

Why Apologetics?

- What is Apologetics?
 - “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.” 1 Peter 3:15 ESV
 - “Defense”= “apologia” (ἀπολογία)
 - A defense of a belief or philosophy
 - Apologetics is “systematic argumentative discourse / in defense (as of a doctrine) / a branch of theology devoted to the defense of the divine origin and authority of Christianity” (Merriam-Webster)
 - Polemikos (πολεμικός)
 - “War-like”
 - Polemics is “the art or practice of disputation or controversy” (Merriam-Webster)
 - **Remember:** *Giving a defense doesn't mean that we need to get defensive, and going on the offense doesn't mean that we should be offensive.*
- Why Study Apologetics and Polemics?
 - It is Biblical
 - 1 Peter 3:15
 - Philippians 1:7
 - Paul (Acts 17, Acts 26)
 - Jesus (Matthew 22)
 - Because there are wrong ideas out there
 - “Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered.” - C. S. Lewis
 - Some people disbelieve Christianity (at least in part) because of arguments against Christianity. Many people will be more open to considering believing in God if they first see that belief in Him is rational.
 - How should we address wrong ideas?
 - William J. McGuire's Inoculation Theory
 - Six Groups
 - No warning
 - Review of True Information
 - Preparation
 - Slight Inoculation
 - Inoculation plus Refutation
 - Inoculation plus Refutation plus Preparation
 - Group six was most successful
 - Group two was least successful.
 - Apologetics and Polemics are tools when sharing the gospel

the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." Ephesians 4:14-15

- Luke 12 tells us not to prepare for defending Christ.
 - "And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say." Luke 12:11-12 ESV
 - There is a difference between "being anxious" and having grounded belief.
 - Apologetics needs to be done in a Spirit led way, not a script led way.
- Apologetics is not an end in itself. People need to experience Jesus.
 - The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" John 1:43-49 ESV

Logical fallacies

- Ad Hominem
 - A personal attack against the individual making a statement
 - Example: “You shouldn’t listen to Tom’s advice. He has greasy hair and beady eyes.”
- Straw Man
 - Attacking a different argument than that which your opponent is actually defending
 - Example: After Tim said that he is a Christian, Kelly replied, “I’m appalled that you believe we should stone adulteresses!”
- Appeal to Ignorance (argumentum ad ignorantiam)
 - Using lack of knowledge to support a premise
 - Example: “There is no archeological evidence that the Israelites were ever slaves in Egypt. The Egyptians would have kept records of the plagues if they had actually happened.”
 - **Remember:** *Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.*
- False Dilemma/False Dichotomy
 - An argument that only gives you a limited range of answers by how it is phrased. It is set up to exclude options that go against the argument.
 - Example: “Yes or no, have you stopped beating your wife yet?”
- Slippery Slope
 - Linking together a string of events to get from one action to an unlikely outcome
 - Example: “If you let your toddler choose what he wants to eat for breakfast, then soon you will let him choose when he wants to go to bed, and then later where he wants to attend kindergarten, and eventually he won’t listen to anything you say.”
- Circular Argument (petitio principii)
 - Using an argument where one or more of your premises presuppose the truth of your conclusion
 - Example: I know the Bible is true because 2 Timothy 3:16 says that “all Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”
- Hasty Generalization
 - When a claim which is sometimes or often true is stated in a way that implies it is always true, or when we assume that because something is true of a small group of people, it must be true of everyone.
 - Example: “People these days just don’t enjoy reading anymore.”
- Red Herring (ignoratio elenchi)
 - A red herring is a smelly fish that was dragged across the scent trail to try to distract dogs. This logical fallacy occurs when some unrelated detail is brought in to sidetrack the conversation.

- Example: *Question*: “Are you going to raise taxes during your time in office?”
Answer: “Taxes are an important means of revenue to ensure that essential services for our citizens are offered at a high quality and at a low cost. We are committed to seeing the quality of our government services increase during our time in office.”
- Tu Quoque Fallacy
 - A.k.a. “Appeal to hypocrisy” “Tu Quoque” is Latin for “you too.” This fallacy attempts to deflect an issue by pointing out that you have a similar issue.
 - Example: “Officer, I don’t know why you pulled me over for speeding when I have seen police cars driving faster than I was!”
- Causal Fallacy (post hoc)
 - Assuming that because a later event precedes a previous event the previous event must have been the cause of the later event.
 - Example: “Every year in NYC, murder rates go up when ice cream sales go up. Therefore, eating ice cream influences people to commit murder.”
- Fallacy of Sunk Costs
 - When you argue that you need to keep on going with something because you have spent so much time/energy/money on this cause
 - Example: “If I would have heard about Jesus when I was young, I would have considered being a Christian, but now I have invested too much into Judaism to turn back.”
- Appeal to Authority (argumentum ad verecundiam)
 - Supposing that a statement must be true because someone smart or famous believes it.
 - Example: “Strawberries are good for you because they were Albert Einstein’s favourite fruit.”
- Equivocation (ambiguity)
 - Using similar words to make someone think you are saying one thing when you are really saying something else.
 - Example: “I have the right to vote, so it is right for me to vote.”
- Appeal to Pity (argumentum ad misericordiam)
 - Playing on someone’s emotions to make them sympathetic to your cause.
 - Example: “A man applies for a job. When the boss asks him what his qualifications are, he replies that he has a wife and six children at home, the wife is a helpless cripple, the children have nothing to eat, no clothes to wear, no shoes on their feet, there are no beds in the house, no coal in the cellar, and winter is coming.” (Max Shulman, *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*. 1951)
- Bandwagon Fallacy
 - Believing that something is true simply because it is the newest or most popular thing to believe.
 - Example: “We know that Islam is the one true religion because it is the fastest growing religion in the world.”
- Contradictory Premises

- When an argument is constructed using two premises which cannot both be true.
- Example: Can God create a rock so big that he cannot lift it?
 - Contradictory premises 1. There is an irresistible force. 2. There is an immovable object
- False analogy
 - Making an analogy of two things which are alike in one aspect, but then drawing conclusions from aspects in which they are actually unrelated.
 - “Students should be allowed to look at their textbooks during examinations. After all, surgeons have X-rays to guide them during the operation; lawyers have briefs to guide them during a trial. Why then shouldn’t students be allowed to look at their textbooks during exams?” (Max Shulman, *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*. 1951)

Listing of fallacies excerpted from “15 Logical Fallacies You Should Know Before Getting Into a Debate” by David Ferrer and “Love is a Fallacy” by Max Shulman

Further Resources for a Broad Overview of Apologetics

Books

- *On Guard* by William Lane Craig
- *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis
- *The Reason for God* by Timothy Keller
- *Understanding the Faith* by Jeff Myers
- *Tactics* by Greg Koukl

Websites

- www.reasonablefaith.org
- www.str.org
- www.coldcasechristianity.com

YouTube Channels

- ReasonableFaithOrg
- InspiringPhilosophy
- CSLewisDoodle

Feel free to contact me with any questions. mattjantzi19@gmail.com

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.