

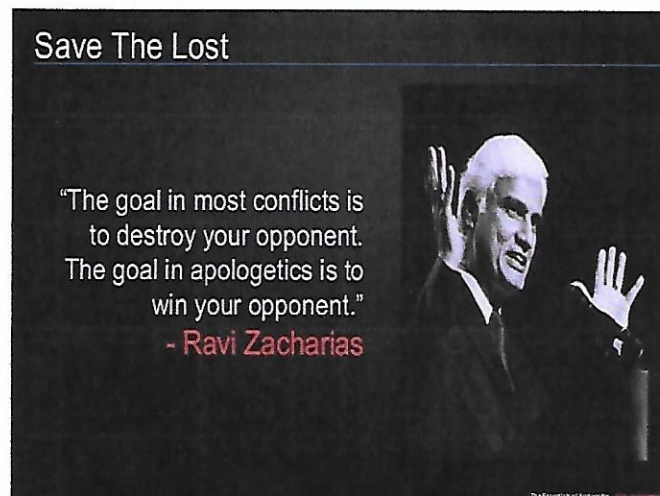
Introduction to Apologetics

Have you ever had someone say to you, “Prove to me that God exists”? Do you feel like a deer in the headlights? I mean, how do you answer this? Where do you start? Sit back, relax and take a deep breath.

First, let's discuss why we should even answer this question. 1st Peter 3:15 says, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” Isaiah 1:18 says, “Come let us reason together...” So we need to be able to answer some of their questions or at least recommend some resources for them to look at.

Second, **try to determine if this person really wants to hear your answer**. Let him know that a question like this can't be answered in 1-2 minutes or 1-2 sentences. Your answer will take time. Are they willing to take that time? Are they willing to spend time in reading some websites or books? If they're not, you've just saved yourself a lot of time, effort & frustration. It's been my experience that most people will drop out at this point as they're not really interested in doing the work required.

If they are interested, you must set the agenda. Don't let them dictate the terms of the conversation. If you do, they'll get you bogged down with a whole bunch of picayunish, never ending questions. You must take charge and set the agenda.



FYI: Apologetics is the name of the branch of theology concerned with the defense of Christianity. Luke 12:30 says, “Love the Lord with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your MIND...” **The objective of apologetics is not to convince a person against their will to become a believer, but to lay evidence in an intelligent way so people can understand what is real & true.** “The heart cannot delight in what the mind rejects as false” – Theologian Clark Pinnock.

Let's start out by defining 'truth': It's a noun, the real state of things, the body of revealed events or facts, something that agrees with reality. What methods can we use to determine if something is true? The 2 major methods are;

- the scientific method
- the legal/historical method

The scientific method has 3 components to it:

- 1...observation of an event
- 2...measurement of that event
- 3...repetition of that event

If you don't have all 3 of these components, you cannot use the scientific method of proof. Example: Because Thomas Edison & his scientists were able to observe, measure & repeat experiments, they were able to produce a longer lasting light bulb. Done right, the scientific method is extremely accurate.

Other examples:

- architects building bridges, buildings, etc.
- rockets scientists launching rockets
- auto manufacturers building autos, etc.

You cannot use the scientific method to prove you were born or that Abe Lincoln existed or that someone murdered someone else or that someone loves you because you cannot observe, measure or repeat these events.

The legal/historical method:

This is used to determine the validity of an event that cannot be repeated. When using this method, we depend on the probability of an event happening based on the facts that we can gather. This method is not 100% accurate but depends on proving the reality of an event beyond a REASONABLE doubt, not beyond any doubt. We reach our decision of the trustworthiness of an event by seeing where the preponderance of evidence leads to.

Examples:

- in a courtroom with a guilty or not guilty verdict
- in reconstructing history, like did George Washington exist?
- in things like love, friendship, trust, faith, etc...in other words, the intangibles.

We may use some science, like DNA evidence, to support this method in determining the truth of something but the final answer will still not be without some doubt.

How would you answer these questions?...

When we're talking about proving the existence of God or how the universe or human beings were created, which method will we use...the scientific or the legal/historical method? (answer; the legal/historical)

Definition of Apologetics

1. *Apologia* → Apologetics → Defense
2. Judicial term a lawyer uses not a military term
apo = away *logos* = word
3. Giving a Reason or Defense for our Christian faith
4. 9 times used in New Testament (*I Cor 9:3; 2 Cor 7:11; I Pet 3:15; Phil 1:7, 16; II Tim 4:16; Acts 25:16; 19:33; 22:1*).
5. Apologetics is a branch of Christian theology dealing with verbal defense of Christian faith

What would you say to someone who says, “Prove to me scientifically that God exists”? (answer; you can’t use the scientific method because you can’t observe, measure or repeat God’s existence. You have to use the legal/historical method).

Do you think most people are aware of these 2 types of proof and where they can and cannot be used? (answer; NO).

Once your method of proof is determined, you can ask them **what subject area that they want the proof in**. Is it in the historical, archaeological, the classical arguments, prophetic probability, philosophical, scientific or sociological/psychological areas? There are massive volumes of work done in each of these areas. *We have produced a very brief synopsis of each of these areas so that your friend won’t be overwhelmed.* When he picks his area, then you can start by explaining what the synopsis says. Be sure that he applies the same critical thinking skills to this Bible area that he does to the same areas that you’re talking about. In other words, if you’re talking about history, make sure he’s not more critical with you than he is with other aspects of history. This is a very important point as most skeptics will be much more critical with the biblical aspects than with the same subject area that’s devoid of it.

Finally, don’t worry if you don’t have all the answers. No one does. But you can lead them to consider some things that they probably have never considered before (even if they tell you they have). You can also give them additional resources to study. Remember, the goal is not to win an argument but to give them a foundation for believing in Jesus. What they do with it is up to them.

In each of these areas, we have only presented a brief analysis. There is SOOOO much more evidence that can be considered.

When you add up all of these proofs, we think God’s existence is easily proved beyond a reasonable doubt.