

1. What is apologetics?
  - a. Systematic Theology answers the question(s):  
“*What* do we believe about (fill in the blank) doctrine?”  
(alternately worded) “*What* does the whole Bible say about (fill in the blank) doctrine?”
  - b. Apologetics answers the question(s):  
“*Why* do we believe (fill in the blank) doctrine?”
  - c. Quite clearly, ST and Apologetics are intricately linked →  
James White: “Your theology determines your apologetic.”
2. The goal(s) of apologetics (1 Pet 3:15-16; 2 Cor 10:5)
  - a. Evangelism (answering skeptics)
  - b. Discipleship (edification of the body of Christ)
3. Types of apologetics:
  - a. Evidential
    - i. Uses evidence to persuade people **to** God/Scripture
      1. Historical
      2. Archaeological
      3. Documentary
      4. Scientific
    - ii. Some proponents
      1. Lee Strobel
      2. Josh McDowell
      3. Kerby Anderson
      4. Intelligent Design organizations (William Dembski, Michael Behe, Discovery Institute)
  - b. Classical / Philosophical
    - i. Uses reason to persuade people **to** God/Scripture
      1. Ontological argument
      2. Cosmological argument
      3. Teleological argument
    - ii. Some proponents
      1. RC Sproul / John Gerstner
      2. William Lane Craig
      3. Alvin Plantinga
      4. Greg Koukl
      5. Ravi Zacharias

- c. Presuppositional
  - i. Reasons *from* God and Scripture
    - 1. Transcendental argument
    - 2. God is the precondition for all intelligibility
      - a. 1 Cor 2:14
    - 3. It cannot be otherwise, ***because of God and His revealed Word***
  - ii. Some proponents
    - 1. Cornelius Van Til / Greg Bahnsen / K. Scott Oliphint
    - 2. John Frame
    - 3. James White
    - 4. Voddie Baucham
    - 5. Gordon C. Clark (different from Van Til / Bahnsen)
    - 6. Certain creation ministries like CMI, AiG, BSI (Jason Lisle)
- 4. A Case for Presuppositional Apologetics
  - a. Presuppositional apologetics goes hand-in-hand with Reformed Theology
  - b. Because of
    - i. the truth behind 1 Cor 2:14
      - 1. there is no neutral ground upon which to stand together and debate
      - 2. the unbeliever should never be allowed to think he has the capability or the right to sit in judgment of God
    - ii. the sovereignty of God...
      - 1. Rom 1 – people are suppressing the truth in unrighteousness, and sometimes He gives them over to their false delusions
    - iii. the glory of God
      - 1. How does it glorify God to rely on Scripture in every other area of ministry (evangelism/missions, discipleship, preaching, counseling, ethical decisions, etc.) and then set it aside for worldly methods that don't even present the Biblical God?
      - 2. God is most glorified when we use the Word He has given to us and revealed to us to present Him before the world.
  - c. ...*Evangelistic* apologetics (goal 2.a. above) ought to focus on presuppositional methods.
    - i. We cannot argue someone into the kingdom of God. Neither can we love anyone into the kingdom of God. Only the Holy Spirit by grace operating through His Word can regenerate someone. So give people the Word of God.
    - ii. Unbelievers will either be *converted* or *have their mouths stopped* (Rom 3:19)
  - d. The Triune God of the Bible is the only answer to the philosophical problem of “the one and the many”

- e. Churches may properly use every kind of apologetics listed above for the edification of the body of Christ (*Discipleship* apologetics – goal 2.b. above)
5. Answering some objections to presuppositional apologetics
- a. “God used \_\_\_\_\_ method in my conversion.”  
The fact that God has used other methods in the process of people’s conversions is not necessarily a good argument for the continued use of such methods in evangelism. That does not make those practices normative. (See Balaam’s donkey and Peter’s shadow).
  - b. “Saying we believe in Scripture/God because of Scripture is circular reasoning.”
    - i. Every system of thought is circular when arguing its most fundamental presuppositions.
    - ii. The Scriptural circle is the only one that renders reality intelligible on its own terms. Even someone who argues against it must presuppose it and borrow from it. That is, the Scriptural circle is the only argument that is not **viciously** circular
6. Some practical considerations:
- a. Ask a lot of questions in your encounters with people
    - i. It’s easier for most people to talk than it is to listen, so ask questions that get people talking about themselves and their beliefs.
    - ii. Ask open-ended questions
      - 1. Why do you believe that?
      - 2. How did you come to that conclusion?
      - 3. What are you basing that on?
  - b. All non-biblical positions are inconsistent either in themselves or with regard to the world around them (or both).
    - i. Don’t just tell that to people. Help them (through the questions you ask) to see where their worldview is inconsistent
  - c. Creation apologetics is especially helpful because people are forever talking about topics that involve the creation. It can be incredibly easy to steer an everyday conversation into a gospel encounter through creation topics
  - d. Press people to **defend their own worldview**, rather than constantly going into defensive mode about Christianity
    - i. Many people cannot even communicate a coherent worldview much less defend whatever worldview they may hold
    - ii. No one can be an expert on every single topic and every single objection to Christianity. You can certainly learn answers to common objections, but remember to make the other person defend their own worldview.
  - e. Remember the sovereignty of God
    - i. Your goal isn’t to win the argument

- ii. Your goal isn't to convert them
- iii. Your goal is to have a conversation, find a doorway to plant a seed, and hopefully even communicate the full gospel message. Then let the Holy Spirit do His work.
  - 1. His work may involve regeneration (instantly or over time)
  - 2. His work may also involve hardening.

Suggested Reading:

Mark Farnham. *Every Believer Confident*  
Jason Lisle. *The Ultimate Proof of Creation*  
Richard Pratt. *Every Thought Captive*  
Greg Bahnsen. *Always Ready*  
Greg Koukl. *Tactics*