

**“Room For Doubt—Reason For Hope”**  
**Room For Doubt Apologetics Conference – March 20-21, 2015**  
**Cincinnati Christian University**

Resource Webpage: [www.worldvieweyes.org/CCU2015.html](http://www.worldvieweyes.org/CCU2015.html)<sup>1</sup>

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**Room For Doubt** is a grant-funded program that provides learning experiences and resources to strengthen the faith of committed Christians, address the questions of those who have doubts about their Christian heritage, and represent the Christian message to those who are skeptical about its claims.

### Introduction

A. Thinking about faith and doubt: Is it a \_\_\_\_\_ **SEE** \_\_\_\_\_ **SAW?**

B. Thomas (John 20)

C. Peter (Matt 14:22-33)

“You of \_\_\_\_\_ **LITTLE** \_\_\_\_\_ **.FAITH**”

D. Don’t doubt

1. Matt 21:21

2. James 1:6 “... You must \_\_\_\_\_ **BELIEVE** and not \_\_\_\_\_ **DOUBT.**”

E. John the Baptist (Compare John 1:19–34 with Matt 11:1-11 and Luke 7:18-30)

F. It’s OK to \_\_\_\_\_ **.DOUBT**

Jude 1:22 “Be \_\_\_\_\_ **MERCIFUL** to those who \_\_\_\_\_ **DOUBT.**”

G. Doubts – But \_\_\_\_\_ **ADEQUATE** \_\_\_\_\_ **ANSWERS.**

1. Jesus’ response to Thomas (John 20:27–29).

2. Jesus’ response to John the Baptist (Matt 11:4-5; Luke 7:21-22).

3. “I do believe; help my \_\_\_\_\_ **UNBELIEF**” (Mark 9:24).

### I. The Growing Need for Christian Apologetics<sup>2</sup>

A. Doubts and disengagement

1. Church youth and doubt

\_\_\_\_\_ **38%** have significantly doubted their faith.

\_\_\_\_\_ **32%** felt like rejecting their parents’ faith.

\_\_\_\_\_ **36%** cannot ask their most pressing questions in church.

<sup>1</sup> The resource webpage provides access to outlines (including answers for blanks), presentation slides, and more.

<sup>2</sup> Good resources are available for these statistics and valuable direction for Christians. Note the Resource List.

2. Churched youth “disengaged” by age 30? \_\_\_\_\_ **59%**
- B. Growing influence of skeptics and atheists.
1. E.g. Richard Dawkins, Evolutionary Biologist, Oxford University
  2. E.g. Lawrence Krause, Physicist and Cosmologist, Arizona State University
  3. E.g. Christopher Hitchens (1949–2011): author, journalist, debater
  4. E.g. Bart Ehrman, Prof. of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina
- C. Increasing secular culture and the growth of the Nones.
- The “Nones”: \_\_\_\_\_ **19.3%** of all Americans. \_\_\_\_\_ **32%** of 18-29 year olds.
- D. Inadequate preparation by churches, church leaders, and Christian parents.

1. \_\_\_\_\_% of Nones come from religious homes.
2. \_\_\_\_\_% of Nones are “de-converted.”

Frequent factor mentioned by “de-converts”:

“... \_\_\_\_\_ **TRITE** and \_\_\_\_\_ **UNHELPFUL** answers.”

## II. Misconceptions about Christian Apologetics

- A. “It sounds too passive.”
- B. “It’s argumentative.”
- C. “It’s just for really smart people.”
- D. “It’s irrelevant to daily life.”
- E. “It’s not spiritual.”

## III. Biblical Directives for Christian Apologetics

- A. **1 Peter 3:15** \_\_\_\_\_ **DEFEND** [*apologia*] the faith. (1 Peter 3:15; Acts 22:1; 24:10; 26:12; Phil 1:7,16). Cf. *dialeptomai* (reasoned discussion) in Acts 17:2-3,17; 18:4,19; 19:8-9; 24:12).

1 Peter 3: <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” <sup>15</sup> But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer [*apologia*] to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. [NIV]

Phil 1:7b “... whether I [Paul] am in chains or defending [*apologia*] and confirming the gospel, all of you share the affection of Christ Jesus.”

“Perhaps the main function of apologetics is to show that ... [we] have nothing whatsoever for which to apologize” (Alvin Plantinga, “Christian Life Partly Lived,” in *Philosophers Who Believe*, ed. Kelly James Clark [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993], 69).

- B. **Col. 2:8** “Don’t be taken \_\_\_\_\_ **CAPTIVE** by deceptive philosophies.”
- C. **2 Cor. 10:5** “We \_\_\_\_\_ **DEMOLISH** arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God” (2 Corinthians 10:5).
- D. **2 Timothy 2:24-25** “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome but be kind to all . . . with gentleness \_\_\_\_\_ **CORRECTING** those who are in opposition; if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth”
- E. **Titus 1:9** “He [an elder] must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and \_\_\_\_\_ **REFUTE** those who oppose it.”
- F. **Jude 3** “Contend earnestly for the faith.”
- G. Early church preaching and teaching (e.g. Acts 2:14-36; Acts 7:1-53; Acts 17:16-34).

#### IV. Biblical Objectives for Christian Apologetics

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ **ASSENT** (Matt. 16:15-17; John 20:30-31; Rom. 10:9; 1 John 4:15; Heb. 11:6ab).
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ **TRUST** (James 2:19; Matt. 4:1-3; Hebrews 11:1,6c).
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ **LOVE**
1. See Mark 12:30; cf. Deut. 6:4-5.
  2. Compare Jesus’ question and Peter’s “great confession” (Matt 16:15-16) with Jesus’ question of Peter after His resurrection (Jn. 21:15-17).

#### V. Apologetic Attitudes

- A. Be \_\_\_\_\_ **SENSITIVE**.
1. 1 Pet. 3:15 “with gentleness and reverence”
  2. 2 Tim. 2:24-25 “not quarrelsome but kind . . . with gentleness”
  3. Jude 22 “Have mercy on some, who are doubting”
- B. Be \_\_\_\_\_ **INQUISITIVE** (see Mark 11:27-33).

#### VI. Three Strategies for Christian Apologetics

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Apologetics **NEGATIVE**
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Apologetics **POSITIVE**
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Apologetics **NEUTRALIZING**

A. **“Negative” Apologetics:** Replying to specific criticisms to show that Christianity is

\_\_\_\_\_ **NOT FALSE.**

1. E.g. The disciples of Jesus were accused of stealing Jesus’ body (Matt 28:11-15).
2. E.g. Festus accuses Paul of being insane (Acts 26:22-32).
3. E.g. The claim that Christians “all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar [the state]” (Acts 17:5-8).
4. E.g. The problem of evil. Accusation: The reality of evil is inconsistent with the reality of an existing God who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good.

B. **“Positive” Apologetics:** Attempting to show that **Christianity is**

\_\_\_\_\_ **TRUE.**

1. **Evidences in nature** (Ps 19:1-6; Rom 1:18-32).
2. **Miracles** (1 Kings 18; Ex 10:1-2; Jn 20:30-31; Acts 2:22-24; 1 Cor 15:1-20).
  - a. John 20:30-31 “... these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”
  - b. Acts 2:22-24 “... Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him ...”
3. **Fulfilled prophecy** (Lk 24:25-27; Acts 17:2-3; 26:22-23; Deut 18:18-22; Is 7:14; Micah 5:2; Zach 9:9; Is 53; Ps 22:1-8; 16:10).
4. **The nature and reliability of scripture.**
  - a. 2 Tim 3:14-17 “... all Scripture is inspired by God ...”
  - b. 2 Pet 1:20-21 “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”
  - c. John 10:34-36 “... and the Scripture cannot be broken.”
5. **Social benefits** of the Christian way (Titus 3:8; Gal 6:9-10; 1 Tim 5:8).
6. **Personal experience.**
  - a. John 9:25-30 “... One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see.”
  - b. Paul’s testimonies to the Jews (Acts 22), to Felix (Acts 24:10-23) and to Agrippa (Acts 26).

C. **“Neutralizing” Apologetics:** Attempting to show that **other worldviews are**

\_\_\_\_\_ **INCONSISTENT** or \_\_\_\_\_

**UNLIVABLE.**

1. Biblical precedent.
  - a. 2 Cor 10:5 “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God ...”
  - b. Titus 1:9-11 “... able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”
  - c. Rom 1:21 “For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”
2. Apologetic advantage: It does not employ \_\_\_\_\_ **SCRIPTURE** in its method.
3. How does this work?