyle)
 - Christianity is an entire worldview (world-and-life view)
 - **Worldview** – a basic outlook or perspective on the world
 - **View** – not a view in the physical sense; it's a philosophical view. It involves your most basic assumptions, values and ideas about reality.
 - A WV is a person's basic outlook, a way of understanding the universe, the philosophical assumptions that shape how one thinks and lives; the intellectual lens that guides thoughts and actions
 - A WV determines how a person thinks about the world, how they interpret their experiences in the world, how they make value judgments and how they respond to experiences

THREE ASPECTS OF APOLOGETICS

- Apologetics as Proof (positive apologetics)
- Apologetics as Defense (negative apologetics)
- Apologetics as Offense

THREE ASPECTS OF APOLOGETICS

- Apologetics as Proof (positive apologetics)
 - The task of offering positive reasons to believe that the Christian worldview is true and reasonable
 - Addressing the questions: “Why should I believe Christianity?” “Why should I become a Christian?”
 - Example: Argument from apparent design in the universe
 - Example: Historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus
- Apologetics as Defense (negative apologetics)
- Apologetics as Offense

THREE ASPECTS OF APOLOGETICS

- Apologetics as Proof (positive apologetics)
- Apologetics as Defense (negative apologetics)
 - The task of countering alleged reasons others for thinking that Christianity is false or unreasonable
 - Addresses the questions: “Why shouldn’t I disbelieve Christianity?”
 - Example: responding to the “problem of evil” objection
- Apologetics as Offense

THREE ASPECTS OF APOLOGETICS

- Apologetics as Proof
- Apologetics as Defense
- Apologetics as Offense (sports analogy)
 - The task of offering reasons to believe that non-Christian worldviews are false and unreasonable
 - Addresses questions: “Why shouldn’t I believe _____ as an alternative to Christianity?”
 - Example: Atheism cannot account for objective moral values; can’t explain why anything would be objectively right or wrong
 - Example: the Qur’an is not a divine revelation because it is full of contradictions and false historical claims

THREE ASPECTS OF APOLOGETICS

- Summary of the three aspects of apologetics
 - Apologetics as Proof – offering positive reasons for why Christianity is true and reasonable
 - Apologetics as Defense – responding with reasons when someone is arguing against Christianity
 - Apologetics as Offense – indirectly arguing for the Christian worldview by showing that all other worldviews are false and unreasonable
 - Worldview A, B, C, D (Christianity)
- We will use this process of proof, defense, and offense as we address issues in apologetics later

WHY DO APOLOGETICS?

- *Discussion: Why do apologetics? What are some reasons we should engage in apologetics?*

WHY DO APOLOGETICS?

- *Apologetics has multiple purposes (7 purposes)*

1. Apologetics is to glorify God

- Not to show how smart you are or to avoid looking stupid when people ask questions
- Apologetics isn't ultimately about defending ourselves; it's about glorifying God
- Apologetics sets forth the attributes of God (truth, order, rationality of his word)
- Apologetics manifests God's lordship of the intellectual realm
- The ultimate, over-arching purpose of apologetics that governs the rest

WHY DO APOLOGETICS?

2. To silence unbelievers

- When unbelievers say that God's truth is false or morally wrong and God's wisdom is foolish, that is profoundly dishonoring to God. A concern for God's honor means that we will seek to silence those false accusations.
- Not by force, but by exposing the error of objections and the folly of unbelief.
- 1 Peter 3:16: "having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame."
- Jesus' own interaction with his opponents
 - Luke 20:40: "For they no longer dared to ask him any question."
- We glorify God with biblical arguments by putting to shame or silencing those who do not glorify God with their arguments

WHY DO APOLOGETICS?

3. To evangelize unbelievers

- Apologetics and evangelism are inevitably bound up together

4. To edify the church and the believer

- Apologetics is edifying because it strengthens and develops faith
- Our trust in God and his word can be deepened as we more fully understand how the truth claims of the Christian faith cohere, support one another, and make sense of the world
- Apologetics provides nourishment for the Christian intellect

WHY DO APOLOGETICS?: THE PURPOSES OF APOLOGETICS

5. To protect the church and the believer

- Apologetics has an important role to play in the protection of the corporate church and the individual believer
- There will always be people who want to draw Christians away from Christ by casting doubts on Christian beliefs
 - People raise objections to the Christian faith that sound superficially persuasive
- Analogy: anti-missile defense system
- Analogy: preventative medicine (given something in advance to protect you from catching something) or curative medicine (given if you catch something)
 - The church should have a preventative ministry in protecting the saints rather than simply a reactive ministry

WHY DO APOLOGETICS?: THE PURPOSES OF APOLOGETICS

6. To promote theological insight and maturity

- Apologetics is bound up with theology; if you have bad theology, you will have a bad apologetic

7. To develop critical thinking skills

- Since apologetics involves offering a reasoned defense of the Christian faith, that means we will sharpen our thinking about the Christian worldview and unbelieving worldviews
- Apologetics compels us to think critically, evaluate arguments, examine evidence, questions of ethics, etc.
- Summary
 - Apologetics serves multiple purposes with the overarching purpose of glorifying God

WHAT APOLOGETICS IS NOT

1. Apologetics is not about making an apology in the popular sense

- Apologetics is not about saying sorry; you could say apologetics is about never having to say you're sorry because you are giving positive reasons for the truth of Christianity

2. Apologetics is not excuse for being argumentative

- 2 Timothy 2:24, “must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone...”
- Some believers are attracted to apologetics because they like arguing, but Christian apologists should be peacemakers
- The goal is to actually persuade people to embrace a Christian worldview

WHAT APOLOGETICS IS NOT

3. Apologetics is not a form of intellectual bullying

- Some Christians who are gifted intellectually give the impression that the purpose of apologetics is to belittle and humiliate unbelievers
- Christian apologetics should be reasoned and forceful, but it should never be belligerent
- Our goal is to win a person, not merely to win an argument

WHAT APOLOGETICS IS NOT

4. Apologetics is not a substitute or alternative for evangelism

- Some view apologetics as pre-evangelism – something you do first to lay the ground for evangelism
- Some enjoy what they think to be knock-down arguments for God's existence, but then never actually present the gospel
- We don't just want people to be theists; we want them to be Christians
- Apologetics is not abstract, philosophical argumentation that never gets around to talking about Jesus
- Biblical apologetics will always involve evangelism; it will involve the proclamation of the gospel

GOALS FOR CLASS ON APOLOGETICS

1. To show why apologetics is important and necessary for all Christians
2. To lay the biblical foundation for the practice of apologetics
3. To give an overview of different approaches to apologetics
4. To introduce the most common issues in apologetics and how we can address them from a biblical worldview

APOLOGETICS IN LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRY

- Discussion Questions

- *What role does apologetics play in preaching?*
- *What role does apologetics play in evangelism and missions?*
- *What role does apologetics play in discipleship?*
- *What role does apologetics play in counseling?*
- *What role does apologetics play in mercy ministry?*

APOLOGETICS IN LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRY

- What role does apologetics play in preaching?
 - Equipping the saints to defend their faith
 - Contending for the faith against false teaching (Jude 3)
 - Encourage and edify the saints
- What role does apologetics play in evangelism and missions?
 - Deconstructing other worldviews
 - In a pluralistic society people see a worldview as one among many
- What role does apologetics play in discipleship?
 - Worldview thinking – seeing all of life under the lordship of Jesus Christ
 - Preventive teaching (vaccinate believers)
- What role does apologetics play in counseling?
 - Reconciling theological beliefs with experience (example: suffering)
 - Identify false thinking that leads to tension, stress, and helping people think truer thoughts

CLASS OUTLINE

- What Is Apologetics? Why Do Apologetics?
- Biblical Foundations for Apologetics
 - Understanding Worldviews
- Approaches to Apologetics
- The Reformed-Worldview Approach
 - Principles & Practice
- Specific Apologetics Issues
 - The Existence of God
 - The Inspiration and Reliability of the Bible
 - The Problem of Evil and Suffering
 - The Resurrection of Jesus Christ
 - The Sexual Revolution
 - Science and Faith

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR APOLOGETICS

- The Bible has much to say about apologetics (what, who and how)
 - It mandates apologetics
 - It tells us how to engage in apologetics
 - What we're defending
 - What our goals should be
 - What are methods should be
 - What our attitude should be

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR APOLOGETICS

- The biblical mandate for apologetics
 - Is apologetics mandated by Scripture or is it something optional for Christians?
- Two exhortations and two examples in the New Testament

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR APOLOGETICS

- First exhortation: 1 Peter 3:15: *“but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense [apologia] to anyone who asks you for a reason [logos] for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”*
 - What is the exhortation?
 - What does the word “prepared” imply?
 - What is the manner of Christian apologetics?
 - What is the context? Christians suffering for their faith, persecuted for their beliefs: “Why do you believe this?” (3:14-17)
 - Who is the intended audience of the defense? Unbelievers.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR APOLOGETICS

- Second exhortation: Jude 3: *“Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend [struggle, fight] for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”*
 - What is the exhortation?
 - What is the content we contend for?
 - What is the significance of the phrase “the faith”?
 - What is the context?
 - Who is the audience?

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR APOLOGETICS

- Summary of the two exhortations
 - Apologetics is mandated by Scripture
 - Apologetics involves Christ the Lord
 - Apologetics requires being prepared to make a defense
 - Apologetics is giving a reasoned defense of Christian hope in the face of suffering
 - Apologetics is characterized by gentleness and respect
 - Apologetics is directed to unbelievers
 - Apologetics involves struggling and fighting
 - Apologetics is about defending the faith delivered to the saints
 - Apologetics requires combatting false teaching in the church
 - Apologetics is for the protection and health of believers

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR APOLOGETICS

- First example: John 20:30-31: *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*
 - The Purpose: to lead people to faith in Jesus Christ
 - The Evidence: Apostolic testimony to the miracles, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus
- Second example: the Apostle Paul
 - Acts 17:2, 17: “And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures.... So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.”
 - Acts 18:9: “And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.”
 - Paul’s approach varies based on audience (Jews & Gentiles)

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR APOLOGETICS

- Acts 19:8-9: And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.
- Acts 24:25: “And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, “Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.”
- 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: “For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...”
 - Where do you see proof, defense, and offense in these verses?