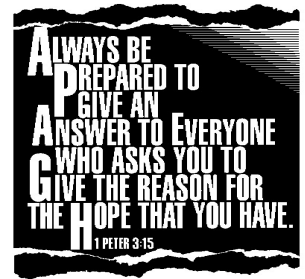


# Reasonable Faith

How do you personally know that Christianity is true?  
How does a person come to know God?  
How is the Gospel and Christian apologetics related?



## Christianity Is A Reasonable Faith:

- “Apologia” (apology)
  - Defensive: “defense against a charge of falsehood, inconsistency, or credulity”  
“refuting objections or skeptics’ arguments in a believable, reasonable way”
  - Offensive: “making a case for” “to reply to”, “to give an answer or reason for why you believe what you believe.”(Acts 22:1; 24:10; 25:8,16; 26:1; Phil. 1:7,17; Lk. 12:11,12; 21:12-15; Col. 4:5,6; Matt. 10:19)
- Apologetics: A defense of the Christian World View
  - 1 Peter 3:15* “*But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have; but do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience...*”
  - We must always be ready to give an answer why we believe what we believe!
    - Everyone believes something. (You state belief in order to deny belief.)
  - Presented with the right attitude (Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 2:25)
- “Contend For The Faith” (Jude 3; Phil. 1:27,28)
  - “Convincing proofs” (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:3)
  - “Hold to sound doctrine” (Titus 1:9; 1 Tim. 1:10)
  - \*Christianity is an objective faith (Jesus, Bible) (1 Cor. 15:3,4,14-18,20)
    - Faith is only as good as the object of one’s faith!
  - \*Christianity is a historical faith (based on historical fact)
  - \*Christianity is an intelligent/reasonable/rational faith
    - (It makes sense!)(It reflects the way things really are.)
    - (The Christian Faith is a faith that seeks understanding.)
    - There is a place for reason/thought (Isa. 1:18; Matt. 22:37; 2 Cor. 10:5)
    - Yet reason apart from God is foolishness (Prov. 1:7,29-31; 9:10; Ps. 10:4; 14:1-4; 1 Cor. 1:18-23; Rom. 1:22; Col. 2:3,4,8)
    - “The worldview of the Christian faith is simple enough. God has put enough into this world to make faith in him a most reasonable thing. But he has left enough out to make it impossible to live by sheer reason alone.” (Ravi Zacharias)
- Role Of The Holy Spirit
  - John 16:8 Conviction
  - Ezekiel 36:26,27; Titus 3:5 Regeneration
  - “The Holy Spirit moves in the hearts of unbelievers to dissolve their sinful prejudices and open their minds to an honest consideration of the arguments and evidence. In the absence of the work of the Holy Spirit, our best arguments will fall like water on stone, for the natural man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness.” “Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, the unbeliever will do all he can to resist the argument, even adopting extreme beliefs, rather than yielding to the truth of Christian theism.” (William Lane Craig) Romans 1:18,21; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2:12-14

• **The Christian Faith answers ultimate questions:**

- Does God exist? On what is ultimate reality based? God
- Where did I come from? The universe? Origins
- Why am I here? What significance does my life have? Meaning
- Where am I going? Where is history moving? History/Purpose
- What or who am I? Do I have a soul? Nature of Man
- Is there life after death? Future
- Who says? (Why should I be moral?) Authority
- What is right, wrong, & just? (moral oughts/justice) Ethics/Morality
- What is true and how do I know it? Truth/Knowledge

Throughout history, how has the wisdom of man every fully answered the deepest issues or questions of life?

(1 Peter 1:18; Rom. 1:21,22; 6:21; Job 28:12-14,20-22; 1 Cor. 1:18-25)

## Acts 17: Mars Hill

1. Motivated by a provoked spirit (brokenness over lost people)(v.16)
  2. Presented Christ and the Resurrection (v.17,18)
  3. Addresses wrong belief/thinking (v.18-21)
  4. Addresses man's hunger to worship (religious), yet in ignorance (v.22,23)
  5. Declares the Truth of God's existence as Creator, Sustainer (v.24-26)
  6. Calls men to seek God and to reject false views of God (v.27-29)
  7. Calls men to repentance and faith explaining the coming Just, Judgment of God and the proof in Christ's Resurrection (v.30,31)
- Familiar Religion: reasoned (explaining/proving/persuading) from the Scriptures proving Christ Deity/resurrection. (synagogue)(Acts 17:1-15)  
Unfamiliar Religion: reasoned/conversed from God as Creator, Sustainer, Judge to Christ and the Resurrection. (marketplace/philosophers)(Acts 17:16-34)  
Responses to the gospel: sneering, curiosity, belief (v.32-34)  
Rejection/Unbelief - Hebrews 4:2,3; Repentance/Faith – Ephesians 1:13

## The Balance Between Two Views Of Man: (Acts 26:28)

(Question of capability - total or partial depravity)

(Question of the order of regeneration)

• **Man is unable to reason**

- Present the Gospel (disabled)
- 1 Cor. 1:18,20-24; 2:1-8,13,14; 3:18-20
- 2 Corinthians 3:14,15; 4:3,4
- Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17,18; Jn. 6:65
- Romans 1:16;8:7,8; Hebrews 4:12

• **Man is able to reason**

- Present reasonable argument
- Acts 17:2,17; 18:4,19; 19:8,9; 26:25,28; 28:23,24; 2 Cor. 5:20
- Genesis 1:26,27
- Romans 1:18; 2:14,15; Isaiah 1:18

- \* People can be persuaded by bad arguments.
- \* Sinful men may not be persuaded by sound arguments. (Gal. 4:16)
- \* One cannot reason someone to faith. (1 Cor. 1:18-30; Jn. 6:44,65)
- \* There exists a mystery in the timing of regeneration. (unable>able)
- \* Begin and end with the gospel. The Gospel is the power of God (Rom. 1:16)
- \* If God opens the door for reasonable argument – present it.

## The Natural Man: (Romans 1)(marked by foolishness, rebellion, & unbelief)

Romans 1:18 "Suppresses the truth" (plain, known, clearly seen, understood)

- Truth about God known through Creation (Rom. 1:20,21; Ps. 8:3,4; 19:1-4; Is. 40:26; Job 26:14) (self-evident)
- Truth about God known through Conscience (Rom. 1:32; 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:20; 2 Cor. 4:2; 1 Pet. 2:19)

- Truth about God known in Christ (Jn. 1:18; 14:7,9,10; Heb. 1:2,3)
- Truth about God known in the Word of God (Jn. 17:17)

Acts 10: General and Special Revelation

Romans 1:21 "Not glorify" (acknowledge), or "give thanks"

Romans 1:22 Resulting in darkened understanding, hard hearts, and foolishness

Romans 1:23,25 False substitute

Romans 1:28,32 Rejection of God, Rebellion against God

Ephesians 4:17-19 Worthless thinking, darkened understanding, ignorant, hard hearts, ever-increasing wickedness (1 Cor. 2:1-5), foolishness (Ps. 14:1)

Reasons Why People Reject Christ:

1. Immorality (Issue of evil desire/no accountability)(Jn. 3:18-20)
2. Rebellious Pride (Issue of authority/autonomy)(I am god, I don't need god)
3. Willful unbelief (Jn. 12:37)

## The Battle Of Ideas:

Ideas have consequences. What you believe affects how you live.

1 Timothy 4:16 "Watch your life and your doctrine."

False ideas are the greatest obstacle to the reception of the gospel.

(1 Peter 1:18; Colossians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 1:20; 8:2; 2 Corinthians 10:4,5)

## The Process Of Human Thought

What happens when what you know (reason) and what you believe (faith) conflict? (Faith always steps beyond the facts.)

What happens when what you feel and what you think differ?

(heart –v- head)(problem of incompatibility/inconsistency)

When conflicting ideas collide, an individual adjusts or disregards the beliefs that seem inconsistent. ("I changed my mind.") An individual may choose to live in tension with conflicting ideals in spite of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary. (faith over reason)

How strongly do you hold your Biblical convictions? What compelling evidence would it take for you to give up what you previously held to be true? Are you basing your beliefs on the facts or your feelings? (2 Timothy 1:12-14; 3:14; Romans 14:5,14,22)

Primary or Secondary Beliefs (non-negotiable –v- negotiable)

Egocentric (self-centered) I am my ultimate reference point. I say.

Theo centric (God-centered) God is my ultimate reference point. God says!

Circular reasoning cannot be avoided with ultimate presuppositions.

Importance of Logic/reasoning (intelligibility, process of evaluation)

"There are no absolutes" (Isn't that an absolute statement?)

"There is no such thing as truth" (How do you know that is true?)

"Language is not meaningful" (What do you mean by that?)

"You can not know anything for sure" (Great! Class dismissed!)

Every worldview has an ultimate standard as to what is real, true, good. (self-attesting claim to ultimacy) (intolerant and unbending)

Man seeks to discover truth on his own apart from God. (autonomy)

Law of Excluded Middle – two opposing worldviews can not both be true.

## Four Basic World Views:

- **Atheists/Secular Humanists** (naturalism)

\* Issue of God's existence/authority

Classical arguments (Creation, Cause, Design, Mind)

Presuppositional arguments (Meaning/Moral arguments)

Already knows God/suppresses (Romans 1:18-21)

Can man live without God and life still make sense?

- **Cosmic Humanists/New Age Thinker/Eastern Religions** (pantheism)
  - \* Issue of the nature of God, nature of man, and the solution to man's problem
  - \* Define God, Man, Sin, and Salvation in Jesus Christ.
  - Evidential arguments (Lord, Liar, Lunatic/Resurrection)
- **The Religious Lost** (Religious theism)
  - \* Issue of personal righteousness/justification before God.
  - \* Lack personal assurance of heaven/judgment.
  - \* Present the Law and the Righteousness of Christ.
- **True Believers In Jesus Christ** (Biblical Theism)
  - \* **Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone & Scripture alone**

### Discerning Questions To Use With Religious People:

1. If you were to die today, do you know for sure you would go to heaven?
2. If you were to stand before God and he were to ask you, "Why should I let you into heaven?" What would you say?
3. Whose righteousness will you present to God on Judgment Day?
4. Do you see yourself in need of God's forgiveness?
5. Are you at peace with God? Are you eagerly awaiting Christ's Return?
6. How does a person become right before God?

### Methods Of Apologetics: (Strategies)

Questions: How does a person come to know Christ as Savior and Lord?  
How does a Christian engage an unbeliever in conversation about Faith?  
Is the nature of man able or unable to reason to faith?  
What methods do we use: experience, reason, or Scripture alone?  
What is the relationship between faith (heart) and reason (head)?  
What keeps a person from making a profession of Faith in Christ?  
What would it take to convince someone? (Issue of knowledge or will?)  
How much argumentation is necessary to justify belief?

**Classical** (R.C. Sproul, J.P. Moorland, William Lane Craig, Gerstner, Norman Geisler)

Primarily presents arguments for the existence of God (Christian Theism)

Two – Step Approach (Proves God exists, Presents historical evidence)

(Cause, Effect, Design, Mind, Meaning, Morality)

(Natural Theology – men's rational reflection about general revelation.)

(General Revelation -God's self-revelation in nature and conscience)

Romans 1:18-20; Acts 14:17; Hebrews 11:6

Presents historical evidence, proof of miracles, fulfilled prophecy, the Deity of Christ, the Resurrection, the trustworthiness of Scripture

Asks the question:

- "What is the rational that proves God's existence?"

"Rational argument and evidence can be used to confirm in the believer's mind the truth witnessed to him by the Holy Spirit."

There a difference between knowing Christianity to be true (faith/Holy Spirit) and showing Christianity to be true (reasonable argument/evidence).

**Evidential** (Josh McDowell, John Montgomery, Doug Geivett)

One-Step Approach (Presents historical evidence)

Presents proofs for the belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Resurrection, the Bible, Miracles, Creation, and the trustworthiness of Scripture.

Man is able to reason and can be swayed by the evidence.

Uses empirical evidence or historical facts to reason to faith

Asks the question:

-“Is there sufficient evidence to warrant belief in the Christian message?”

Limitation: Facts do not save. Matthew 28:17 Men still rejected the risen Christ.

Luke 16:30,31 unconvinced; James 2:19,20 Demons know the truth

**Cumulative Case** (Feinberg, Mitchell, C. S. Lewis, Evans, Chesterton, Tennant)

Presents the argument for Christian Theism (Worldview) as making more sense than any other worldview as a whole. (inference to the best explanation)

Presents the case regarding the nature of the cosmos and intelligent design, the reality of religious experience, the objectivity of morality, and fact of the resurrection of Jesus.

Worldview Truth Claims Tests: consistency (Does it contradict? Is it consistent? reduce to the absurd), correspondence (Is it true to reality?), comprehensiveness (Is it the best explanation?), simplicity (Is it clear/understandable?), livability (Is it livable?), fruitfulness (What does it produce? What consequences?), conservation (Does it need constant revision?).

**Presuppositional** (Van Til, Francis Schaeffer, John Frame, Gordon Clark)

Starting Points (God, The Bible, Conscience, Creation)(Gal. 1:11,12)

All thought and meaning logically presupposes God.

God's character is the basis for all things. (2 Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 6:13)

It begins with God and reasons from Him. (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 15:33; Ps. 111:10)

“We should present the Biblical God, not merely as the conclusion to an argument, but as the one who makes argument possible.” (Frame)

The Bible is the ultimate standard of truth and falsity.

Everyone knows there is a God (nature) & knows they are sinners (conscience).

Strives to show unbelievers that they cannot argue, think, or live without presupposing God, and that their worldview is inadequate to explain their existence. (Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:16,17; 2:3; Romans 11:36)

Uses presuppositions/assumptions of faith to reason to faith

Asks questions like: “Why do you believe what you believe?” “What compelling influences have determined your values/personal beliefs?” “Is the universe personal/impersonal?” “Can man live without God and life still make sense?” “If your worldview is true, what are you ultimately left with?” “Do moral ‘ought’s’ exist universally? What is the basis for right or wrong?”

Presuppositions are core beliefs/non-negotiables/basic assumptions about life and reality. They are the foundational or essential beliefs to one's system of thought (worldview). A presupposition is a belief that places conditions or limitations upon other less essential beliefs. Different presuppositions lead to different conclusions about how things (reality) should be interpreted. (Example: Christians subject scientific assertions to the test of Scripture, Non-Christians subject Scripture to the test of science.) Circular reasoning cannot be avoided with ultimate presuppositions.

Transcendental: necessary prerequisites (nature is uniform, language has objective meaning, laws of logic exist outside man/brute givens)

**Experiential** (self-validating/profound, personal testimony)

Witness of the Holy Spirit (self-authenticating/intrinsic internal witness)

(Rom. 8:16; 4:21; 14:5; 1 Thess. 1:5; Col. 2:2; Jn. 14:16,17,20,26; 15:26,27; 1 Jn. 2:20,26,27; 3:24; 4:13,14; 5:6-13)(1 Cor. 2:4,12-14)

Fact of a changed life (Lk. 8:39; Jn. 9:25,26; Acts 3:10,11; Gal. 1:23; 1 Cor. 6:11)

Ramm, Pascal, Kierkegaard, Brunner)

## **Christian Foundational Presuppositions:**

Truth Claims (propositions)(Jn. 18:37,38; 14:6)  
Christianity is the only reasonable position to hold.

### **Reality (what is real?)(metaphysics)**

- \* God is the final and eternal Reality who created all else that exists.
- \* All reality is derived from Him. In Him all reality coheres.

### **Truth/Knowledge (how do we know what is true?)(epistemology)**

- \* God is the ultimate, independent standard of Truth.
- \* From Him all reality derives its meaning.  
(Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16,17; 2:3; Acts 17:28; John 1:3; 15:5)
- \* Man is wholly and completely dependent on God for the acquisition of knowledge.
- \* All relationships are established by Him and are made known as He reveals them. (revelation – Deut. 29:29; Eph. 1:17)
- \* All true knowledge is knowledge with reference to God (Prov. 9:10)  
Man truly knows nothing apart from God. Man is dependent.
- \* Question: "How do you know anything for certain?"

### **Morality (what is right/good?)(ethics)**

- \* God is the ultimate source of good and sets the standard of what is right and wrong. (Romans 2:15; 3:19,20; 7:7,8,13; Exodus 20)
- \* He is the ultimate authority/reference point (He says!)(Mk. 10:18)

### **The Nature of God**

Attributes: Spirit, Eternal, One God in Three Persons, All present, All powerful, All knowing (exhaustive), Holy, Righteous, Just, Good, Unchangeable, Self-existent/self-sufficient (independent Acts 17:24-28), Merciful, Forgiving  
Creator/Sustainer (decree/providence/sovereignty)  
Lawgiver/Judge

### **The Nature of Man**

Image-bearer (unique/valued)  
Dominion/Stewardship  
Utterly dependent on God  
Sinful, Rebellious  
Call to repentance and faith in Christ

### **The Person of Jesus Christ**

God/Man (Isaiah 7:14; Colossians 1:15; 2:9; Hebrews 1:3)  
Savior/LORD  
Atonement (cross)  
Imputed righteousness (righteous life)

### **The Scripture**

The very Words of God/Inspired  
Special Revelation/Absolute Truth  
Without error/Accurate/Clear/Sufficient  
Authoritative/Binding

*"We can not defend that which we do not know!"  
"You can't give away what you don't possess."*