


CONTENTS

Before You Get Started	7
1 Introduction to Apologetics	15
2 Common Misconceptions	27
3 Is There a God?	37
4 Creation Apologetics	49
5 More Creation Apologetics	63
6 The General Argument for Christianity	75
7 The Reliability of the N.T.—Bibliographical Test	83
8 Historical Reliability of the N.T.—Internal & External Tests	95
9 The Resurrection of Jesus Christ	109
10 Fulfilled Prophecy	125
11 The Deity of Christ	131
12 The Closing Arguments	137
The Good Teacher Myth	138
The Quintilemma	141
Conclusions	147
Supplemental materials	149
The Disappearing Penny	151
The Eye	153
The Cell	154
Quiz One	155

DNA	157
Dog Varieties	158
Golden numbers	159
Author & Time Span	161
Author & Copies	162
Model of Herodian Jerusalem	163
Do We Have the Original N.T.?	164
Quiz Two	165
Correspondence between Pliny & the Emperor	167
Pool of Bethesda	169
Percentage of Christians—World Population	170
The Gospel Creed	171
St. Paul (I Cor. 15:3–8)	171
Quiz Three	172
Skeptic’s Letter	173
Recommended Reading	174



BEFORE YOU GET STARTED



Are you ready to help your students learn to defend their faith? There are two reasons you should consider teaching this course in your Wednesday night adult Bible study, small group Bible study, Sunday School class, or high school Bible class: 1) Christians need to be equipped in the area of apologetics; 2) This course has been developed using the “Laws of the Learner,” a set of teaching principles and methods that help teachers make lessons interesting and equipping. The lessons in this series are designed to effectively and creatively equip Christians to defend their faith.

CHRISTIANS NEED TRAINING TO DEFEND THEIR FAITH

It is becoming increasingly important in this age of pluralism and secularism for Christians to be equipped in the discipline of apologetics.

What is apologetics? Apologetics is the rational defense of one’s faith. It is giving reasons for what one believes. Christian apologetics presents evidences and rational arguments to someone who doubts the truth of Christianity or to someone who wants better reasons for believing that the Bible is true and Christianity is the

only valid religion.

Apologetics comes from the Greek word *apologia*, which means “defense.” In ancient Greece, a defendant on trial would give his *apologia* after being accused by the prosecution. In the same way, Christians give an *apologia* when the truth of Christianity is attacked by non-Christians. Apologetics needs to be distinguished from polemics, since many people tend to confuse the two. Polemics deals with attacks on biblical Christianity from within the church. Polemics happens when Christians fight erroneous doctrine that comes from people who claim to be orthodox Christians.

Polemics often relates to “secondary issues,” though not always. Apologetics defends the *major* tenets of Christian theology from attacks on the “outside.”

A believer should learn apologetics: 1) To strengthen his faith, and 2) To help him share his faith. Christians will be strengthened spiritually when they are shown that their faith is reasonable and supported by historical and scientific evidence. When a Christian is strong in faith and properly equipped, he can go out to be successful in “giving an answer to those who ask” (1 Peter 3:15). We should present evidences for Christianity to non-believers because removing intellectual obstacles may move them one step closer to the Cross (and a commitment to Christ). Apologetics gives the unbeliever sufficient reasons for accepting the gospel.

1 Peter 3:15 admonishes Christians to be always ready to give a defense to everyone who asks for a reason for the hope within them. As the church obeys the command to “equip the saints for the work of the ministry” (Ephesians 4:11, 12), she must be preparing Christians to defend the basic truths of Christianity. Preparation for the defense of the faith is

part of the church’s job to “equip the saints.” Therefore, the Sunday school teacher or Bible teacher is legitimately considered responsible to help his or her students strengthen and defend their faith.

As I said at the beginning of this Introduction, the second reason that one might consider teaching this course is that it was developed using the “Laws of the Learner.” In the following paragraphs, I will describe the book *The 7 Laws of the Learner*, and discuss the laws that were applied to the course in order to make the course effective.

THE LAWS OF THE LEARNER

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson has revolutionized the way students respond to some teachers. These are the teachers who apply the principles in his book *The 7 Laws of the Learner*.¹ These biblically-based “Laws of the Learner” enable teachers to teach for life change. The Laws not only help teachers at school and Sunday school, but also parents at home, employers at work, and pastors in the pulpit. The Laws show someone “how to teach almost anything to practically anyone.” The Laws will help the person who fully applies them become a master communicator.

The Laws of the Learner are built on the thesis that the teacher is responsible for the education of the student. If a student hasn’t learned, then the teacher hasn’t taught. A teacher is responsible because he has control over the three primary relationships that directly impact most classroom situations: his relationship to the student, the subject, and his style.²

There are three of the 7 Laws of the Learner that are most relevant to a course on apologetics. They are the “Law of Need,”

the “Law of Retention,” and the “Law of Equipping.”

THE LAW OF NEED

The “Law of Need” will enable the teacher to create a classroom environment where the students are begging to hear what the instructor has to say, where the students are disappointed when class is over, where the word “boring” is never used—because the teacher isn’t boring.

The “Law of Need” states that the teacher is responsible for “need building,” or for awakening the interest of the student. Need *meeting* is the teacher’s primary calling. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the teacher to *discover* the true needs of the students, then to *awaken* the realization of the need in the minds of the students, so that finally the teacher can *satisfy* their need.

Need building is the teacher’s main method to motivate students. The teacher must “bait the hook” if he is going to have motivated students. The “bait” will be effective in motivating students to the degree that it is felt. The teacher must touch the students’ feelings. In order to arouse the feelings of the students, helping them desire the content of the lesson, the “need building” teacher will use the seven universal motivators.

The seven motivators that will help the students “feel the need,” and thus be interested in what the teacher has to say, are: 1) A factual presentation that is shocking, totally unexpected, or presented in such a way that the listener sees the facts from a new perspective; 2) Storytelling; 3) Drama; 4) The teacher’s delivery (use of voice, eyes, hands, and body—intensity is the key); 5) Music; 6) Diagrams; 7) Pictures.³ All these motivators build the need

to the extent that they touch the emotions of the students.

THE LAW OF RETENTION

In presenting the “Law of Retention,” Wilkinson claims that minimal mastery of this law will enable a teacher to cause a student to memorize twice the material in half the time.⁴ Teachers will “speed teach” not just any facts, but the most important facts of any subject. The “Law of Retention” states that it is the responsibility of the teacher to cause the students to “master the minimum;” that is, to know and use the most important facts or concepts. The following three principles accompany the “Law of Retention”: 1) Retention of facts is effective only after they are understood; 2) retention increases as the student recognizes the content’s relevance; and 3) the teacher must focus on the most important facts, and then use regular review in order to strengthen long-term memory of these facts.⁵

This law rejects the standard procedure of teachers dumping vast amounts of content onto the students without the students knowing for sure what is most important. The law says that the teacher must be very selective in what he chooses to present. He should generally only present the most important facts. Once selecting the facts, the teacher must take the time to arrange the content in a way that is easy to memorize; then, in class, he must help the students memorize the material. The student’s time outside class should not be used for memorization but for application of what Wilkinson calls the “irreducible minimum.”

The five step method by which a teacher can help the students master the “irreducible minimum” is: *Before class*, 1) Gather the material by overviewing the subject, organizing

the subject, and finally outlining the subject. 2) Out of all the material surveyed, identify the irreducible minimum (the most important concepts to master). 3) Restructure (or package) the material in such a way that the irreducible minimum is “easy on the mind” (“mindeasy”) and thus easy to remember. *In class* 4) Help the students to memorize the “memorizable” irreducible minimum. In this step the teacher reviews the content with the students enough for the material to move from short-term memory to long-term memory. 5) Help the students “master the minimum.” In this step the students become skillful in the use of the material they memorized by applying it outside class.⁶

The five steps of the Retention method can be summarized in five words: Material, Minimum, Mindeasy, Memorize, Master.

The third step, Mindeasy, can be a challenge to the inexperienced teacher. But Wilkinson helps by listing specific ways the teacher can package the material for ease of memorization. The teacher causes the student to remember the material by using pictures, stories, the alphabet (for instance, arranging the points on the outline in an acrostic, or doing what Wilkinson does by starting each Retention step with an “M”), drama, music, graphs and charts, and/or objects and actions.⁷

THE LAW OF EQUIPPING

The “Law of Equipping” states that equipping is the responsibility of the Christian teacher. According to Ephesians 4:11–12, teachers are a gift of God to the church to help equip the saints for ministry. Teachers are not simply dispensers of information, but equipping agents. Ultimately, the teacher should reproduce himself in the skills that

he is teaching his students. It is not enough to inform or entertain students. The primary purpose of teachers is to equip.⁸

Sunday school teachers must move their focus from the lesson that was taught to the ministry done after class. Teachers must do more to train students to be effective in ministry activities.

The common practice of most teachers, employers, pastors, and parents is to instruct someone in a certain activity or skill, and then, using a lot of guilt and exhortation, attempt to motivate them to participate in the activity. This approach does not usually succeed. The “Law of Equipping” says that teachers must not skip any steps in the equipping process. Certain steps in the equipping process should be used in any place, for any teacher, with any student, and for any skill. They are universal. They work equally well for teaching someone to ride a horse or to witness. These five steps (The Equipping Method) are:

1. Instruct (*Tell* them how to do something);
2. Illustrate (*Show* them how to do something—give them a live preview);
3. Involve (Have the students participate in the process—they are doing the skill *with* you);
4. Improve (Have the students do something *on their own*, then critique);
5. Inspire (*Encourage* the students to continue to use the skill and pass it on).⁹

These laws were applied to this course on apologetics in an attempt to make the course interesting and effective in equipping Christians to defend their faith.

CONTENT OF APOLOGETICS COURSE

This course on apologetics discusses the following: the existence of God, evidence for biblical Creation and against evolution, historical reliability of the New Testament, Resurrection of Christ, prophecies of Christ, deity of Christ, and inspiration of Scripture. These topics are included because of their importance to a compelling case for Christianity. We start with the existence of God. Belief in the existence of God is foundational to other Christian beliefs. Since the belief in evolution is a popular alternative to a belief in God, we spend a couple of lessons arguing for creation and against evolution. Then we discuss the historical reliability of the New Testament. If we can demonstrate that the N.T. can be trusted historically, we can have reasonable assurance that Jesus rose from the dead and fulfilled dozens of Messianic prophecies. If the fulfillment of prophecy and the Resurrection are true, then we have confidence that Jesus is who He said He was—God in the flesh. If Jesus is God, then we can trust His testimony that the Bible is the very Word of God and that He is the only way to Heaven.

Central to this course is the following argument, which assumes belief in a divine Creator. In syllogistic form:

Is the Bible the Word of God and Jesus the Only Way to Heaven?

- Premise A: The New Testament is historically accurate; it is a basically reliable and trustworthy document.
- Premise B: We have sufficient evidence from this reliable document to

believe that Jesus rose from the dead as He predicted He would and that He fulfilled dozens of other Messianic prophecies.

- Premise C: Jesus' Resurrection and fulfillment of prophecy show that He is who He said He was: the Messiah, the Son of God—God in the flesh.
- Premise D: As the Son of God (God the Son), Jesus Christ is an infallible authority—what He says is absolutely trustworthy.
- Premise E: Jesus Christ taught that the Bible was the Word of God (Matt. 5:18, 15:4; Mark 12:36; Luke 24:44–46). He also taught that He was the only way to God (John 14:6).
- Conclusion: If Christ said it, we must believe it—the Bible is the Word of God, and Jesus is the only way to God.

Each of the above premises needs to be demonstrated to be true before we can be certain of the final conclusion. The apologetics lessons try to substantiate each of the above premises so that one comes to the conclusion that the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God and that Jesus is the only way to God.

Substantiating the above premises necessitates a discussion of the historical reliability of the New Testament, the Resurrection of Christ, fulfilled Messianic prophecies, and the deity of Christ. Each of these is not only important to our argument for Christianity, but they were also important

to the Bible writers. For instance, Luke makes it clear that the things he was writing were accurate (Luke 1:1–4). This suggests a concern for historical reliability. Paul argued that Jesus rose from the dead and fulfilled Messianic prophecies (Acts 17). John said that he wrote his gospel in order to show that Jesus was the Son of God—God the Son (John 20:31). Almost the whole first chapter of Hebrews argues against any belief which makes Christ a being inferior to God. These doctrines that were important to the Bible writers are defended in this course.

HISTORICAL RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A great deal of emphasis is placed on the historical reliability of the New Testament. Without a reliable New Testament, we have no reason to believe in the Resurrection, fulfilled prophecy, or the deity of Christ. Fortunately, there is available to us a vast amount of *objective* evidence in favor of a historically accurate New Testament. A significant portion of the course is devoted to presenting some of that evidence.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

According to I Corinthians 15, if Christ did not resurrect bodily (in time and space) from the dead, then the faith of the Christian is in vain. Christianity becomes meaningless. It is therefore important that Christians not only affirm the fact of the Resurrection, but also support their belief in the Resurrection with strong historical evidence.

What does the Resurrection prove? Jesus' predicted death and Resurrection were the sign that Jesus gave to the unbelieving Jews to

confirm that He was who He claimed to be. Historical evidence that Jesus rose from the dead will confirm our faith that Jesus was God and therefore is absolutely trustworthy in His words. For this reason we have a lengthy lesson discussing the Resurrection.

Another major reason this course discusses the Resurrection is that one of the marks of a true Christian is his affirmation of the bodily Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. No one who denies the Resurrection can become a Christian. A person must believe the gospel in order to be saved. What is the gospel? It is that Christ (the God-man) died for our sins, was buried, and was raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). Romans 10:9 says that in order for a person to be saved, he must believe in his heart that Jesus rose from the dead. The doctrine of the Resurrection is therefore crucial to Christianity and must be defended.

FULFILLED MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

The prophecies that Jesus fulfilled are discussed because they identify Jesus as the predicted Messiah. Jesus Himself appealed to those prophecies as evidence that He was the Christ. The apostles (such as Matthew and Paul) also refer to Messianic prophecies when they present their case for Jesus as the Messiah. The fulfilled prophecies not only substantiate Jesus' claim to be the Messiah, but also demonstrate that Jesus, being the Christ, was also God—since the Messiah was to be a divine Person.¹⁰

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

We defend the deity of Christ because of the crucial nature of the doctrine. Jesus said

that unless one believed that “I Am,” he would die in his sins (John 8:24). Jesus was identifying himself with Jehovah, the I AM of the Old Testament. If Jesus claims to be God, and says that we must believe this in order to be saved, then it is extremely important that we defend this doctrine.

It would be hard to overemphasize the importance of the doctrine of the deity of Christ. Only one who is both God and man could accomplish redemption. If Jesus were not God, He could not have atoned for our sins. The sacrifice for sins must have been an infinite sacrifice to be worthy to atone for the sins of the whole world against an infinite God. The only one who can save is the God-man. A person who professes to believe in Jesus while refusing to believe that He is God is believing in a “Jesus” who cannot save anyone. A person who refuses to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and God cannot be saved because one can exercise true saving faith only in a Person with the power to save.

This course also defends the deity of Christ in order to show that His words can be trusted absolutely. If we can affirm Christ’s absolute trustworthiness (since He is divine), then we have no reason to doubt His assertions that the Bible is inspired of God and that He is the only way to Heaven. This actually is part of this course’s general argument for Christianity.

INSTRUCTIONS

Make sure that you are careful to follow the instructions in the lessons. You should read through each lesson weeks before you plan to teach it to make sure you are able to get any props or materials that will help the class be more effective. The activities and visuals are part of the application of the Laws of the Learner.

You will notice text boxes scattered throughout the lessons. In these boxes, I explain how the Laws of the Learner are applied. Obviously, you will not share the content of the boxes with the students; they are for you to read in preparation. It will remind you of the importance of using the methods suggested, rather than simply presenting the material.

Each student should have a student workbook where they will take notes, fill in the blanks, and be able to follow the lessons. At the back of this book, you will find supplemental material such as quizzes, illustrations, or charts. These could simply be held up so the students can see them as you discuss them, or you may use the PowerPoint presentation of this course, which is available for download from the Answers in Genesis website at www.answersingenesis.org/go/defending-your-faith. The student workbook is also available for downloading in PDF format, or you may purchase it separately from Answers in Genesis.

Something probably needs to be said concerning the age-level of the curriculum. The material and activities should be appropriate for teens and adults. However, older adults may not feel comfortable with a few of the activities.

In Lesson Six, you are instructed to use wooden blocks to literally build a case for Christianity. These blocks are very important to the success of the course. To make the blocks, simply cut a 2x4 into six pieces of equal length (about 16 inches per piece). Then use a black marker to write the appropriate phrases on the blocks.

It would be most helpful (almost necessary if you have not recently read some good apologetics books) for you to read the book, *The Case for Christ*, by Lee Strobel, in preparation to teach this course.¹¹ You may also want to



have your students read the book as you work through the lessons. It is an excellent supplemental text. Listed at the back of this book are other apologetics resources that you may want to get as well.

PAGE FORMAT

The lessons have been designed with a two-column format. The left column is what the students will see in their notes, while the right column is for the teacher. (Please note that the words in brackets, in the left column, are to be filled in by the student and do not appear in their notes.) The sentences **in bold** are to be read to the students, as are the student notes in the left column. You will move back and forth between the columns as you teach through the lessons.

The words and phrases in ALL CAPS should be written on the marker board. Instructions to the teacher are {within

ellipticals}. The sentences enclosed in boxes tell how the Laws of the Learner are used in the lesson. These Laws-of-the-Learner boxes, as well as the illustrations, may occur in the left or right column, as space allows.

Become very familiar with the words in bold; try to make them your own, so that when you present the lesson you can come very close to the language of the text without being tied to the notes. This will mean lots of practice. It is recommended that you read the text out loud several times before presenting it in public or deciding to change or eliminate something.

If you have any questions about this course, feel free to email the author, Mark Bird, at MBird777@aol.com. After you have taught this course, please send feedback to the same email address. Feel free to offer suggestions for improvements.

NOTES

¹ Bruce Wilkinson, *The 7 Laws of the Learner*, Multnomah Press, Sisters, OR, 1992). Our endorsement of the teaching methods outlined in this book by Dr. Wilkinson does not mean that we endorse all of his teachings or other writings.

² *Ibid.*, 48–50.

³ *Ibid.*, 269–276.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 180–189.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 197–209.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 210–218.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 287.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 315–322.

¹⁰ Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 110:1.

¹¹ Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1998.