



Answering questions, objections and challenges to the gospel

1 Peter 3:15

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;

I. Think Biblically

Colossians 2:8

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

A. Understanding why people reject Christ?

1A. It's a spiritual battle

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest

- People are dead in sin and live according to a satanic agenda

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

- The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving

Ephesians 4:17-19

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; ¹⁹ and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

- People are darkened in their understanding and hardened in their hearts

B. People have underlying motives for rejecting the love of Christ

1B. Separated from God, people love darkness rather than the light

John 3:17-21

For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that

his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

2B. Separated from God, people are filled with pride and will not give glory to God

John 5:39-44

³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰ and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. ⁴¹ I do not receive glory from men; ⁴² but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. ⁴³ I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. ⁴⁴ How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and only* God?

3B. . Separated from God, people are fearful of what will happen

John 12:42-43

⁴² Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing *Him*, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God

4B. Separated from God, people are ignorant and cannot believe in Him whom they have not heard

Romans 10:13-17

¹³ for “WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”¹⁴ How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!”¹⁶ However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?” ¹⁷ So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

II. Listen critically to what people say

Proverbs 26:4-5

⁴ Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
or you yourself will be just like him.

⁵ Answer a fool according to his folly,
or he will be wise in his own eyes.

Matthew 22:23-33

²³ That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ²⁴ “Teacher,” they said, “Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him. ²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. ²⁷ Finally, the woman died. ²⁸ Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?”

²⁹ Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. ³⁰ At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. ³¹ But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, ³² ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.” ³³ When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching

A. Speak to their conscience

2 Corinthians 4:1-2

Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, ² but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God

III. Bring the conversation back to Jesus

A. Ask the key question

"If I could answer your questions about Christianity to your intellectual satisfaction, will you commit your life to Jesus Christ?"

B. Share your story

Acts 26:1

Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and *proceeded* to make his defense:

IV. Present the evidence

Acts 17:1-4

¹ When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ² As was his custom, **Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,** ³ **explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah,"** he said.

⁴ Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.

V. Know the answers to commonly asked questions

Know Why you Believe-Paul Little

A Ready Defense-Josh McDowell

The Reason for God-Tim Keller

When Skeptics Ask-Norm Geisler

Tactics-Greg Koukl

How to Communicate the Exclusive Truth Claims of the Gospel-JP Jones