

Answering Tough Questions

❖ 1 Peter 3:15

“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;”

People will ask questions about the Christian Faith. God wants us to be able to answer their questions.

There are three main ministry contexts:

1. Ministry in the Christian Church World
2. Ministry in the Secular World
3. Ministry in the world of “World Religions”

I. Ministry in the Christian Church “World”

People believe:

1. In the existence of God
2. In the virgin birth of Jesus
3. In His death on the cross – for our sins
4. In His resurrection from the dead
5. In the inspiration of scripture
6. In God’s revealed plan for salvation
7. In Eternal life in heaven or hell
8. In miracles and real answers to prayer

Secular people and people from “world religions” (87% of the people in the world) do not believe in the above list.

In the “Christian World” or a Bible School, you can preach and teach the Bible, and people do not question the veracity, truthfulness of what is being taught.

II. Ministry in the Secular World

To tell someone who does not believe in the existence of God, that God sent His son to die for their sins is a nonsensical statement.

A. Distinction:

1. Evangelism is the preaching of the Gospel message – with the intent to call the hearers to a commitment to Christ.
2. **Pre-evangelism is the removal of secular people’s objections to faith.**

Secular “strongholds” must be removed before the gospel can penetrate their hearts.

*Answering tough questions is pre-evangelism.

*No one will be saved until the gospel (the power of God unto salvation) takes root in their hearts and faith arises.

A further distinction:

1. **Evangelism has its basis in Bible proclamation, and sharing your personal testimony.**
2. **Pre-evangelism has its basis in reason and logic to show why secular objections to faith are groundless.**

❖ **Acts 19:8 – “reasoning”**

“And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.”

Before we can share the gospel, in a way that will make sense to a secular thinking person, we sometimes must “smooth the road” removing the obstacles and answering questions that are keeping people from accepting the Lord.

Evangelism	Pre-evangelism
1. Done by all Christians	1. Done by equipped Christians when needed.
2. Anytime & place	2. Done when objections are raised.
3. Content is <u>the</u> Gospel	3. Content is all Doctrine.
4. Based on the Bible	4. Based on reason.
5. Proclaims the Gospel	5. Clarifies erroneous thinking
6. Faith is the goal	6. Understanding is the goal

Points to consider:

1. Unbelievers have good questions.

How could a “good God’s” creation be such a mess?

How could Jonah be swallowed by a fish or Jesus be raised from the dead?

Seven days...really? Science has “proven” millions and billions of years.

Let’s face it: for secular people, Christian doctrine sounds like fairy tales.

2. We have good answers.

*The vast majority of skeptics have only heard the questions and believed we have no answers.

The Bible is true and we have real and true answers to their questions.

God, His Word and reality are on our side.

We can draw on thousands of years of great Christian thinkers to defend the hope within us.

3. God actually commands us to give them the answers.

❖ **1 Peter 3:15 (NKJV)**

“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;”

❖ **1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)**

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,”

❖ **1 Peter 3:15 (AMP)**

“But in your hearts set Christ apart as holy [and acknowledge Him] as Lord. Always be ready to give a logical defense to anyone who asks you to account for the hope that is in you, but do it courteously and respectfully.”

- A. We should be ready
- B. We should be able to give a reason to those who would ask questions.
- C. Giving these answers sets up the opportunity to share the gospel with a person whose mind has been cleared of prior objections.

❖ **2 Corinthians 10: 4-5**

“For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,”

This applies to our own minds, but also we can do this for others also.

“Destroy their speculations and every high and lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God...”

*A word of caution: You will run into “fools in their folly”.

❖ **Proverbs 26:4**

“Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest you also be like him.”

Some people simply love to argue with Christians.

They are not hungry for God or the truth.

To argue with a fool – someone who has rejected the truth and will not listen to reason makes us just as foolish as he or she.

Do not lose your peace, joy or patience with such a person – that is their goal in arguing with you.

***Our responsibility is to provide thoughtful, sincere, non-Christians with real answers to their honest questions about God and Christianity.**

If we have no reasonable answers, we confirm their unbelief.

Our Task:

- 1. Answer their questions**
- 2. Remove their obstacles**
- 3. Preach Jesus**
- 4. Call for faith and commitment**

THE TOUGH QUESTIONS:

1. How do we know God exists?
2. What about evolution?
3. Is Jesus the only way?
4. What about those who have never heard of Jesus?
5. If God is so good, why does so much evil exist?
6. But I'm a good person, I don't need Jesus.
7. I tried the church.
8. Isn't Christianity just a psychological experience?

III. Ministering to the World Religions

1. Preaching Christ
2. The Trinity

3. Ministering to Catholics
4. Ministering to Muslims
5. Ministering to Hindus
6. Ministering to Buddhists
7. Ministering to Atheists
8. Ministering to Occultists and Animists

These will be covered in additional training sessions.