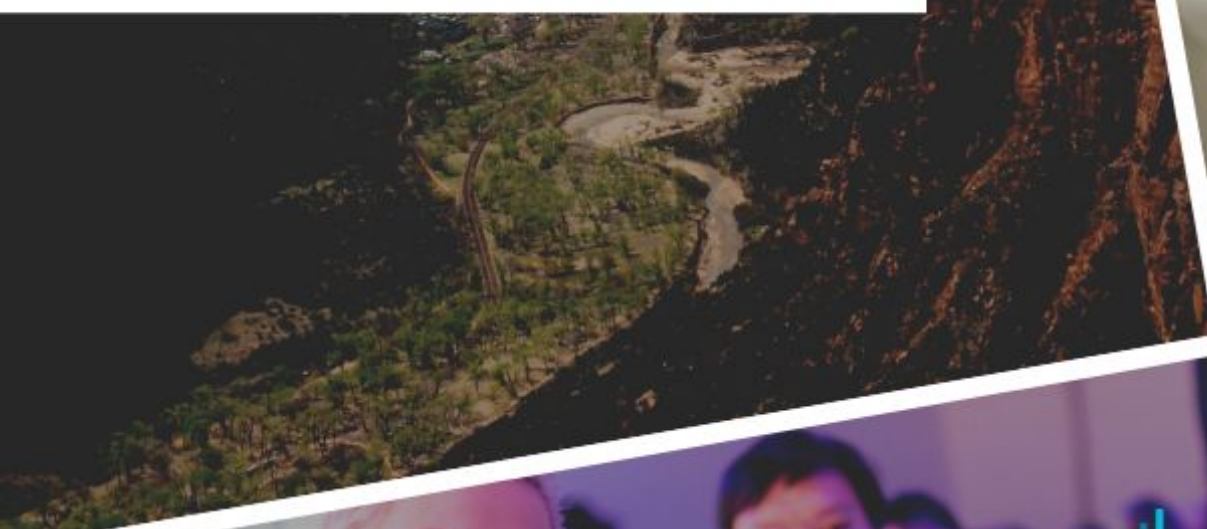


HOW TO DEFEND THE
TRUTH OF THE
CHRISTIAN MESSAGE



SESSION NOTES



BRING YOUR SCALPEL!

IN 2018, BARNA FOUND THAT FEWER BELIEVERS THAN EVER ARE USING THE BIBLE TO SHARE THEIR FAITH.

TWO THIRDS SAID THEY DID SO BY LIFESTYLE RATHER THAN WORDS, AND ONLY ABOUT 25% CHALLENGED THE OTHER PERSON TO DEFEND THEIR BELIEFS.

HEBREWS 4:12 SAYS GOD'S WORD IS SHARPER THAN A SWORD. SHARING YOUR FAITH WITHOUT IT IS LIKE A SURGEON TRYING TO DO SURGERY WITHOUT A SCALPEL!

WE MUST LEARN TO USE THE BIBLE TO OPERATE ON THE HEARTS OF UNBELIEVERS.

Before we begin, what is one objection to the truth of Christianity that you've heard?

Now, on a scale of 1-10, how confident are you in your ability to answer that objection?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

OBJECTIVES

Why are we here?

- To define apologetics and know the biblical basis for learning the practice
- To learn the importance of defending the biblical worldview with a method that is faithful to Scripture.
- To present a method for defending and recommending biblical truth using a three-step process.
- To grow in understanding of how to use apologetics as a tool for evangelism and discipleship.

My Crisis of Faith

Have you ever doubted a doctrine that Christians are supposed to believe? What was it? As for me, when I was 15 I had something of a crisis of faith over one such doctrine, namely that God wanted us to worship him. *After all, I thought, if I wanted everyone to worship me, I would be an egomaniac. Yet when God tells us to worship him, why is that okay? And does this make him actually unworthy of worship?* These questions vexed me and threatened to shake my faith to its very foundation. Could I continue to follow a God I could not worship? Surely not!

Pause here and think about this. .How would you have answered 15-year-old Joel?

As it happens I found the answer to my faith crisis at that great hall of learning known as McDonald's. I had grabbed my Bible and ridden my bike over to Mickey D's (that was what the cool kids called it--and by cool kids I mean mainly myself, a not-at-all-cool adolescent). I sat down there over my red box of piping hot, golden fries and began to look through my Bible, thinking about what I knew to be true of God.

I don't remember which specific passages I read, but I do remember my mind wandering back to a recent youth group night at Wheaton Free Church, when our youth pastor, John, taught us an astonishing fact: "There is more historical evidence that Jesus Christ lived, died and rose again than that Julius Caesar ever existed." *Hm, I pondered to myself, no one doubts that Caesar existed. So that must mean that Jesus really did die and rise from the dead.*

I then thought of all the Scripture passages I knew detailing how much God loves us--and how that love was demonstrated for us while we were yet sinners, by having his own Son die for our sins. *Man, that really did happen.* I had been a Christian since age five, but that afternoon I saw the Gospel, and its implications, in a new way. It was as though the dark clouds of doubt were being blown away, and there were the glorious beams of God's truth, shining down on me again.

I knew I did not have all the details worked out, but I knew something true: *Any God that would be willing to send his only Son to die for me is a God worthy of worship!*

My faith crisis was solved, and it was solved by apologetics--a combination of biblical truth and historical facts.

Since then my knowledge of God *and* apologetics has grown. I now know that the very concept of historical evidence itself makes no sense unless we already *assume* the Bible is true. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Instead, we need to back up and talk about what apologetics is, and when it is needed.

What Is Apologetics?

John M. Frame is a scholar, theologian and prolific and influential author on the subject of apologetics. He defines apologetics as:

- “The theological discipline that defends the truth of the Christian message.”¹
- “The application of Scripture to unbelief.”²

In my own personal example it was the application of Scripture to my own unbelieving thought that resolved my objection.

Note that neither definition includes the word philosophy. Neither definition includes the words science, reason or evidence. Instead, we see words like “theological” (having to do with the study of God) and “Scripture” (the word of God). This conveys how we will approach apologetics. It is not a discipline derived from philosophy, or dependent on scientific evidence. All these things are *good*, but a person does not need to be a philosophy major or an expert in the latest scientific advancements in order to defend the Christian faith.

The field of Christian apologetics, as we will consider it, is principally concerned not with man’s ideas but God and his word. This is good news for everyday Christians who want to do apologetics. You may never get that philosophy degree, but you do have a Bible. Your Bible, not your in-depth knowledge of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and Einstein, will be your most important apologetical tool. We will see this more clearly as we continue.

When is Apologetics Needed?

Apologetics is not always necessary. If you are in a spiritual conversation and you have an opportunity to share the Gospel, and the person is receptive and ready to trust in Christ right then--I should not even have to say this--that would be the *wrong* time to bring up your favorite apologetic argument for God’s existence. Bring that lost sheep home into the Good Shepherd’s fold!

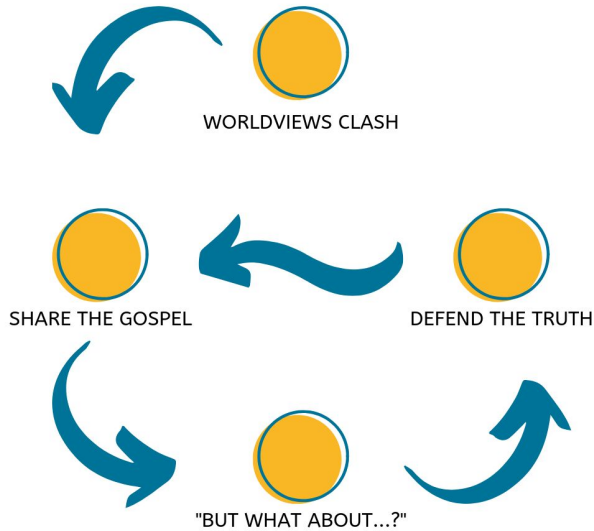
Instead, apologetics is needed when the person with whom you are engaging inevitably pushes back with a question or objection about the Gospel of the biblical worldview.

We may therefore think of apologetics as being part of a cycle. First, the Christian finds himself in conversation with someone who believes differently. There is a “clash” of worldviews--not in a

¹ John M. Frame, “Presuppositional Apologetics,” May 23, 2012, www.Frame-Poythress.org, accessed June 27, 2019.

² Ibid., cf. John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1987), 81, 87.

violent sense--and it becomes clear that there are two competing perspectives of the world in play.



The believer works his way around to sharing the Gospel with the unbeliever with the intent to persuade him to repent and trust in Jesus, to become a Christian.³

At this point, the unbeliever may raise an objection. For example, he states that he could never believe in a God who would allow so much evil in the world.

Now the Christian is engaged in apologetics--the defense of the truth of the Christian message. He may either do it well or poorly, convincingly or unconvincingly, biblically or unbiblically, but there is no avoiding the fact that apologetics is taking place.

The goal of the believer must always be, if possible, to get back to the Gospel. Apologetics is not the goal, but a means to an end--we want our discussion partner to know the joy and freedom that comes from being forgiven and reconciled to God.

Takeaways from this section:

³ Think of the Apostle Paul, telling King Agrippa at his trial, "I wish before God... that whether easily or with difficulty, not only you but all who listen to me today might become as I am--except for these chains" (Acts 26:29, CSB).

We Must Defend the Biblical Worldview Biblically

A Christian is someone who has surrendered himself completely to Jesus Christ and committed himself to living by God's word. So when a Christian engages in the defense of the faith, he must do so in a way that honors God's word.

In other words, Christian apologetics must be done in a biblical way. There are three major schools of thought when it comes to how Christian apologetics should be practiced. These are:

1. **Classical Apologetics:** presenting philosophical arguments to show that belief in God comports with reason and logic. The central principle is "*Faith resting on reason.*"
2. **Evidentialist Apologetics:** presenting evidence drawn from empirical science and history to "prove the case" that God exists or that the Bible is true. The central principle here is "*Faith resting on evidence.*"

Classicalism and Evidentialism share a lot in common, including certain assumptions about the unbeliever and the apologetic process. Apologists in these two camps will purport to put their own personal beliefs aside and ask the unbeliever to do the same, in order to meet on "neutral territory."

The stated goal of these approaches is often to show that Christian faith is reasonable or probable. The hope, then, is that the unbeliever will become convinced by the evidence or the appeal to his reason, and view the Christian worldview as true (or at least possible or reasonable).

Classicalism and Evidentialism are the most mainstream schools of apologetics. Because of this, many Christians see apologetics as very difficult and beyond their reach. After all, who has time to go out and study every possible philosophical or scientific objection that anyone might raise against Christianity? The prevalence of these two approaches has unfortunately moved apologetics, from its rightful place in the church as the duty of all believers, to something only "elite Christians" may engage in. To reiterate, the study of philosophy and science are *good*, and it is a blessing to be able to engage in them. But devoting oneself to their study full-time is too difficult for many believers.

Beyond their difficulty, do these approaches do justice to what the Bible teaches about the unbeliever? Is it really possible for the non-Christian to put his own perspective aside and reason in a neutral way? Is it morally advisable for the believer to do so? In the final analysis, we will see that Classicalism and Evidentialism come up short.

This is not because Christianity is not reasonable, or that it does not comport with evidence(!), but rather because of the false assumptions these approaches make about the unbeliever and

what he actually needs. When we examine the biblical data, we will see that the unbeliever's greatest problem is not a lack of evidence, and his greatest need is not a more reasoned defense for God's existence. Rather, the reason the unbeliever does not believe in Christ is because of his sin. He is suppressing the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18). There is no neutral territory between the biblical worldview and the unbelieving one. Worldviews are sets of presuppositions through which people interpret all human experience. So we need an approach to apologetics that gets at the unbeliever's presuppositions, exposing them for what they are and revealing the heart-level rebellion against God that is driving them.

It sounds like a tall order, and it is. It would actually be impossible if God did not provide a way. After all, we are not the Holy Spirit, and we cannot expose anyone's heart. Yet there is an answer! The Holy Spirit has given us a book, hasn't he? The holy Bible, the word of God, "is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). So our approach to apologetics, if it is going to be truly effective and biblical, needs to be based on Scripture and use Scripture.

This brings us to the third approach to apologetics.

3. **Presuppositional Apologetics:** presenting biblical arguments to show that the Christian worldview is the only one that makes sense of human experience (including the unbeliever's own objections), while exposing the unbelieving worldview as self-contradictory and necessarily false. The central principle is, "*Faith resting on Scripture.*"

To see why Presuppositionalism is the most biblical alternative, let us now dig into God's word and see what he has to say.

Takeaways from this section:

Some Key Verses for Apologetics

Look up the following verses and answer the questions.

Romans 1:19-20. Before being presented with any arguments, what does the unbeliever already know? How does he have this knowledge?

Romans 1:18. What do unbelievers do with the truth?

Romans 1:22. What is the unbeliever's attitude toward God? Can he rightly be called "neutral?"

Proverbs 1:7; 9:10. What is the starting point for wisdom and knowledge? How would you put it into your own words?

Colossians 2:3. Where do wisdom and knowledge reside?

Psalms 14:1. The Bible has a favorite word for a person who chooses to suppress God's truth and live in rebelliousness against God. That word is "fool." This is not mere name-calling. Rather, it is pointing up the truth that God's plan is best, and rejecting God's plan is foolish. According to this verse, what does the fool say in his heart?

Do you see now how we need to think about the unbeliever? The Bible says he has all the evidence he needs to believe in God. His unbelief is not due to a lack of facts but rather a lack of faith.

So then, what is our situation as believers engaging in apologetics? We are not impartial, neutral robots merely conveying facts and arguments. We are more like surgeons. Our goal is to use the scalpel of God's word to operate on the unbeliever's hardened heart. Or if you like, we are to be so biblically minded that we ourselves are like a scalpel in God's hand, which he uses to perform open heart surgery. We want God to use us to save lives.

Takeaways from this section:

Some Principles to Consider⁴

In a few moments we will lay out a process for what an apologetical encounter should look like. But first, let us consider a few basic principles we need to keep in mind.

Principle 1: Commit to the biblical worldview.

Scripture is useful for teaching truth, rebuking falsehood, correcting errors and training us to live rightly; in God's word is everything we need to be fully equipped to live the kind of lives God desires of us (2 Timothy 3:16-17). A follower of Jesus must enter every apologetics discussion from the presupposition that the Bible is true.⁵

Principle 2: Commit to the Gospel.

Remember that apologetics is a means to an end. We want our unbelieving discussion partner to come to repentance and the knowledge of the truth, as the Apostle Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:25. In that same verse, he says that it is God who does that work. Yet we get to play a role. Again, the believer is an instrument in the hand of God as he operates. When we communicate God's message it is, God, "making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: 'Be reconciled to God'" (2 Corinthians 5:20).

The heart of what you want to communicate is the Gospel — the good news about Jesus. It is the Gospel that is the "power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). Every Christian should be able to articulate the story of Jesus's life, death, resurrection and reign, as well as the need to trust in Him for salvation. Even if you flub every other argument, you will have shared the power of the God if you've gotten the Gospel across.

⁴ Principles 1, 2, 4 and 6 are drawn from an article I wrote for Park Community Church's blog: Joel Settecase, "How to Defend the Christian Faith: Four Principles to Get Started," January 16, 2018, ParkCommunity.church, accessed June 28, 2019.

⁵ *A note about circularity:* What I just said above may sound like circular reasoning. In a certain sense, this is true. After all, we are making arguments to prove that the Bible is true. Is it really logically permissible, then, to start from the presupposition that the Bible is true? Is that not begging the question--assuming what we want to prove? In point of fact, everyone reasons in a circle. This is because everyone must begin at some starting point. For the Christian, this is God's word, from which we derive our basis for reasoning, scientific and historical inquiry, and intuition. We know our truth-seeking faculties are valid because God's word tells us so. For the unbeliever, he is left with only his own reason. How does he know his reasoning is valid? Because his reasoning tells him so! Christians reason in a circle, but it is a broad circle, beginning from God's word, out into the world, through our own minds and hearts, and back to God's word (to test our conclusions). The unbeliever's circle is viciously tiny. His reasoning ultimately has to support itself as its own basis, which is to say it is actually without any basis.

Principle 3: No neutrality.

We have already discussed why there can be no neutral territory between the worldviews of the believer and the unbeliever.

Even the claim that there is such a neutral territory reflects a worldview--and an unbiblical one! Jesus said, "Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who does not gather with me scatters" (Matthew 12:30).

Keeping this principle in mind does *not* mean we do not speak with charity or gentleness. In fact, 1 Peter 3:15, which has been called the "charter verse" of Christian apologetics, commands us to give our answers with "gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience." However, we must not neglect the first part of the verse, which abjures us, "in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy." All our apologetics must be done in the service to King Jesus. He is always on his throne as Lord over all (Psalm 110:1), and our apologetics must reflect that he is Lord over our own lives.

Principle 4: Ask lots of questions.

Learn to make fewer statements and ask more questions. How many times have you been frustrated by a conversation partner who only seems to care about hearing the sound of their own voice? Certainly you give them grace, but you don't want to be that person yourself. Asking questions is vital to being a good conversation partner. It helps you create favor with the person you're talking with and understand what they actually believe.

This is incredibly important when engaging in apologetics, because you want to make sure you are addressing what the person actually thinks — not what you think they think. As the Bible says, "The one who gives an answer before he listens — this is foolishness and disgrace for him" (Proverbs 18:13). Asking questions also helps you uncover the reasoning *behind* what your discussion partner is saying.

Principle 5: Look for arbitrariness.

As you engage in apologetical discussions, you will often find that your discussion partners make assertions without any reason behind them.

For example, one time I was out with a family member at the Green Mill, a jazz club in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood, and the conversation turned to spiritual matters. He adhered to a blend of New Age thought, and I spoke as a follower of Jesus. In the course of our conversation, we got around to the Bible, and he asserted that there are many contradictions in the Bible. I recognized this as an arbitrary claim and asked, "For example?" He did not expect me to ask that. He thought about it for a few moments and then asked me, "Well, aren't there?" I replied,

“No! There are no contradictions in the Bible.” “Really?” “Really. Not one.” And this was true!⁶ It made quite an impact on him. He later told my parents that I had *almost* convinced him to become a Christian. *Lord, may it happen soon!*

Another arbitrary claim that unbelievers will make is that our Bibles are unreliable, because they are translations of translations, and we have no idea what the original manuscripts said. This is an arbitrary claim, unsubstantiated by actual biblical scholarship and textual criticism. Do not let your discussion partner get away with this claim. Ask them what they mean, and how they came to believe that.⁷ Make them substantiate their claims. And substantiate yours, with evidence and reason, all based on Scripture. Do not be arbitrary, and do not let your discussion partner get away with being arbitrary.

Principle 6: Look for inconsistency.

We already used the word “presupposition” a few times, so we had better define it. A presupposition is a core commitment, one that is unquestioned, that undergirds a person’s thinking.

For example, before I look for evidence to determine whether a claim is true or false, I am already presupposing that my mind is rational and capable of examining evidence. I am presupposing there is such a thing as truth. And there are a host of other presuppositions I have to make before I even look at the evidence.

When you are engaging with an unbeliever, ask questions to draw out their presuppositions, and look for inconsistency between what they say they believe and what their worldview allows them to believe. What you will often find is that their conclusions do not follow from their presuppositions.

As an example: someone who claims that the God of the Bible is “immoral” is presupposing an absolute standard of morality, that is actually impossible without the God of the Bible. Their conclusion cannot follow from their presuppositions.

As another example: an atheist who claims to believe that the universe is governed by random chance, without God’s divine design or plan, cannot rightfully believe in science. Science requires the presupposition that the cosmos is governed by reliable laws (e.g. the law of gravity). The first modern scientists (e.g. Newton, Kepler) were Christians who believed that the

⁶ Certainly there are many purported biblical contradictions that skeptics will bring up, but there is literally not one that actually stands up to scrutiny. The Bible is free of internal contradictions. This is exactly what we would expect from a book “breathed out by God,” who is himself the ground and basis of logic.

⁷ At this point it does help to have a working knowledge of basic textual criticism and the manuscript tradition of the Bible, but suffice it to say that there is vastly more evidence for the Bible we have today than any other work of antiquity. Think back to my opening story. My youth pastor was correct when he said that there is more evidence for Jesus’ life, death and resurrection than that Julius Caesar ever existed

faithful God governed the universe in a consistent way, and that nature was therefore uniform. Science is impossible in any other worldview. An atheist who posits a chance universe has no reason to believe in the uniformity of nature--that the future will be like the past.⁸

One more example: many Muslims will argue that the Bible has been corrupted over time. However, the Qur'an states that the Bible was given by Allah, and that Allah's word cannot be corrupted.⁹ So if the Muslim believes what his own scripture says about the Bible, he will revere it as the word of God. The Bible, on the other hand, contradicts the Qur'an.¹⁰ So if the Qur'an is true, then the Bible is true, and the Qur'an is false. The Qur'an cannot be both true and false at the same time; this is inconsistent.

We must learn to identify inconsistencies and point them out (with gentleness and respect!) in our unbelieving discussion partners' worldviews.

Principle #7: Know How to Answer a "Fool"

Speaking of inconsistencies, there are two verses in Proverbs which seem to contradict one another. Upon investigation, they do not, and they both turn out to be vital for developing our approach to apologetics.

"Don't answer a fool according to his foolishness or you'll be like him yourself" (Proverbs 26:4).

"Answer a fool according to his foolishness or he'll become wise in his own eyes" (Proverbs 26:5).

Verse four warns the believer against adopting the unbeliever's worldview or feigning neutrality. Doing so will make you become like the unbeliever. We are not neutral. We do not put our faith in Christ on the shelf in order to argue for God's existence. The Jesus we believe in has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18)--and that includes the unbeliever's life and the very conversation we are having! Remember, "fool" here means a person in rebellion against God, that is, an unbeliever. So when we answer the unbeliever, we give our answers as though we actually believe in the biblical worldview, *because we do*.

⁸ Note: this is not to say that atheists cannot do science. There are many atheists in the various scientific fields. However, atheists cannot account for the uniformity of nature based on their own atheism. Rather, they must do science *as if* they believed in the God of the Bible. Of course, Romans 1:18-24 tells us that, deep down, they do believe and are suppressing that knowledge. The more knowledge one has about the universe, the more evidence one has for God's existence. Suppressing God's truth surely becomes more difficult the more one knows. Perhaps this is why some of the world's most aggressive, prominent atheists (e.g. Richard Dawkins, Neil DeGrasse Tyson, and Bill Nye come to mind) work in science.

⁹ Matt Slick, "The Qur'an says the Bible is not corrupt," CARM.org, accessed June 28, 2019.

¹⁰ For example, the Bible teaches the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, and salvation by grace alone through faith in Jesus alone, all of which the Qur'an denies.

We invite the unbeliever to step into the biblical worldview *for the sake of argument* and demonstrate how it agrees with reason, science, and the longings of the human heart. There is no need to hide that fact and become like the unbeliever in our reasoning.

So then, what do we make of verse five? We answer the unbeliever “according to his foolishness” by stepping into his worldview *for the sake of argument* and perform an “internal critique.” This is where we examine it for arbitrariness and inconsistency. Because the Bible is true, every argument set up against the Bible is necessarily false.

To the extent that unbelievers make right judgments about the world, they have to steal from the biblical worldview. The Bible gives an absolute standard for morality and laws of logic. The Bible presents a universe governed by the faithful and consistent mind of God. The God of the Bible unifies and accounts for the existence of unity, diversity and personality. No unbiblical worldview can do that, so unbelievers must steal from the biblical worldview (most often without knowing they are doing so) to argue in favor of these things.

It is our responsibility to “demolish” such arguments, “and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). We do not want to unbeliever to be “wise in his own eyes,” not because we want to look smart, but because we *genuinely care about his soul*. It is *dangerous* to think that one may be wise and live apart from God. The end result of such a life, lived as it is in rebellion against God, is eternal punishment in hell.

This is why it is so important to keep committed to the biblical worldview. Only then will we understand what is at stake and how to respond accordingly.

Takeaways from this section:

STEP 1

Show that the unbelieving position makes no sense.
Adopt the unbelieving position for the sake of argument. Do an internal critique & uncover inconsistencies.

STEP 3

Appeal to the unbeliever to repent and trust in Jesus.
Explain that the same Bible that makes sense of and answers the objection, also teaches the reality our need for reconciliation to God through Jesus.



STEP 2

Show that the biblical worldview makes sense.
Invite the unbeliever to adopt the biblical perspective for the sake of argument.
Demonstrate how the Bible accounts for the very things the unbeliever wants to use to argue against it (e.g. logic, morality, science, etc.).

As we close this course, reflect on what you have learned. Think back to the first objection you wrote down at the beginning. How confident were you then to answer it? How confident are you now? Do you believe you have the resources to answer the objection? Would you approach it differently after taking this course? How so?

Record your reflections here:

What are your biggest takeaways from this training?

Now, who is at least one unbeliever that you want to come to faith in Christ? Write his or her name below, along with a prayer that the Lord will use what you have learned today to help you reach them with the Gospel.

Name:

Prayer:

Take your apologetics study further with these recommended resources:

- *To answer supposed contradictions in the Bible:* Lisle, Dr. Jason. ***Keeping Faith in an Age of Reason: Refuting Alleged Bible Contradictions***. Biblical Science Institute, 2017.
- *For an introduction to presuppositional apologetics:*
Pratt, Richard L., Jr. ***Every Thought Captive: A Study Manual for the Defense of Christian Truth***. P&R Publishing, 1980.
Also:
Baucham, Voddie, Jr.. ***Expository Apologetics: Answering Objections with the Power of the Word***. Crossway, 2015.
- *For a list of resources to help you get started with Presuppositional Apologetics:*
Settecase, Joel. "This is Apologetics: Presup Starter Pack." October 13, 2017, [settecase.wordpress.com](https://settecase.wordpress.com/2017/10/13/this-is-apologetics-presup-starter-pack). Accessed June 28, 2019, <https://settecase.wordpress.com/2017/10/13/this-is-apologetics-presup-starter-pack>.

Thank you for your engagement with this course, which is a presentation of the Think Institute. We pray it was a blessing to you. To learn more about our ministry, access resources, and learn about partnering with us, go to truthinconversation.com.

"Dear friends, although I was eager to write you about the salvation we share, I found it necessary to write, appealing to you to contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all" (Jude 1:3).

Appendix: A Few Examples of Presuppositionalism at Work

In the next section I have included a few articles that I have written for my blog. In them I use the three-step process that I outlined above. Note that even when all three steps are used, they are not necessarily done so in the same order every time. Nor is it always possible to get to all three steps. In at least one of the following articles I lay out a defense

This is how apologetics work out in real-life conversation, too. Steps may be done out of order, and you may even move back and forth between the steps several times in the course of one conversation. As you read the articles, see if you can identify where I take each of the three steps. You can decide for yourself how faithful I was to the biblical worldview and how effective the arguments would be with your unbelieving friends, family, neighbors and coworkers.

An Argument from Science¹¹

What is apologetics?

Is Christian faith the enemy of science? This is a common objection to biblical Christianity, but is there any weight to it?

If Christianity's teaching about man and nature¹² is true, then our senses are designed by our Creator to correspond to the world around us, and scientific inquiry is possible. If not, then there is no corresponding design and we have no reason to trust our sensory intake, and therefore no reason to trust in science.

Christian faith is not the enemy of science. On the contrary, science actually needs the Christian message to be true for its own survival. If you want to believe in science, you must presuppose the Christian faith. Yet the Christian faith doesn't end with the creation narrative in Genesis. It is revealed in 66 books (together called the Bible) with one central message. And the urgent call of the Christian faith is:

“...having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has set a day when he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the

¹¹ Originally posted as: Joel Settecase, “This is Apologetics: an Argument from Science,” August 22, 2017, [Settecase.wordpress.com](https://settecase.wordpress.com/2017/08/22/this-is-apologetics-an-argument-from-science_), accessed June 28, 2019, https://settecase.wordpress.com/2017/08/22/this-is-apologetics-an-argument-from-science_

¹² In the original article this sentence contained a hyperlink to Genesis 1 from Bible Gateway, accessed at <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=genesis+1%3A26-2%3A20&version=CSB>.

man he has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead” (Paul the Apostle, Acts 17:30-31).

That judge, and the only Savior and Lord, is Jesus. By believing in science but rejecting Jesus, you are actually sinning against the Creator who gave you life—and a lifetime of sinning against God earns the “[wages](#)” of an eternity of death (Romans 6:23). The Creator’s gift for sinners, however, is that he sent his into the world he created, to take the death his people had earned in their place.

Science is an incredible gift from God, yet it is a gift that points beyond itself to the God revealed in the Bible. We have all sinned against him, and we all must get to the point where we turn from our sin and trust ourselves to his Son. Repent and trust in him today, and your Creator will give you new life that lasts forever.

An Argument from Logic¹³

This fall, I’ve been leading a small group focused on evangelism and apologetics. We discuss a different topic each week, but we came to the subject of logic and reason, we ended up having to break it up into two weeks. Why? Because thinking about the way we think is hard. We usually just think; we usually just speak.

When we study logic, however, we find out that there are invisible rules that govern our reason and communication. These rules are unbreakable. Every single proposition we think or say simply must follow these rules, lest our speaking and reasoning become what the philosophers call, “gobbledy-gook.”

Learning about logic and reason can be a lot of fun (if you’re into that sort of thing). But sometimes a skeptic (or even a seeker or believer) might pose the objection that belief in God is not logical.

As it turns out, it is logic itself that gives us a fantastic, dare-I-say irrefutable argument for God’s existence.

You see, whenever someone thinks or speaks (as a believer or unbeliever) to the extent that he desires to do so rationally, he is already presupposing that God exists. Read on.

¹³ This is taken from two articles originally posted as: Joel Settecase, “This Is Apologetics: An Argument from Logic,” October 25, 2017, [Settecase.wordpress.com](https://settecase.wordpress.com/2017/10/25/this-is-apologetics-an-argument-from-logic/), accessed June 28, 2019, <https://settecase.wordpress.com/2017/10/25/this-is-apologetics-an-argument-from-logic/>, and Joel Settecase, “This Is Apologetics, (Another) Argument from Logic,” March 13, 2019, [Settecase.wordpress.com](https://settecase.wordpress.com/2019/03/13/this-is-apologetics-another-argument-from-logic/), accessed June 28, 2019, <https://settecase.wordpress.com/2019/03/13/this-is-apologetics-another-argument-from-logic/>

So, What Is Logic?

Logic is the study of correct reasoning and argumentation as opposed to incorrect reasoning and argumentation. Laws of logic govern the universe and determine whether our reasoning is right or wrong.

What Are the Laws of Logic?

- The Law of Identity: a thing is what it is (this one's so obvious it hurts my brain).
- The Law of Non-Contradiction: a proposition cannot be true and false in the same way at the same time.
- The Law of Excluded Middle: a proposition is either true or false, never "neutral."
- The Law of Rational Inference: a proposition is true if it logically follows from another true proposition (Something like, "If A, then B. A, therefore B").

How Does Logic Point to God?

Really it's not so much that the laws of logic point to God, as though logic is the evidence and "God exists" is the verdict. Rather, it's that to even use logic is to show that you already believe in God. Every proposition you make, you assume it is logical. Rational. That it plays by the rules (the rules listed above, to be specific). This very activity of attempting thinking and speaking logically demonstrates that you presuppose God's existence.

How is that possible? Because: using logic presupposes that logic has certain attributes, all of which are grounded in God. Read on....

Are the Laws of Logic Really Rooted in God?

In short, yes. They have to be. They are rooted in God's nature. There's nothing else for them to be rooted in. Every attribute they have, God also has. They would be impossible if not grounded in God.

- The laws of logic are immaterial. God is immaterial (John 4:24). (How could a law of logic be made of matter?)
- They are unchanging. God never changes (Malachi 3:16; Psalm 90:2; Jeremiah 33:25). (Matter, on the other hand, does change. And so do our own feeble minds.)
- They are universal. God is everywhere (Psalm 139:7-10).
- They are knowable. God is knowable; He reveals Himself to us (Colossians 2:2-3; Romans 11:36; Daniel 4:34-36).

When we speak or think, we hope that our reason is functioning properly. We hope we are being logical. Insofar as we make that our goal, we are aiming at conforming our thinking to the very character of God—the source of logic.

There is no way to account for logic apart from God. Even the very thought process you would need to have in order to question whether God exists, would have to presuppose both logic and God. It's as if every proposition we make (everything we say) has an invisible disclaimer at the beginning: "Presupposing that God exists...."

In other words, a "logical" denial of God, is to say "Presupposing that God exists, God does not exist." As a great philosopher once (probably) said, "That don't make no sense!"

A logical denial of God's existence is a contradiction in terms.

Again, it's not "Logic, therefore God." It's, "God, therefore logic." Logic begins with presupposing God. Really, logic begins with faith. You can't disprove God by logical argument. Without God, you wouldn't have logic in the first place.

There is no way around it. Logic presupposes God.

Thank God he has revealed himself to us. The more I learn about God, the more I realize how necessary all his attributes are, and how glorious and praiseworthy he is. It's like, "Oh, yes, of course God must be like that." But the truth is my feeble mind wouldn't and couldn't have invented him.

In the person of Jesus Christ, God has revealed himself fully and perfectly. In Jesus we see the attributes of God on display, and as we behold him we not only understand God better, but we actually become more like him.

The truth of God is antithetical to the mind bent on seeking its own autonomy ("set on the flesh" as Paul puts it). True knowledge about God (necessary for true knowledge of the world) starts w/ repentance and faith in Jesus. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

An Argument from Christian Hypocrisy¹⁴

Sometimes skeptics will argue that Christians are hypocrites, and therefore Christianity must be wrong. After all, hypocrisy is wrong, and therefore Christianity clearly doesn't produce moral people!

However, this objection relies on a presupposition that hypocrisy is objectively wrong (it is wrong for all people, at all times, everywhere, including Christians, however we may try to rationalize it).

¹⁴ Originally posted as: Joel Settecase, "This Is Apologetics: An Argument from Christian Hypocrisy," March 8, 2018, Settecase.wordpress.com, accessed June 28, 2019, <https://settecase.wordpress.com/2018/03/08/this-is-apologetics-an-argument-from-christian-hypocrisy>.

The objection is aimed at proving Christianity false, however it actually assumes that Christianity is true. How so? Because it assumes that Christian moral standards are true.

After all, Christianity condemns hypocrisy as objectively wrong, because it goes against the righteous nature of God and his commands. The Bible is chock-full of condemnation for hypocrites. Condemning hypocrisy is a uniquely Christian moral judgment.

But on what basis does the skeptic, who has rejected the God of the Bible and his moral commands, condemn hypocrisy as objectively wrong?

The unbelieving worldview has no way to support the idea of objective morality. There can be no universal moral obligations, because there is supposedly no universal lawgiver to give those obligations.

The only way to get to a standard in which hypocrisy is objectively wrong is to sneak God in the back door. You can't get it without borrowing from the Bible. But remember, this argument was supposed to disprove the Bible and its God. By borrowing from God, the skeptic undercuts his own argument.

You can't fight against God and win.

The fact is that hypocrisy really is morally wrong. It's sinful. It's sinful when Christians do it. And it's evil when skeptics do it (for example, by making arguments against God while stealing the Bible's moral standards). And the truth is that we are all hypocrites. We have all been sinful and fallen far short of the glorious (and never-hypocritical) nature of God.

For that sin, we deserve to be judged and condemned. Yet God has provided a way out. He punished his own Son, Jesus, as though he were a hypocrite. Jesus, who was always true, became the substitute for hypocrites like us. He died, he was buried, and he rose—conquering sin and hypocrisy forever. Now he reigns, and one day he's going to judge the world.

If you renounce your hypocrisy and sin and give your life to Jesus, God will forgive you—as if your sin never happened. But now that you know the truth, it won't do you any good to live like you don't know.

After all, that would be hypocritical.