

# APOLOGETICS

## Why People Don't Seek God

### Lesson # 1

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Apologetics is the field of study that seeks to address how Christians should communicate with others, especially unbelievers. Peter, in **1 Pet. 3:15** says, “*but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.*” The phrase “*make a defense*” is a translation of the Greek word “*aplogia*” the word we get “apologetics” from. It is usually translated “defense” and describes a reasoned argument, verbal explanation, or answer given in defense of something. Christians usually do not have to defend themselves from other believers, though they have to defend themselves against false professors of Christianity. This is why apologetics is a term that is usually associated with the Christian’s need to be ready and able to give a reasoned speech, argument, or defense to those who do not know Christ or believe the doctrines of the Christian faith, specifically the gospel.

A problem frequently encountered in the field of apologetics is that many, having come to the conclusion Christians need to “*make a defense*” of what they believe, think that all that is needed is an informed, reasoned, logical argument. They assume that such an argument will persuade and convince unbelievers of the truth claims of Christianity. However, this never works. While it may work in other fields such as law, logic, or physics, it never works with Christianity. Why is this? Because when you enter into the realm of communicating the Word of God to unbelievers there is more at stake than merely information. There are spiritual truths that are not accessible to everyone. There are spiritual barriers both inside and out which get in the way of unbelievers understanding the truth. These spiritual barriers make Christian communication unique among all others.

Therefore, before reaching out to lost people, it is necessary to understand the spiritual nature, disposition, attitudes, and barriers which keep unbelievers from embracing Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. We will certainly err if we attempt to treat the gospel like any other information. Our methods for communicating the truths of the Bible must take into consideration what the Bible teaches about Christian communication and the unbeliever. If we fail to understand these things we are doomed to failure, frustration, and wasting time that could be better spent in other pursuits. In this four lesson series we will look at 1) why men don't seek God, 2) different apologetic methods, 3) the most biblical apologetic method, and 4) how to apply the biblical method to evangelism. For now, let's consider why men don't seek God.

#### I. **MAN, HIS ORIGIN, NATURE, AND FALL INTO SIN**

When God created Adam and Eve, they were perfect, without sin, without a sin nature, and untainted by the corruption of sin and the curse.

- A. **Origin of man – Gen. 2:7** Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

**B. The Constitution of Man**

1. **Gen. 1:26-27** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
  
2. Unlike the animals men were created in the image and likeness of God. Being created in God's image makes us unique and set apart from animals.
  - a. Man is a rational being.
  - b. Man has the freedom of self determination.
  - c. Man is a moral being.
  - d. Man has complex emotions.
  - e. Man is a complex social being.
  - f. Man has an immortal soul.
  - g. Man is self conscious and capable of introspection.
  - h. Man is a worshiping being.
  - i. Man has a responsibility to rule over the animals.
  - j. Man has a responsibility to rule over the earth.

C. **Rom. 2:14-15** For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

D. **I Cor. 15:39** All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish.

Some believe that people are nothing more than animals or even plants that have evolved into higher life forms. If this were true it would mean that men are no different than animals or trees. However, the Scriptures teach us that men are significantly different than animals because men are created in the image of

God, possess certain attributes of God, and they are assigned the task by God to rule over and subdue the earth.

## II. SIN, ITS DEFINITION, ORIGIN, AND ENTRANCE INTO THE HUMAN RACE

### A. Definition of Sin

1. **I Sam. 15:23** “For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. . .
2. **James 4:17** Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.
3. **I Jn. 3:4** Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.
4. **I Jn. 5:17** All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.

### B. Origin of sin

1. **Gen. 3:1** Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?” . . .
2. **Jn. 8:44** “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
3. **I Jn. 3:7-8** Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

### C. Fall of Man

1. **Gen. 3:1-14** Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?” 2 The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’ ” 4 The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! 5 “For God knows that

in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. 8 They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” 10 He said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.” 11 And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” 12 The man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.” 13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” 14 The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life;

2. **Rom. 5:12-14** Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— 13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.
3. **II Cor. 11:3** But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

#### D. The Process of Sinning

1. **James 1:14-15** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.
2. **Gen. 3:6** When the woman **saw** that the tree was good for food, and that it was a **delight to the eyes**, and that the tree was **desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate**; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.
3. **Josh. 7:20-21** So Achan answered Joshua and said, “Truly, I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: 21 when **I saw** among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, **then I coveted them** and

**took them;** and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it.”

4. **II Sam. 11:2-4** Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king’s house, and from the roof **he saw a woman bathing;** and the woman **was very beautiful in appearance.** 3 So **David sent and inquired about the woman.** And one said, “Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” 4 **David sent messengers and took her,** and when she came to him, **he lay with her;** and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.

E. **Original Sin** - is a term used to describe the sinful state in which men are born. Paul tells us that when Adam fell, the entire human race fell in him. His sin and guilt was imputed, reckoned, charged to the account of all his descendants. Therefore every person is a sinner in Adam and soon after being born begin to commit their own sins. Thus men are sinful in two primary ways, in Adam and by their own thoughts and actions.

1. **Rom. 5:12, 18** Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned, . . . 18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.
2. **I Cor. 15:21-22** For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

### III. THE SINFULNESS OF MAN

#### A. When Men Become Sinners

1. **Gen. 8:21** The Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.
2. **Psa. 51:5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

- B. **Psa. 58:3** The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth.

C. **The Degree to Which Sin Has Affected Man**

1. **Gen. 6:5** Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
2. **Jer. 17:9** “The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?”
3. **Jer. 13:23** “Surely, the hills are a deception, A tumult on the mountains. Surely in the Lord our God Is the salvation of Israel.
4. **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.
5. **Eph. 4:17-19** So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.
6. **Tit. 1:15** To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.
7. **Mk. 7:21-23** “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, 22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. 23 “All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

D. **How Sin Has Affected Man’s Attitude Towards God**

1. **Jn. 3:18-20** “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20 “For everyone who does evil hates

the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

2. **Rom. 3:9-18** What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; 11 There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; 12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one." 13 "Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep deceiving," "The poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness"; 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood, 16 Destruction and misery are in their paths, 17 And the path of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

#### E. Internal Barriers to Men Receiving the Gospel

1. **I Cor. 2:14** But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.
2. **II Cor. 4:3-4** And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
3. **Eph. 2:1-3** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.
4. What are the internal barriers which work against men understanding the truth of the gospel so as to be saved?

#### F. External Barriers to the Gospel

1. **Mt. 13:18-22** "Hear then the parable of the sower. 19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, ***the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart.*** This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. 20 "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and ***when affliction or persecution arises***

because of the word, immediately he falls away. 22 “And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and ***the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word***, and it becomes unfruitful.

2. **II Cor. 4:3-4** And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
3. **Rev. 12:9** And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.
4. What are the external barriers which work against men understanding the truth of the gospel so as to be saved?

#### IV. THE UNIVERSAL PROFILE OF MANKIND

- A. People are sinners from birth.
- B. People sin because they are sinners.
- C. People are corrupt in every part of their being, including their reasoning faculties which are described with words such as, “defiled,” “darkened,” “futile” and “suppressing the truth.”
- D. Because men are evil they never choose to do good for the glory of God. They may do good deeds in a social sense but they never do good deeds for the glory of God (**I Cor. 10:31**). In fact, they are repelled by the righteousness, holiness, and justice of God. Therefore, they don't seek God.
- E. People are spiritually dead in sin and therefore, cannot respond to spiritual things. They cannot understand the Word of God because they don't have the Holy Spirit who alone reveals spiritual truth. They reject the gospel as foolish.
- F. Satan is busy blinding people from the truth, snatching away the Word once it is sown, and working through unbelievers to persecute, tempt, and deceive men so they cannot see the truth of the gospel and be saved.
- G. It is the natural instinct of fallen humanity to choose evil, not good. Men love darkness rather than light for their deeds are evil.
- H. Unbelievers have a distorted world view because their world view doesn't include living for the glory of God according to the Word of God.