



General Topics :: Are there Guidelines for doing Apologetics?

Are there Guidelines for doing Apologetics? - posted by LivingMartyr (), on: 2006/7/19 0:52

Are there Guidelines for doing Apologetics?

Most every discipline has a set of rules and guidelines that help a person perform better. In fact, guidelines could be produced for most any endeavor. Why should apologetics be any different?

Following are some things I have found that are very helpful in developing apologetic skills. I am not saying that these are definitive or exhaustive in scope. Rather, these are simply the things that I have found that have helped me. I hope they help you.

Remember, there is no method for apologetics that works in all situations. There can be no outline approach that, if followed, will always lead a person to understanding and accepting the truth. That is why apologetics is a combination of what you know and are. It is a fluid expression that must adapt the obstacles in its course.

Apologetic skill is directly related to your experience and knowledge. You gain knowledge by experiencing a situation where you defend the truth. This is "doing" apologetics. It is through this doing that you polish what you know, discover your areas of weakness, and plan ways to improve your abilities. You need to learn as much as you can through study, practice what you learn in real situations, think of ways to apply what you know, mess up, and keep going. All of this is what apologetics is and is how you get better. So, is there one single rule that will help you develop skill in apologetics? Yes there is. Go for it! You will have success and failures.

In fact, when I teach seminars on apologetics, I can confidently state that I have probably made more mistakes in evangelism, witnessing, apologetics, etc., than any ten people combined. My wife will attest to that. But hey, that's okay. You don't grow if you don't go.

Nevertheless, here are some guidelines.

Pray - It is the Lord who opens the heart and mind, not you (Acts 16:14). Ask God for guidance (John 14:14). Ask for blessing in your understanding (James 1:5) and your speech (Col. 4:6). Ask the Lord to also open their understanding to God's word (Luke 24:45).

Memorize Scripture - Few things are as powerful when defending the faith as being able to cite chapter and verse of a particular verse (Psalm 119:11; 2 Tim. 3:16).

Memorize the locations of information whether it be in cult material, secular material, or any other source you've got. - It is extremely valuable to know material in different disciplines. Of course, you cannot know everything, but you can memorize a few pertinent facts about Mormonism, or evolution, or philosophy, or the Bible, or whatever else may be needed. You will learn what you need as you witness.

Listen to what is being said to you - and respond to what is said. It is by listening that you will then know what to say. Listen for errors in logic. Listen for motives, for hurts, for intent. Listen.

Don't interrupt - This is just common courtesy. You need to earn the right to speak. Just because you have an answer doesn't mean it must be heard right away. When interruptions become the norm, learning is thrown out the window.

Don't be afraid to make mistakes - One of the best ways to improve, is to discover your weaknesses. The best way to discover your weaknesses is when mistakes uncover them for you.

Study what you discover you don't know - If you don't know something, then study it. Get books and read. Write down what you learn.

Don't be afraid to take a chance - This takes real faith. All you have to do is be available, speak up, and take a chance in defending the Christian faith. You'll be surprised at how well you do. And when you mess up, don't worry, review

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Rehearse - Perhaps the best place to do apologetics is in your head. Think of a situation, a scenario that you need to have an answer for, and develop an answer. Practice in your mind. Try and corner yourself and then get out of it.

Read Books that deal with what you need to know -

The knowledge of others is invaluable. Isaac Newton said, "If I have reached the stars, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants." In other words, he learned from others.

Basically, the guidelines are common sense. All you have to do is try, don't worry about failure, keep going, pray, and trust God. It works.

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