



On-Target Apologetics

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On-Target Apologetics

Apologetics can teach you some things to say, but above all you must learn to listen.

- **Know God's truth:** Study Scripture. Know how to explain, defend, and contend for it.
- **Know the context:** Study the culture, its practices, assumptions, worldview.
- **Know the person:** Pay attention to the individual. Don't assume too much or jump to conclusions. Listen, listen, listen!

Off-target by ignoring Scripture

An apologetic argument may seem smart, but does it accurately reflect God's Word?

- You might try to show that Christianity is compatible with evolution. Is it?
- You might argue that evidence of design in the world around us perfectly displays the Creator's wisdom and goodness? Does it?
- In dealing with the problem of how God can be real in a world of such suffering, you might say that some things are outside God's control. Is that so?

Off-target by ignoring context

- Arguments for God's existence and miracles may help atheists, but not Muslims, who already believe in God and miracles.
- Evidence that spirits are real is needless if you're talking to an animist.
- If you show Hindus that Jesus is God, they may yawn and say, "Of course! Isn't everybody?"
- Demonstrating the Bible's reliability may help a secularist, but a Mormon already accepts it.
- Postmoderns may brush off logic and evidence. They crave experience and relationship.

Off-target by ignoring person

- **“Christianity is unscientific.”** Maybe they’ve known foolish, anti-intellectual Christians. Or maybe they’re just in a new crowd at college.
- **“Evil and suffering prove there’s no God in charge.”** Not abstract, but their own pain.
- **“Church is full of hypocrites.”** Is this a shallow excuse? Or have they suffered a deep wound?
- **“It’s arrogant to say Jesus is the only way.”** Foggy notions, or encounters with arrogance?
- **“Christianity is all do’s and don’ts.”** Offended by legalists? Or perhaps immersed in sin!

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Target the person

- ✓ Seek to win the person, not the argument.
- ✓ Be alert for things in their surroundings or background that make belief harder.
- ✓ Address the person's challenges; don't bring up non-issues for them.
- ✓ Connect with heart, not just head.
- ✓ Show that unbelief is not just intellectual but often involves stubborn rebellion.
- ✓ As you talk to the person about the Lord, talk to the Lord about the person.
- ✓ Listen to the person, and listen to the Spirit for insight to reach the person's heart.