

Mr. G Video Transcript – Introduction to Apologetics, Part 2

A second reason for apologetics is to be able to intelligently answer objections and questions from sceptics and members of different religions. We saw in 1 Peter 3:15 that we are actually commanded be ready to give a defense to those who ask you why you have these beliefs, why you have this hope. This is both for you, so that you are not swayed by clever-sounding arguments from skeptics that may not be based on good information or on sound reasoning; but also for the benefit of the one doing the asking, doing the challenging. Actually one way that apologetics could be used by God is to clear away some intellectual barriers to belief that people may have, to help them on their journey to knowing the Lord as well.

Having said that, it's important to remember that we can never "reason" someone into the Kingdom of God. We give answers, but it's not our job to use our persuasive reasoning and logic to convince someone to become a Christian. Conversion, or being "born again," is something that only the Holy Spirit can accomplish. And actually, reasons can only get a person so far. There are a lot of stories of atheists or people from other religions coming to Christ, becoming Christians, and the apologetics, the reasons why, helped them greatly in that journey, cleared away a lot of the questions and obstacles, but still it took a work of God to bring them to the point of actually making a decision to take the leap and commit themselves to Christ.

So there are some limitations to apologetics. And actually, the apostle Paul, in the Bible, who was a great apologist, whom you often see in the book of Acts reasoning in the synagogues, trying to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, warns us not to place too much emphasis on human wisdom, logic, wise words: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. He also reminds us that the Christian message is always going to seem foolish to some people. See 1 Corinthians 1:18. Yes, we have reasons built on solid evidence. No, we don't turn off our brains when we become Christians. Yes, there are intellectually brilliant people in nearly every field who are Christians. But there will always be people who think we and our beliefs are foolish, who are unwilling to seriously consider the evidence to the contrary, who refuse to budge. And we need to accept that and not let it sway us in our belief.

So what if you do find yourself in a discussion with a non-Christian who may have honest questions, objections, or even be downright hostile towards you and your beliefs? Well, hopefully, first of all, you're coming from a place of relationship with God. You can't really speak convincingly of something you've never experienced. And the point of all this is a relationship with God; that's what really matters. So if you know that you don't have that relationship, and you want it, you need to start there before you do anything else. Our next lesson will be on what the Good News is and how to have a relationship with God, just so that everyone's on the same page 😊

Secondly, you need to be approaching the conversation from a place of love for the other person. You normally should not be in “debate mode” when you’re having a conversation with another person; you’re not trying to win the argument, score a victory, “destroy” the other person’s arguments. They are a person precious to God, even if they don’t believe in Him yet. That doesn’t mean that you ignore or keep quiet about the truth. It doesn’t mean you won’t say things they might dislike or disagree with, but it’s coming from a place of love. If you’re having trouble with this part, ask the Spirit of God to help you love people like He does. We are not to do apologetics from a place of fear, or anger, or frustration, or a desire to defeat someone.

Third, ask God to help you know what to say, and trust Him that He will answer that. Fourth, don’t panic if they ask you something you don’t know or don’t have a good answer to. Tell them so, and if possible, try to take a little time to think and research the issue a bit and get back to them. Some hidden benefits here are that you might have a way to have an ongoing conversation with them about your faith, and you’ll learn something in the process; in addition, they will see that you are a Christian who is open and honest and genuine, not afraid of questions, and humble enough to admit ignorance if necessary.