

AN INTRODUCTION TO

APOLOGETICS

APOLOGETICS

▶ Apologetics may be defined as that branch of Christian theology which seeks to provide rational warrant for Christianity's truth claims.

- ▶ Source: Craig, William Lane. "Christian Apologetics: Who Needs It?" *Reasonable Faith*, www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/popular-writings/apologetics/christian-apologetics-who-needs-it/#ixzz45LVRFYoq.

DEFINITION IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ “Apologetics is thus primarily a theoretical discipline, though it has a practical application. In addition to serving, like the rest of theology in general, as an expression of loving God with all our minds, apologetics specifically serves to show to unbelievers the truth of the Christian faith, to confirm that faith to believers, and to reveal and explore the connections between Christian doctrine and other truths.”
- ▶ Source: Craig, William Lane. Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics. Crossway Books, 2008.

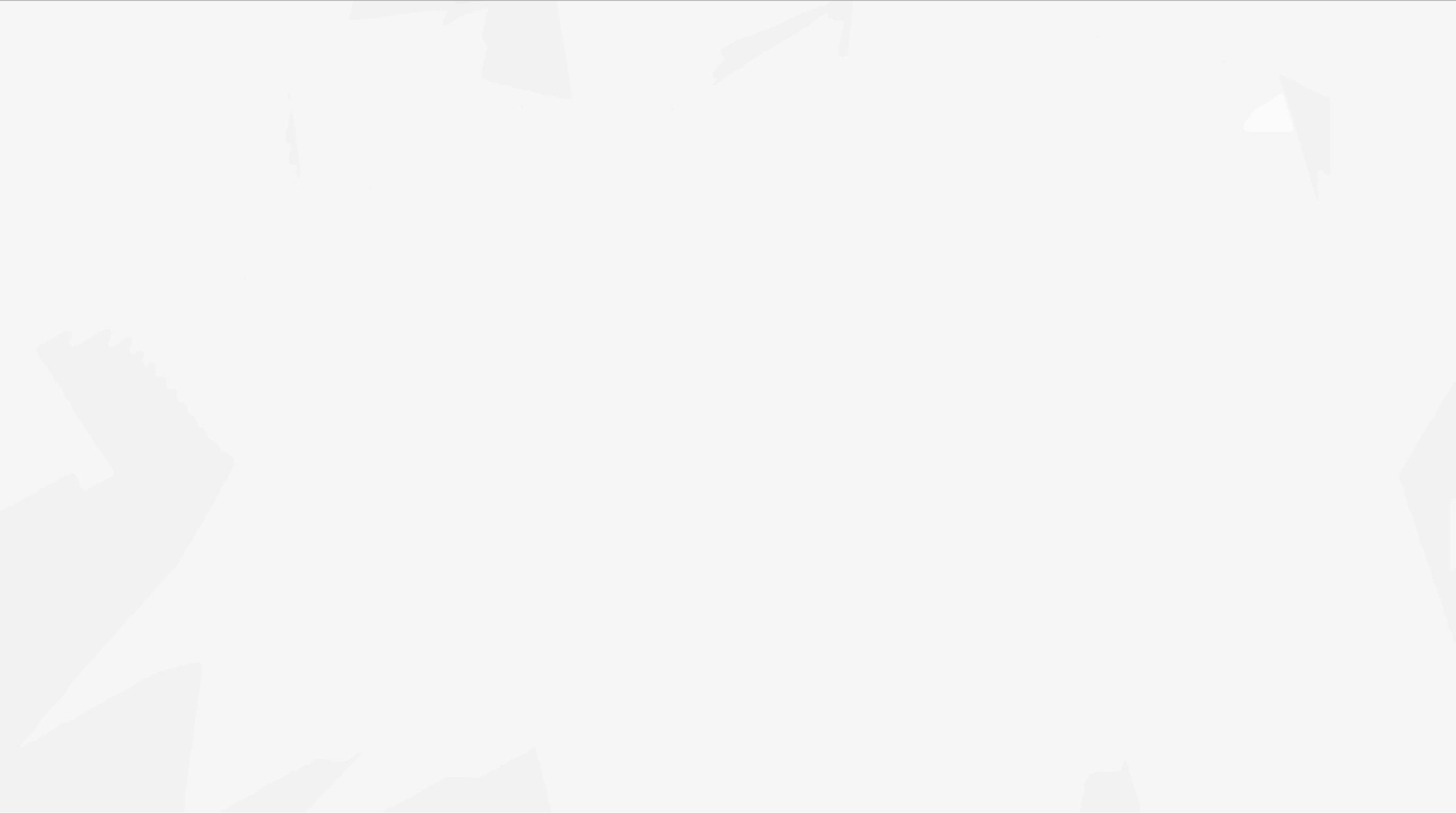
VITAL ROLE

- ▶ Shaping culture
- ▶ Strengthening believers
 - ▶ Confirming the believers faith
 - ▶ Encourages the believer to evangelize
- ▶ Evangelizing unbelievers
- ▶ Source: Craig, William Lane. Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics. Crossway Books, 2008.

NO ONE COMES TO CHRIST THROUGH ARGUMENTS?

- ▶ The Gospel is never heard in isolation, but always against the backdrop of the culture. So if the culture is heavily secularized and naturalism is the prevailing worldview of influence, the Gospel has a much harder time getting a hearing. However, if the culture is shown that Christianity is reasonable, a worldview that is coherent and has more explanatory power and scope of the reality we live in, then when people hear the Gospel, it is something that their heart and mind will/must reckon with. This is why apologetics is so important in today's culture. Apologetics helps create an atmosphere in which men and women see the Christian faith as a major contender in the ring of thought.
- ▶ Source: Craig, William Lane. Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics. Crossway Books, 2008.

TESTIMONY



TESTIMONY

- ▶ “But Christian apologetics does much more than safeguard against lapses. The positive, upbuilding effects of apologetic training is even more evident. I see this all the time on the university campuses when I debate. John Stackhouse once remarked to me that these debates are really a Westernized version of what missiologists call a “power encounter.” I think that’s a perceptive analysis. Christian students come away from these encounters with a renewed confidence in their faith, their heads held high, proud to be Christians, and bolder in speaking out for Christ on their campus. Sometimes after a debate students will say, “I can’t wait to share my faith in Christ!”
- ▶ Source: Craig, William Lane. “Christian Apologetics: Who Needs It?” *Reasonable Faith*, www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/popular-writings/apologetics/christian-apologetics-who-needs-it/#ixzz45LVRFYoq.

DON'T WE LIVE IN A POSTMODERN WORLD?

- ▶ “The idea that we live in a postmodern culture is a myth. In fact, a postmodern culture is an impossibility; it would be utterly unlivable. Nobody is a postmodernist when it comes to reading the labels on a medicine bottle verse a box of rat poison. If you’ve got a headache, you’d better believe that texts have objective meaning! People are not relativistic and pluralistic when it comes to matters of science, engineering, and technology; rather, they’re relativistic and pluralistic in matters of religion and ethics. But that’s not postmodernism; that’s modernism!”
- ▶ Source: Craig, William Lane. Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics. Crossway Books, 2008.

THE SITUATION

- ▶ “One reason Christianity has failed to exert much influence on the major intellectual institutions of America is that too many Christians hold their beliefs in an uninformed and precarious fashion. Instead of pursuing answers to the toughest questions an unbelieving work can marshal, they attempt to preserve certainty through ignorance and isolation relying on platitudes rather than arguments.”
- ▶ Source: Groothuis, Douglas. Christian Apologetics: a Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith. IVP Academic, 2011.

APOLOGETICS IN

SCRIPTURE

APOLOGETICS

- ▶ The word "Apologetics" comes from the Greek word "**ἀπολογία**" which can be translated in different ways dependent upon the context of its usage. It can mean simply to "give an answer" or to "make a defense".
- ▶ This is a word that the discipline of having a rational justification for the Christian faith is based upon, namely "Apologetics", however, I don't think that our Scriptural foundation is limited to passages which contain that word as we will see.

SCRIPTURAL JUSTIFICATION

- ▶ "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense (ἀπολογία) and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. *And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*" (Philippians 1:3-11)

SCRIPTURAL JUSTIFICATION

- ▶ "I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense (ἀπολογία) of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment." (Philippians 1:12-17)

SCRIPTURAL JUSTIFICATION

- ▶ "Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. *At my first defense* (ἀπολογία) no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen." (2 Timothy 4:14-18)
- ▶ Notice here that Paul is having problems with "Alexander the Coppersmith", and is *obviously arguing/debating* with him concerning the Kingdom of God.

SCRIPTURAL JUSTIFICATION

- ▶ "Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend (ἐπαγωνιζεσθαι) for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:3-4)
- ▶ This is not the word "ἄπολογία", but the word "ἐπαγωνίζομαι" , "epagōnizomai" which means to "struggle with, compete for, or contend".

PAUL

- ▶ *"And Paul went in, **as was his custom**, and on three Sabbath days he **reasoned** with them from the Scriptures, **explaining and proving** that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women." (Acts 17:2-4)*

PAUL

- ▶ "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks." (Acts 18:4)
- ▶ "And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews." (Acts 18:19)

PAUL

- ▶ "Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, *his **spirit was provoked within him** as he saw that the city was full of idols. So he **reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.** Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babbler wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection." (Acts 17:16-18)*

PAUL

- ▶ "And he entered the synagogue and *for three months spoke boldly, **reasoning and persuading** them about the kingdom of God.* But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, ***reasoning daily** in the hall of Tyrannus. This **continued for two years**, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks."* (Acts 19:8-10)

STEPHEN

- ▶ "And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and **disputed** with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking." (Acts 6:8-10)
- ▶ Notice it is "*the Spirit*" that is speaking through Stephen that they could not handle.

APOLLOS

- ▶ "He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted (διακατελέγχομαι) the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus." (Acts 18:26-28)
- ▶ This is the story of Apollos, how the gospel (the Way) was revealed more by Priscilla and Aquila and then, being well-learned in the Scriptures, refuted those who did not believe. διακατελέγχομαι means to "*prove downright, confute*"

JESUS

- ▶ "Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. " (Matthew 11:2-5)
- ▶ Notice Jesus didn't respond by saying "go tell that doubter, John, to just blindly believe..." but He told them to tell John of the evidence of His own Messiahship.

JESUS

- ▶ "The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.' Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. So too the second and third, down to the seventh. After them all, the woman died. In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her." But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living." And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching." (Matthew 22:23-33)

GUARDING THE GIFT

- ▶ "Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you." (2 Timothy 1:13-14)
- ▶ We defend/guard (φυλάσσω) the faith by the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ "Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, 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; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame." (1 Peter 3:13-16, NASB95)

APOLOGETICS AND THE

HOLY SPIRIT

ASSURANCE

- ▶ "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him." (Romans 8:15-17)
- ▶ The Holy Spirit *assures* us of our salvation. He is our *Intrinsic Defeater* of all threats against Christianity. Those with compelling arguments can have a *double warrant* however.
- ▶ The Spirit is how we *know* Christianity to be true, arguments and evidences are how we *show* Christianity to be true to an unbeliever.

CONFIRMATION

- ▶ "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged." (John 16:7-11)
- ▶ The fact is, no one would ever come to Christ apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. However, this doesn't mean we should not use arguments to reconcile man to God, on the contrary, Scripture seems to affirm time and time again the Spirit *uses our arguments* as tools to do just that, as we seen in Paul and the other Apostles.

**PROBLEM
PASSAGES?**

GODLY WISDOM

- ▶ "And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory." (1 Corinthians 2:1-7)
- ▶ **"in demonstration of ... Spirit, &c.—***Persuasion* is man's means of moving his fellow man. God's means is *demonstration*, leaving no doubt, and inspiring implicit faith, by the powerful working of the Spirit (then exhibited both outwardly by miracles, and inwardly by working on the heart, now in the latter and the more important way only, Mt 7:29; Ac 6:10; Heb 4:12; compare also Ro 15:19). The same simple power accompanies divine truth now, producing certain persuasion and conversion, when the Spirit demonstrates by it."

DOUGLAS' THOUGHTS

- ▶ “When Paul refers to the wisdom of God as foolish to unbelievers in 1 Corinthians 1-2, he is not derogating the intellect per se. He is rather stressing that God's initiation through divine revelation is required for a saving knowledge of Christ, and that human pride and arrogance deem it unreasonable to submit humbly to this necessity. God's revelation is not unreasonable, yet the unaided human mind cannot produce it on its own. Similarly Paul warns his readers not to be taken captive by “hollow into septa philosophy,” which is merely human and divorced from God's revelation (Colossians 2:8). This is not a condemnation of all philosophy, only false philosophy. Paul himself reasons carefully throughout his many intellectual encounters in the book of Acts and in his many New Testament letters. We do not lose our intelligence by being filled with the Holy Spirit.”
- ▶ Source: Groothuis, Douglas. Christian Apologetics: a Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith. IVP Academic, 2011.

KNOWLEDGE IS A GIFT AND CAN BE USED FOR GOOD

- ▶ "My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; *from his mouth come knowledge and understanding*; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints." (Proverbs 2:1-8)

IS KNOWLEDGE BAD FOR US?

- ▶ "Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know." (1 Corinthians 8:1-2)
- ▶ What's Paul talking about? Obviously *not about all knowledge*, but specifically concerning the Christians knowledge of liberty concerning the New Covenant.
- ▶ "However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled." (1 Corinthians 8:7)
- ▶ "For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols?" (1 Corinthians 8:10)

**TROUBLESOME
ONE-LINER**

NO ONE COMES TO FAITH THROUGH ARGUMENTS...THEY SAY.

- ▶ “Many people will agree with what I’ve said about the role of apologetics in strengthening believers, but they deny that it’s of any use in winning unbelievers to Christ. “No one comes to Christ through arguments!” they’ll tell you. To a certain extent, I think that such people are just victims of false expectations. When you realize that only a minority of people who hear the gospel respond positively to it and place their faith in Christ, we shouldn’t be surprised that most people will refuse to be persuaded by our arguments and evidence. By the very nature of the case, we should expect that most unbelievers will remain unconvinced by our apologetic arguments, just as most remain unmoved by the preaching of the cross. And remember, no one knows for sure about the cumulative effect of such arguments, as the seed is planted and then watered again and again in ways we can’t even imagine. We shouldn’t expect that the unbeliever, when he first hears our apologetic case, will just roll over and play dead! Of course he’ll fight back! Think of what’s at stake for him! But we patiently plant and water in hopes that over time the seed will grow and bear fruit. But why bother, you might ask, with that minority of a minority with whom apologetics is effective?”

- ▶ Craig, William Lane. *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision* (p. 22-23). David C. Cook. Kindle Edition.

NO ONE COMES TO FAITH THROUGH ARGUMENTS...THEY SAY.

- ▶ "First, because every person is precious to God, a person for whom Christ died. Like a missionary called to reach an obscure people group, the Christian apologist is burdened to reach that minority of persons who will respond to rational argument and evidence. But second, this people group, though relatively small in numbers, is huge in influence. One of these persons, for example, was C. S. Lewis. Think of the impact that one man's conversion continues to have! I find that the people who resonate most with my apologetic arguments tend to be engineers, people in medicine, and lawyers. Such persons are among the most influential in shaping our culture today. So reaching this minority of persons will yield a great harvest for the kingdom of God."

- ▶ Craig, William Lane. *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision* (p. 23). David C. Cook. Kindle Edition.

VIDEO

