

BASIC CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS: DEFENDING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Part VI: Steps To Take When Stumped By ANY Critic Of Our Christian Faith

(1 Peter 3:15; Matthew 16:18; 2 Timothy 3:13-17; Ephesians 4:11-16)

I. Introduction

- A. Many a Christian has been confused before the crafty arguments of critics of the Christian faith.
- B. Yet, the believer is to be ready to give an apologetic to any man who asks him about his faith, 1 Pet. 3:15.
- C. Thus, we need Biblical advice as to what to do when we have been told something by a critic that we cannot answer in defense of our faith. This lesson uses Scripture's instruction to that end:

II. Steps To Take When Stumped By ANY Critic Of Our Christian Faith.

- A. **Step One** - Recall that Jesus promised He would build His Church so even the rulers of darkness, the "gates of Hades" would not prevail against it, Matthew 16:18. **Thus armed, still hold to faith in Christ!**
 - 1. Just because we do not have an answer to what a critic may claim at present does **not** mean the critic is **right!** Thankfully, truth does not depart simply because a Christian is ignorant of all the facts!
 - 2. Accordingly, when confronted with a critic's unanswerable critique, simply report, "When I find the answer, I will get back to you on that, for there **HAS** to be an answer!"
- B. **Step Two** - Recall that the Apostle Paul warned that people would proceed from bad to worse in both being deceived and deceiving with misleading ideas, 2 Timothy 3:13. Thus, seek to address the critic's words that we cannot immediately answer to see where deception has crept in to create the errant view!
- C. **Step Three** - Stick with what God **permitted** us to be **convinced** was true **before** the criticism threw us a curve, 2 Timothy 3:14. Paul told Timothy to stay with what he had learned and had become convinced was true, for there was a **reason** why **GOD** had allowed Timothy to adopt his beliefs in the first place!
- D. **Step Four** - Stick with what **past reputable** Bible teachers have taught us was true, 2 Timothy 3:14:
 - 1. Paul reminded Timothy of the quality of people who had taught him the Christian truths he believed.
 - 2. One of those people was Paul, and Paul's testimony was very strong, 2 Timothy 3:10-11:
 - a. Paul reminded Timothy that he had come to know all about Paul's doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, love, long-suffering and patience, 2 Timothy 3:10.
 - b. This was certified by Timothy's having seen Paul's sufferings endured for his faith, 2 Timothy 3:11.
 - c. Paul names events that occurred in Iconium and Lystra in 2 Timothy 3:11, and Timothy would have known that these included Paul's willingness to face stoning for his convictions, cf. Acts 14:5, 19.
 - d. Thus, Timothy had the persuasive testimony of Paul as evidence he was holding to the truth!
 - 3. Thus, when we believers recall the long heritage of multitudes of believers from all races, genders, ethnic and religious backgrounds who have converted to Christ only to suffer horrendous persecution for their faith, we have strong evidence that what we believe is **real!**
- E. **Step Five** - Stick with what Scripture itself presents, for it is sufficient to equip us to face all deception.
 - 1. Paul said that the holy Scriptures Timothy had known from childhood were sufficient to equip the believer to know how to do every good work, 2 Timothy 3:15, 17.
 - 2. This is true because all Scripture bears God's authority so that each word is as though God is saying it **now** with the air moving over his vocal chords, 2 Tim. 3:16 and "inspiration of God".
 - 3. Thus, the believer should expose himself **daily** to Scripture for God's help overcoming deception, cf. also Deuteronomy 17:18-20 with 1 Timothy 4:15-16.
- F. **Step Six** - Wait until the Lord who promised to build His Church supplies an answer to counter the critic's error, and that **most likely** through a pastor-teacher party in accord with God's plan in Ephesians 4:11-16.

Lesson: To handle being "stumped" by a critic of the Christian faith, we can do as follows: (1) Recall there has to be an answer in defense of Christ's building His Church. (2) Seek to discern the deception that has led to the critic's view. (3) Stay with the convictions God let us be convinced were true before confronted by the critic. (4) Stick with what reputable believers have taught and sealed as true for by their suffering for the faith, (5) and stick with what the Bible itself reveals, ESPECIALLY with our DAILY Bible reading! (6) In this state, the LORD who BUILDS His Church WILL supply the necessary answer, and that often through a pastor-teacher in accord with Ephesians 4:11-16.