

Comparative Religions

Session 1: An Appropriate Approach

“You must be able to communicate intelligently what you believe and why you believe it (1 Peter 3:15). In doing this, you will ultimately arrive to the question of authority. This is where the battle is inevitably often lost or won. Christianity cannot effectively stand without absolute truthfulness (hence authority). If there is to be any boldness in the faith, it is because of what is contained in the Word of God.”

—Anonymous

It has never been an easy task to reach someone with the gospel of Christ. Gary Habermas, the great evangelical scholar that has devoted his life to the defense of the resurrection wrote: “We do not act in our own power—saving grace and faith are not ours to dispense. The overall goal of the apologetic endeavor is to minister to others, both believers and unbelievers, keeping in mind their personal needs. Our approaches are person relative, and individual responses are necessary.”¹

Several challenges must be overcome in order to effectively share Christ. Habermas' statement powerfully captures three biblical truths apologetics need to keep in mind: 1) The unbeliever is in the worst possible shape apart from the Spirit of God (they are blind *and dead*), 2) Love for others is the birthing center for apologetics, and 3) A good defense of the faith will be spirit led, rather than a mechanical recitation of a canned method.

Our Commander the Lord Jesus has not abandoned his mission for the Church to make disciples “of all nations,” nor has the world produced any new belief that His Church can be considered impotent to combat. We find that Christ's field manual the Bible has within it all the truth we need to succeed. But “when the Son of Man comes, shall he find faith on the earth (Lu. 18:8).”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In His interchange with others, the Lord Jesus struck the perfect balance between asking questions and giving answers. Other than simply seeking information, how else does the Lord use questions? (Examples: Lu. 2:46-47, 5:21-23, 5:33-35, 7:24-28, 11:15-20, 20:1-8)

2. Why are questions often more effective than even the most articulate argument? Do you have any personal examples of this in action?

3. How do questions help you—the communicator of a potentially superior perspective—to maintain a posture of humility and approach the discussion in a spirit of love?

4. Proverbs has much to say about the use of the tongue. Discuss how one or more of the proverbs referenced could be put into action and keep your mouth a dispenser of beauty and “foot free.” (See 10:14, 10:19, 12:17, 13:3, 14: 25, 15:1, 15:23, 15:28, 16:24, 17:27-28, 18:13 25:15)

¹Quoted on page 236 of *Five Views on Apologetics* (Zondervan, 2000) as part of a critique of the presuppositional approach.