

# Apologetics for Life

## Participant's Guide

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# Session 1: The Motivation for Apologetics

## Intro

- What are the reasons to learn how to do apologetics? Why do you want to learn?
- What gets in the way of doing apologetics?
- What are most hoping to get out of this workshop?

## Apologetics Flows out of Humble Worship & Love

Read 1 Peter 3:8-17

*8 Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy brotherly love a tender heart, and a humble mind. 9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. 10 For*

*“Whoever desires to love life and see good days,  
let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit;  
11 let him turn away from evil and do good;  
let him seek peace and pursue it.  
12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,  
and his ears are open to their prayer.  
But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

*13 Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, 16 having a good conscience, so that when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.*

What does Peter say is the motivation for “always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for the reason for the hope that is in you”?

What does this mean in how a Christian is to do apologetics?

## **What gets in the way?**

A lack of love and worship of Christ comes from worship of other things.

- **Worship is connected to Love**
  - We love what we worship. We worship what we love. Whatever you love most is what you are worshipping. What you worship will tell you what you love.
  - Do **“Who or What am I Worshipping?” Exercise** – key point – works best when done in community, not just on your own personally. **(Appendix A – Page 20)**
  
- **When we Love God more, we will love others more and be motivated to tell others!**
  - Matthew 28:17-20 – *And when they saw him they worshipped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*
  
- How will you grow in worship and love of God in the next week? Month? (discuss in pairs)

## Session 2: The Practice of Apologetics – Moving Towards People

As we grow in worship and love of God, we will grow in desire for others to join us in doing so. This should lead us to move towards people. You can't give an answer to questions if people don't know you or have any idea of the hope that you have. But where do you start?

### Asking Questions, Building Relationships

- Loving people begins with asking questions, truly seeking to know them. How?
- Introduce yourself, ask people their names and write them down.
  - Neighbours: Make a simple map, write down names, on fridge
  - People at work: make list, know their names
- What are questions you could ask of neighbours, co-workers, friends to get to know them?

### *Asking Open-Ended Questions exercise (Appendix B – Page 22)*

- **Listen to Understand, not to respond Exercise.** Tell me more. Interview someone else by only asking questions or inviting them to tell you more. (2 minutes each)
- Spend Time Together
  - What could you do with each other that you would both enjoy doing?
  - Make time in your schedule to do those things.

## Importance of Prayer

- Why is prayer so important for apologetics?
  - Recognizes only Spirit of God has power to change a person's heart
  - Reminds us that we need Spirit to give strength, courage, wisdom, love for others
  - Keeps us humble before God and loving in our relationships with others
  
- Make a list of people you want to pray will come to repent and believe in Jesus.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What does praying for those people include?
  - Pray for conviction of sin, realization of need for Christ's forgiving grace
  - Pray for recognition that God exists and that He is source of life
  - Pray for recognition that life apart from God's love and grace is empty and unsatisfying
  - Pray for opportunities to build relationship
  - Pray for opportunities to share your faith
  - Pray for openness to explore Christianity
  - Pray for eyes to see Jesus, ears to hear good news, and heart to repent and believe

## Share Your Own Story

- What story do you have to share? (take a few minutes to write down your own answers)
  - What has God done in your life?
  - What difference does it make in your life that you are a Christian?
  - What is true about your identity as a Christian?
- How do you share that with others?
  - Helps to have short, concise ways to share this with others
    - Why short/concise? (ask for answers)
  - What does this look like? (Hand out **“Share your Story” - Appendix C – Page 23**)
    - Basic outline:
      - Before I became a Christian (problem)
      - How I became a Christian (crisis point / solution in Christ)
      - Since I became a Christian (how life is changing because of Jesus)
  - Tips
    - goal is to share as part of natural conversation, not a canned speech
    - key on one idea or theme: fear, acceptance, control, security, comfort, love, loss ...
    - avoid Christian jargon or “Christianese” which leaves people confused
    - try to make it specific rather than generally vague
    - emphasize how Jesus is the reason for new hope, life change and so on ...
    - you don’t have to say everything; sometimes it helps to leave room for questions
  - Multiple Stories to Share
    - Over time, you will develop a number of different stories that fit different situations

## Session 3: The Practice of Apologetics – Inviting People In

### Share Your Own Story Practice

- Share your story with a partner. Switch. Give each other positive feedback, ways to improve.

### Share the Word of God: Invite them to read Bible with you

- Getting people to read bible is key to new life! Why?
  - We are all dead in sin. Dead people don't make themselves alive. They need to realize they are dead.
    - How? Sword of Spirit – Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12
  - Word of God also brings new life by the Spirit.
    - How? Romans 1:16-17; John 20:30-31
- What do we do? Share the Word of God
  - Need a Plan? Absolutely!
    - Agree to read “with” the person. Or each person reads on their own, but you read too!
    - Have a goal and timeline to meet and discuss what has been read so far.
    - Start with gospel account(s) – John is often a good choice
    - Make it clear that any questions are welcome
  - Pray daily for the person
    - that the Spirit will use the word to convict, lead to repent and believe in Jesus
  - Give them a bible
    - don't assume people have bibles. Ask if they do and offer to give one.
    - If you don't have one to give, get one!
  - Be patient! It can take time.
    - Sometimes people need to read through things more than one or twice.
    - It is very important that the person feels safe enough to say he/she doesn't understand
  - Invite them to other settings where word of God is read, explained and discussed
    - Church Small Group
    - Discipleship Group
    - Sunday Service

## Share the Gospel

- there are many ways to share the good news of Christianity but we need to remember a key point: it is good news, so you must use words.
  - Romans 10:13-15 – *“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.”*
- How do you share this good news?
  - First, remember that Jesus has commanded us to do this and he promises to be with us. So, pray for the Spirit to give you opportunity and also the words to speak. Trust him!!
  - Here’s one way: **3 Ways to Live (Appendix D – 3 Ways to Live – page 25)**
    - Often we say only 2 ways to live: Christian or not.
      - True, but in our culture it is helpful to show the “not” has two versions to it
    - Most people in our culture think all religions are basically the same. So, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, New Age Spirituality and Christianity all same.
      - In order to share Christianity well, we need to show that what we mean by Christianity is different than what they understand it to be.
      - So, this splits “not” into two ways we live that actually are not Christianity
        - religious: “If I obey, then God will love and accept me.”
        - irreligious: “I will love and accept myself.”
    - This gospel presentation is based on Jesus’ teaching, especially from what is often called the “Parable of the Prodigal Son”, which could be retitled, the “The Two Lost Sons”
      - much of this comes from an adaptation from “The Prodigal God” by Tim Keller.
    - How long does it take when you do this with someone?
      - Brief bare bones version: a few minutes
      - longer version: about an hour or so of interactive working through it
- How do you learn to do this?
  - Use framework / outline and practice with someone and then try it out!



## Session 4: The Practice of Apologetics: How To Answer – Part 1

1 Peter 3:15 – *“but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”*

### What Are the Big Questions?

- Make a list of questions you have personally as well as questions you have heard from others. What are the big questions people have about Christianity? What objections do people have against Christianity?

Space to record questions/objections.

## What's a loving strategy in answering?

- The Importance of keeping First things, First.
  - It is good to engage with people's questions and objections. But, sometimes the best thing you can do is invite people to consider discovering who Jesus really is and then tackling the other questions.
    - i.e. Christianity rises and falls on whether Jesus really is who he claims to be, God come to earth to save people through his life, suffering, death and rising from the dead. If Jesus did rise from the dead and he is who he claims to be, then other questions are worth pursuing. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, why bother with Christianity at all.
    - Sometimes people's objections and questions are ways of avoiding Jesus. Think of this as if you are in a room with someone and there are all kinds of doors leading out of the room. You want to answer questions/objections in such a way that you are closing the doors that would allow them to exit the room and avoid Jesus. If by God's grace and power you are able and the other person is willing, your goal is to close all the other possible exit doors except the one that leads to Jesus, who is the door, the way, the truth and the life.
  
- A Strategy for how to give an answer with gentleness and respect:
  - Invest time and energy in listening and learning. Listen very carefully so you really understand the question or objection. You know this is true when you can restate their position and they agree you understand
  - Affirm something of what they said that you can agree with
    - this is not agreeing with things you don't think are true or being nice. It is affirming some aspect of what they believe that you can honestly say, "me too"
  - Ask them what reasons they have to believe that aspect you agree with them about
    - this is a step of asking them to give the reason for their belief in that idea or concept
    - your goal is to genuinely understand what basis they have for their belief
  - If they are open, offer your reason for believing in that same concept to show them a different basis for it.
    - Goal is to show them that Christianity has a better basis for their belief than their own worldview does.
  - This is helping them find Christianity plausible enough to begin or continue to investigate what Christianity is all about.

- Example: Human Rights
  - Both agree in universal human rights; both agree it is good to care for and protect the weak and those most vulnerable. We believe this even if people in other cultures or countries of the world that do not believe in it.
  - What is your basis for believing in universal human rights?
    - Materialist – we got here thru strong eat weak; some argue caring for weak helped group survive, but evidence for that is very weak. At best the reasons are still one’s own survival, not the good of the other.
      - How does that lead to human rights? There is no logical connection. Evolutionary biologists know this is true and that is what motivates some to try to find some alternative explanation for why we believe this that doesn’t contradict the fundamental belief of natural selection of strong eat the weak.
      - Atheists like Peter Singer argue there is no basis for human rights but people are to be valued according to their productive capacity to society. So, according to Singer, some animals are more valuable than newborn babies or physically and mentally disabled people.
  - What is Christian basis for believing in universal human rights?
    - Bible says human beings are made in God’s image, Genesis 1:26-27
      - This means every person, regardless of their ability, gender, age or any other difference is of equal value and worth. The concept of universal human rights comes from this Christian belief. It is the foundation for this belief and flows logically out of it.
  - Which person has most coherent basis for their belief in universal human rights?
    - If they are willing to see Christianity has a logical and coherent reason for a belief in universal human rights, much more so than what a Materialist can give as a reason, why not consider exploring Christianity further? If they see Christianity’s basis makes sense, invite them to further investigate Christianity.

For more examples of how to do this, check out Tim Keller’s lecture series at Oxford where he takes key themes such as freedom, meaning, satisfaction, identity and hope. You can find them here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRW-D5qZd8A&list=PLqdAeLCMehGEmibQ7BLKzTWRfzNYngTM5>

## **Session 5: The Practice of Apologetics: How to Answer – Part 2**

### Specific Answers to Key Questions

We will take the top one or two questions and work on how we would answer those in light of what we learned last session.

Use this space to take notes on how the leader answers questions:

## Where do I Find Answers? What do you recommend?

- Recommended Resources:
  - Rebecca McLaughlin:
    - “Confronting Christianity”
      - McLaughlin tackles 12 of the most common objections and questions with a tone and manner that exemplifies giving a defence with gentleness and respect. Here they are:
        - Aren’t we better off without religion?
        - Doesn’t Christianity crush diversity?
        - How can you say there’s only one true faith?
        - Doesn’t religion hinder morality?
        - Doesn’t religion cause violence?
        - How can you take the bible literally?
        - Hasn’t science disproved Christianity?
        - Doesn’t Christianity denigrate women?
        - Isn’t Christianity homophobic?
        - Doesn’t the bible condone slavery?
        - How could a loving God all so much suffering?
        - How could a loving God send people to hell?
    - “The Secular Creed”
      - McLaughlin presents five of the common beliefs of our increasingly secular culture and tackles each one in a way that follows the apologetic method of affirming something that she can affirm and then showing Christianity has a better basis for what can be affirmed, while also clearly showing which beliefs can not be affirmed.
      - The five common beliefs that make up “The Secular Creed” are: “Black Lives Matter”, “Love is Love”, “The Gay-Rights Movement is the New Civil-Rights Movement”, “Women’s Rights are Human Rights”, “Transgender Women are Women”.
      - Video on The Secular Creed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noM26VfBbBc>
    - “10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask (and Answer) about Christianity”
      - In a similar fashion to her other books, McLaughlin addresses key questions that teens wrestle with. She writes in a clear and accessible way, pointing teens to the truth of the gospel of Christ!
      - The Ten questions are:
        - How can I live my best life now?
        - Isn’t Christianity against diversity?
        - Can Jesus be true for you but not true for me?
        - Wan’t we just be good without God?
        - How can you believe the Bible is true?
        - Hasn’t science disproved Christianity?
        - Why can’t we just agree that love is love?
        - Who cares if you’re a boy or a girl?
        - Does God care when we hurt?
        - How can you believe in heaven and hell?

- Timothy Keller:
  - “Making Sense of God: An Invitation to the Skeptical”
    - This is a rather academic book that employs an apologetic method of addressing key topics in secular culture by entering the beliefs of non-Christians, affirming some aspect of it and then showing the plausibility of Christianity’s take on that belief.
    - Keller begins by addressing two common questions: “Isn’t religion going away? Isn’t religion based on faith and secularism on evidence?”
    - He then takes on the following topics to show Christianity is more than you think:
      - A meaning that suffering can’t take from you.
      - A satisfaction that is not based on circumstances.
      - Why can’t I be free to live as I see fit, as long as I don’t harm anyone?
      - The problem of the Self.
      - An identity that doesn’t crush you or exclude others.
      - A hope that can face anything.
      - The problem of morals.
      - A justice that does not create new oppressors.
      - Is it reasonable to believe in God?
      - Is it reasonable to believe in Christianity?
    - Keller wrote this after “Reason for God” but said it really is more of a prequel in that it lays the groundwork for why a person would even bother with Christianity.
    - You can listen to a Google talk by Keller about this book here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uIvOniW8xA&t=87s>
  - “Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism”
    - Keller wrote this in two parts: Part 1 is asking people to “doubt their doubts” and Part 2 provides the key truths of Christianity.
    - Keller employs a winsome tone in this book, inviting people to consider being open to the claims of Christianity in ways they may not have heard before.
    - Part 1 covers the following topics: exclusivity of Christianity (only one way); question of how God could be good and allow pointless evil/suffering; belief that Christianity is just a list of stifling rules; Church’s past actions or positions on slavery/crusades; loving God who sends people hell?; why do we need Christianity now that we have science?; and how can you take the bible literally.
    - Part 2 covers: evidence for God’s existence; how we can know God exists; problem of sin; difference between religion and the gospel; true story of the cross; reality of the resurrection; life of personal relationship with God.
    - If you would like to listen to Tim Keller give a summary of his book, his talk at Google is a good one to watch. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kxup3OS5ZhQ>
  - “The Prodigal God”
    - This is a masterful explanation of how Jesus’ parable often called, “The prodigal son”, is actually a parable about 2 lost sons, and elder and younger brother. This book is helpful for those who claim to be Christians and don’t really understand the gospel of grace, as well as for non-Christians who don’t see there is a distinction between a religious approach to God that says, “If I obey God; then he will love and reward me”, in contrast to a gospel approach to God that says, “God loves and accepts me proven by what Jesus has done, therefore I love and obey him.”

- This book is the basis for the gospel presentation that was covered in Session 3 and spelled out in Appendix D.
- Keller talks done at Oxford addressing key topics of Meaning, Satisfaction, Freedom, Identity, and Hope. They include Q&A times that are very helpful as well. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRW-D5qZd8A&list=PLqdAeLCMehGEmibQ7BLKzTWRFzNYngTM5>
- Podcasts
  - Tim Keller - Questioning Christianity <https://qcpodcast.gospelinlife.com/>
- John Lennox
  - “Gunning for God: Why the New Atheists Are Missing the Target”
    - Lennox is a highly educated professor who exemplifies Peter’s call to give an answer for the hope that you have with gentleness and respect. This book, as well as his debates you can watch on Youtube, show that Lennox is not about trying to win an argument but rather to win a person.
    - This book tackles the accusation of the new atheists that God is no longer necessary now that we have science that can explain everything. Lennox responds by answering the following questions which are the chapter titles of this book.
      - Are God and Faith Enemies of Reason and Science?
      - Is Religion Poisonous?
      - Is Atheism Poisonous?
      - Can We Be Good Without God?
      - Is the God of the Bible a Despot?
      - Is the Atonement Morally Repellent?
      - Are Miracles Pure Fantasy?
      - Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?
      - Final Reflections.
  - “Can Science Explain Everything”
    - This concise and accessible book is another example of how someone as smart as Lennox can be a Christian who isn’t afraid of science but also shows that science can not become the new god people serve. Here are the chapter titles from this book:
      - Can you be a scientist and believe in God?
      - How did we get here: from Newton to Hawking
      - Mythbusters 1: Religion depends on faith but science doesn’t
      - Mythbusters 2: Science depends on reason but Christianity doesn’t
      - Can we really take the Bible seriously in a scientifically literate world?
      - Miracles: a step too far?
      - Can you trust what you read?
      - How to disprove Christianity
      - The personal dimension
      - Entering the laboratory: Testing the truth of Christianity
  - One of the best ways to learn from Lennox is to listen to his public debates. Here are some:
    - Christopher Hitchens vs John Lennox – Is God Great? Debate <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OXPIUCGScY&t=5859s>
    - Richard Dawkins vs John Lennox – Has Science Buried God? Debate [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVEuQg\\_Mglw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVEuQg_Mglw)

- Richard Dawkins vs John Lennox – The God Delusion Debate  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zF5bPI92-5o>
- Peter Singer vs John Lennox – Is There a God? Debate  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoTILnpd3q8&t=2817s>
- C.S. Lewis
  - “Mere Christianity”
    - This is a classic book by the same author as “The Chronicles of Narnia”. Lewis is presenting key truths about Christianity as well as exposing false notions about it. The book is split into 4 parts:
      - Right and wrong as a clue to the meaning of the universe
      - What Christians believe
      - Christian behaviour
      - Beyond personality: or First steps in the doctrine of the Trinity
- Christopher Yuan
  - “Holy Sexuality and the Gospel”
    - Yuan became a Christian while in prison and has an amazing testimony that he often shares with people along with his parents. You can find one of those on Youtube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lW1zds3ybxQ&t=1s>
    - His book seeks to apply the truth of the gospel to a gay loved one in truth and grace. Ultimately this book is about finding your identity in Christ rather than in your sexuality or any other source of identity.
    - This book is helpful for a person struggling with same-sex attraction, for those with friends or family members who identify as gay, and for those who want to know more about what the bible says about finding our identity in Christ rather than in sex.
- Sam Allberry
  - “What God has to Say About Our Bodies”
    - Allberry provides a biblical grounding and basis for how to think about and live in our physical bodies which God created, sin has affected and Christ has redeemed. This book is very helpful in providing the foundation for the biblical truth about our bodies in such a way that it will help you think through the various cultural issues about sexuality and how we view our bodies now and into eternity.
    - The book is broken into 3 parts that mirror creation, fall and redemption.
      - Part 1: Created Bodies
        - Made in the image of God, Body and Identity, Biological Sex, Gender
      - Part 2: Broken Bodies
        - Subjected to futility, shame, dead in sin, and Jesus’ broken body
      - Part 3: Redeemed Bodies
        - Temple of the Holy Spirit, Living Sacrifice, Glorious Body like Jesus
  - “Is God Anti-Gay”
    - As someone who openly admits his struggle with same-sex attraction, Sam Allberry has written this book to address some of the most common questions and objections people have about Christianity and homosexuality.
    - Allberry structures the book in 6 main chapters. I have listed them below with a few key Christians that are addressed as part of each chapter.



- Introduction
  - Allberry shares some of his own story.
- Homosexuality and God’s Design
  - What is God’s design for sex and marriage?
- Homosexuality and the Bible
  - Isn’t same-sex partnership OK as long as it’s committed and faithful?
  - Jesus never mentioned homosexuality so how can it be wrong?
- Homosexuality and the Christian
  - Aren’t we just picking and choosing which OT laws apply?
  - Is it sinful to experience same-sex attraction?
- Homosexuality and the Church
  - Can’t Christians just agree to differ on this?
  - Isn’t the Christian view of sexuality dangerous and harmful?
- Homosexuality and the World
  - Should Christians attend gay weddings?
- Conclusion
  - What should I do if a Christian comes out to me?
- You can watch a 5 session set of videos by Sam Allberry on this same content starting with episode 1 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dtOkLQtIZc&t=106s>
- Abigail Shrier
  - “Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters”
    - Shrier is an investigative journalist who didn’t want to write this book but was compelled to do so after seeing enough of the research that she was alarmed. This book is not written by a Christian for Christians. It is a book written by someone who is sounding the alarm that irreversible damage is being done to teens and children, especially girls, and the truth of this needs to be brought to light.
    - Shrier exposes the truth of not only what is happening in gender clinics, schools, doctor's offices and amongst mental health professionals, but also what the research really is about how much damage the transgender ideology is doing physically and mentally to those who are drawn into its unfounded claims.
    - There are also many videos on Youtube that have Shrier sharing her findings. Here is one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWbxIFC0Q2o&t=1910s>
- Thaddeus Williams
  - “Confronting Injustice Without Compromising Truth”
    - Williams tackles the subject of how to biblically interact with the growing influence of the “social justice” movement. This book works to speak biblically about the need to address the injustice of our cultures, societies and world, while also not giving in to a tribalism that seeks to increasingly fracture us into warring groups.
    - The book is split into 4 parts:
      - Jehovah or Jezebel? Three Questions about Social Justice and Worship
        - How does social justice relate to nature of God? To being made in the image of God? To the temptation of worship of self, state, or social acceptance?
      - Unity or Uproar? Three Questions about Social Justice and Community
        - The danger of making group-identity more seriously than identity in Christ.
      - Sinners or Systems? Three Questions about Social Justice and Salvation

- Does the social justice vision prefer and promote division and strife and neglect the true nature of humanity as seen in history?
  - Truth or Tribes Thinking? Three Questions about Social Justice and Knowledge
    - How does the way social justice is being pursued in the broader culture get in the way of doing real justice and turn every event or experience into a social injustice, thus missing other things we need to know and see in our cultures?
- Carl R. Trueman
  - “Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution”
    - This book is a shorter version of the book that is described just below. So, if you want a more accessible and shorter version of what Trueman has to say, this is the right book for you. While it is shorter, it does cover the key concepts, just not in the same depth.
    - Trueman’s purpose in this book is to provide the background for why our culture is at its present situation, believing the things we do about ourselves. He does this because he argues that knowing how we got here will help us more accurately assess whether this is a good place for us to be, and his own conclusion is that it is not.
    - The book traces the most influential thinkers, writers, philosophers and historical leaders who have shaped the modern world as it is, fundamentally creating a worldview that is opposed to the truths of Christianity and thus leaving us fractured and falling apart.
  - “The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self”
    - As mentioned above, this book is the longer version of the book above. It is a recommend read if you want to get to the depth of the reasons for the rise and triumph of our present views and beliefs of the modern self; a self characterized by expressive individualism. Trueman argues that if you want to understand the present changes in people’s beliefs about sexuality, transgenderism, and marriage you need to look further back than the 1960s and the sexual revolution, to the centuries leading up to it to see how we ended up at this place.
    - This book has 4 parts:
      - Architecture of the Revolution
        - Describes how we have reimagined the nature of the “self” and our “culture”
      - Foundations of the Revolution
        - Trueman gives history of major figures and their influence on the change in beliefs about the self. Key figures are: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Wordsworth, Shelley, Blake, Nietzsche, Marx, and Darwin.
        - Trueman shows, relying on work by Philip Rieff, Charles Taylor, and Alasdair MacIntyre, how our present view of self sometimes called, “expressive individualism, or the “therapeutic self”, is built on that foundation.
      - Sexualization of the Revolution
        - This part begins with an in-depth look at how Sigmund Freud influenced our modern view of sex and self so that the foundation of identity has been radically changed from being found in religion, nation or family, to being found in your own desires/feelings.
        - Then along comes Wilhelm Reich who says all sex codes of society are ways to control the people, leading to a politicization of sex in order to free people from their previous views. This is a major basis of “Critical Theory” that claims everything that is wrong can be explained by power dynamics, the solution being

- to destabilize all existing power structures. “Critical Theory” shapes much of our present education system and is having a massive influence on our culture as seen in the massive changes in society’s views on sexuality.
  - Triumphs of the Revolution
    - In the final part, Trueman shows how sex has now permeated every aspect of life; how the “therapeutic self” is now thought to be the norm; and how our culture has normalized the LGBTQ+ views of sex, even though they are at odds with each other.
  - While reading this book may leave you feeling a bit hopeless, Trueman ends by saying the Christian Church would do well to respond in 3 ways: 1. learn the truth about how we got here. 2. Be the loving community the gospel says we should be. 3. present the truth of God’s design for humanity that is honest about sin but also about grace.
  - A video interview of Carl Trueman by Collin Hansen is another way to get a sense of what the book is all about. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k--M2OBrHOU>
- Lee Strobel
  - “The Case for Christ”
    - Strobel brings you on an amazing and incredibly insightful journey that he undertook in his investigation of Christianity. This books covers the following parts:
      - Examining the Record
        - Strobel walks you through the eyewitness, documentary, corroborating, scientific and rebuttal evidence for Jesus by consulting and interacting with experts in every field.
      - Analyzing Jesus
        - Strobel consults theological experts as to what Jesus believed about himself and whether Jesus met the qualifications for the claims made about himself
      - Researching the Resurrection
        - Did the resurrection really happen? Strobel examines the medical evidence, the missing body evidence, evidence of appearances of Jesus, and other circumstantial evidence that point to the resurrection.
    - Strobel concludes with what he calls, “The Verdict of History” and what it means.
  - Strobel has other similarly structured books such as “The Case for Faith” and “The Case for a Creator” which are also very helpful in examining the evidence available to all who are willing to see it.
  - Also, many of the experts Strobel consults have their own books and videos you can find and are well worth reading and watching as well.

## Who or What am I Worshipping?

**Worship is connected to Love. We love what we worship. We worship what we love.**

- Romans 1:25 says we will “worship and serve” either God or some created thing (an idol). It is not possible that we should worship nothing.
- What are the things in your life that you are tempted to worship besides God?

**Read the chart below. Do you see yourself in any of these descriptions?**

If you seek	Your greatest nightmare	People around you often feel	Your problem emotion	The Price I’m Willing to Pay
Power (Success, winning, influence, status)	Humiliation	Used	Anger	Burdened, Responsibility
Approval (Affirmation, love, relationships)	Rejection	Smothered	Cowardice	Less Independence
Comfort (Pleasure, lack of stress, freedom)	Pain / Demands	Neglected	Boredom	Reduced Productivity
Control (Self-discipline, certainty, security)	Uncertainty	Condemned	Worry	Loneliness, Spontaneity

### How to Change?

Admit you have idols that enslave you. Learn to “repent” of those idols. Learn to “rejoice” in Jesus.

#### Learn to Repent

We often think this is repentance:

“The purpose of repentance is basically to keep God happy so he will continue to bless us and answer our prayers. So, we are sorry for sin only because of its consequences. Sin will bring us punishment—and we want to avoid that, so we repent. We think that by saying sorry, we deserve to be forgiven and God owes it to us.”

But the bible shows repentance is this:

“The purpose of repentance is to admit that we are trying to avoid God by either trying to be really moral or by being immoral. So, we are sorry for sin because it offends and displeases God. Sin is making something other than God the thing that will satisfy us. Repentance is admitting that we don't deserve God's forgiveness at all and see that Jesus suffered at infinite cost in our place to earn it for us.”

#### Learn to Rejoice

What does it mean to rejoice? It means that you begin to see Jesus is more valuable than your idols.

How do you do that? Here are some examples of how you might pray so that Jesus becomes more precious to you than your idols. Which of the following four sections speaks most to you?

- “Lord, only in your presence are fullness of joy and pleasures forever more (Ps. 16:11), yet here I am trying to find comfort in something else. This thing I am tempted by is just a pleasure that will wear off so soon, while your pleasure, though it may start small, will grow on and on forever (Prov. 4:18). Please remove my idol of pleasure, which can never give me the pleasure I need.”
- “Lord, I live by your sheer grace. That means though I don’t deserve to have things go right, yet I know you are working them all out for good (Rom. 8:28), because you love me in Christ. I feel safe not because I am lucky or hard working, but because of your gracious love for me. You have counted every hair on my head (Matt. 10:30–31) and every tear down my cheeks (Ps. 56:8). You love me far more and better than anyone else loves me, or than I love myself. Please remove my idol of control, which can never give me the security I need.”
- “Lord, when I forget the gospel I become impatient and judgmental toward others. I forget that you have been infinitely patient with me. You are ‘slow to anger and rich in love’ (Ps. 145:8). When I am anything other than compassionate to people around me, I am like the unmerciful servant, who, having been forgiven an infinite debt, is unforgiving toward his fellow debtor (Matt. 18:21–35). Please remove the idol of power—the need to get my own way—which is making me unforgiving and judgmental.”
- “Lord, when I forget the gospel I become dependent on the smiles and approval of others. I feel them judge me, and when I hear all their criticism I feel like I am a failure. But you have said there is no condemnation for me now (Rom. 8:1). You delight and sing over me (Zeph. 3:14–17). Let me be satisfied with your love (Ps. 90:14). Please remove my idol of approval, which can never give me the approval I need.”

## **Putting It All Together!      Examples of Gospel Repenting and Rejoicing**

### *Judgmental Pride vs. Humble Confidence*

1. Repent
  1. Have you looked down on others, thinking, “I’m glad I’m not like him/her”?
  2. Repent of being judgmental and admit you are so sinful that Jesus had to die for you!
2. Rejoice
  1. Remember that Jesus, seeing all of your pride, still came to give his life for you out of love.
  2. Consider Jesus’ love for you so that you will grow in humble confidence, allowing you to handle other people’s criticism and even the loss of their approval, confident in his approval.

### *Anxiety vs. Courage*

1. Repent
  1. Do you stress out and worry yourself sick? Do you live in fear of losing control of your life?
  2. Repent of thinking you are capable of managing and securing your own life.
2. Rejoice
  1. Remind yourself that Jesus became completely vulnerable and gave up control to save you.
  2. Consider Jesus’ love for you so you will have courage to trust him with your security!

### *Indifference vs. Love*

1. Repent
  1. Are you cold and unkind, lacking patience with others and indifferent to those in need?
  2. Repent of being self-absorbed and lacking in love and patience for those around you.
2. Rejoice
  1. Remember that Jesus, who had every right to condemn you, lovingly sacrificed himself for you.
  2. Consider Jesus’ kindness and patience with you, until you are moved to extend grace to others.

## Learning to Ask Open-Ended Questions

One of the most common reasons conversation dies or is a struggle is because we ask closed questions that can be answered with “yes or no”.

Using “What, When, How, Where and Who” can make questions open-ended.

**Example**

Closed: Did you have a good day?

Open: What was the best part of your day? What was the most challenging part of your day?

**Exercise**

Turn the questions below into open questions and ask them out loud to another person.

Questions	Initial
1. Do you have plans for this weekend?	
2. Did you get something for your birthday?	
3. Is that what you want to do?	
4. Do you have any ideas for the project?	
5. Can I help you?	
6. Are you living out your New Year’s resolution(s)?	
7. Could someone else help you out?	
8. Do you like your job?	
9. Are you looking for something?	
10. Is this exercise driving you crazy?	

## **Share Your Story**

One way people can come to know the reason you have hope is to share the good news of Christianity with others. And a simple way to do that is to share your own story of what Jesus has done in your life.

Use the outline below to help create a brief, attractive story about how Jesus has changed or is changing your life.

### **Before I became a Christian**

or share something you struggle with in life (fear, anxiety, acceptance, control, loss)

### **How I became a Christian**

or how Jesus is the answer to that struggle

### **Since I became a Christian**

or how life is changing because of Jesus and what he has done

## Sample

Example of person who grew up thinking Christianity was about being good enough to earn God's love.

*I grew up thinking that Christianity was about being good enough to make my parents and God happy. And if I was good enough, then I would receive love and acceptance. But I began to wonder how good was good enough? And my fear of not being good enough led me to hide when I failed and messed up. After living with a growing fear of not being able to be good enough, I discovered that the real message of Christianity wasn't about how good I had to be to earn God's love, but rather God sees all my failure to be good enough and still loves and forgives me because of all that Jesus has done in his life, death and resurrection from the dead. This is freeing me to live with greater courage, no longer needing to hide because I see how loved I am. I can admit when I fail and turn to his forgiveness and love and so live with less fear and greater joy!*

## Explanation

Before ...

- describes how you were living your life and what it felt like or what it produced in your life. In this story it produced fear and led to hiding and shame.

*I grew up thinking that Christianity was about being good enough to make my parents and God happy. And if I was good enough, then I would receive love and acceptance. But I began to wonder how good was good enough? And my fear of not being good enough led me to hide when I failed and messed up.*

Solution

- describes how change came about. It points people to see what Jesus has done, speaking of love and forgiveness, even though he sees all you try to hide from others.

*After living with a growing fear of not being able to be good enough, I discovered that the real message of Christianity wasn't about how good I had to be to earn God's love, but rather God sees all my failure to be good enough and still loves and forgives me because of all that Jesus has done in his life, death and resurrection from the dead.*

Since then ...

- gives insight into how the truth of what Jesus has done is changing how you live in day to day life; less hiding, more freedom, greater courage and more joy!

*This is freeing me to live with greater courage, no longer needing to hide because I see how loved I am. I can admit when I fail and turn to his forgiveness and love and so live with less fear and greater joy!*



### 3 Ways to Live (Detailed)

*I usually write some form of this down on a piece of paper in a coffee shop or wherever I am talking with someone. What I write down is in regular print. Italics is notes of explanation for you. This is based on Keller's book, "The Prodigal God", as well as some of what he teaches in "The Gospel in Life" Study.*

#### **1 – Religion says, "If I obey, then God will love and accept me"**

*In this section you are trying to show that this view of how to relate to God is what leads people to either be proud hypocrites because they think they can obey enough, or it produces people filled with guilt/shame and fear because they realize that they can't obey enough.*

- If I think I can obey enough, what will that make me think about myself? -> Better than those who don't. Leads to Pride, judgmental - "I think I am better than them"
  - problem: closer look -> hypocrite, judgmental and no joy
- If I think I can't obey enough, what does that make me think of myself? -> Guilt / Shame and Fear
  - problem: solution seems to be "try harder" but then fail again, leads to more guilt, so "try harder" ... can spiral into spiritual depression – vicious cycle

*Often church people in the "guilt/fear" group slowly or even what seems all of sudden, leave church or fade away. Where do they go? To irreligion*

#### **2. Irreligion says, "I will love and accept myself"**

- First feeling when you go this route? Relief from guilt. Why? No longer slave to obeying rules.
- Later? Frustration with life b/c you realize you don't live up to your own standards. Sense of needing something more, unsettled, unsatisfied.

*(Remember we all live for something and anything that is not God won't satisfy ultimately and won't forgive them when they mess up and life gets messy.)*

*Got to be another way?!?! - depending on person, I might break here & pick it up in next time*

#### **3. Gospel: "God loves and accepts me proven by what Jesus has done; therefore I love God & love others."**

*- ask what is the biggest difference between #1,2, and 3? 1 & 2 depend on "I" and 3 depends on Jesus. Underlining the "I"s and Jesus can help highlight the difference.*

*This is crucial point to show that what you are describing Christianity to be is not the same as #1. This helps the religious person filled with guilt and shame because they see you are not promoting a return to what they possibly left. It also helps the religious person who may be stuck in proud hypocrisy see that there is another way. And it helps the irreligious person see that you are not only not asking them to be religious, but to see true hope is found in what Jesus has done, not in what we do.*

*If is often helpful to ask people where they find themselves in #1 or #2 at this point, pointing out that when you see #1 and #2 compared to #3 there really is a difference even if they struggle to believe in Jesus or not at this point. You are trying to help them see that what you are presenting Christianity to be is something different than what they might have grow up with or what they world has told them Christianity it all about.*

But, what did Jesus do?

1. Died for my sins. What is sin? Debt, brokenness, breaking rules, idolatry

Why did he have to die? Car Story

*Car story – suppose I borrow your car, run off the road and do \$4,000 of damage? Who should pay the autobody place? You or me? If me, that's justice. If you, that's grace. Either way, someone has to pay. In the same way, God can't ignore the damage done by sin. Someone has to pay. Either you pay, which is justice. Or Jesus pays, which is grace. Someone has to pay.*

2. He lived the perfect life, I couldn't live. Gives it to me. - 2 Cups

*2 Cups Illustration – I ask people to imagine an old-fashion weigh scale with two sides, which ever side being heavier goes down. I use two cups to represent the two sides of the scale. The one cup is the good cup, the other the bad cup. I ask how much good or bad would most people say is in their cups. I ask them what they think of their own. I ask if they know what the bible says about our cups. Truth is our good cup is empty and bad cup is full. How do we fix this? Try be good. That's the religious way to live. Other solution? Jesus empties the bad cup in our place. Suffers, dies. But then both are empty. But God requires full good cup. How does that happen? Most people say we have to fill good cup now that Jesus has emptied our bad cup. But gospel is Jesus filled good cup too by giving his perfect life. He did it all. We did none of it. All grace!*

What does this begin to do in someone who believes #3?

- Humble – start to realize I can't do it. Jesus did. He paid the price! Big price!
  - *Lack of humility usually comes from not being able to see the cost to Jesus. This should make people who are naturally living out of #1 less judgmental and proud*
- Confidence – Jesus was willing to do this! God must love me!
  - *This should help those who are naturally living out of #2 be less filled with guilt/fear b/c they realize how much God must love them based on what Jesus was willing to do*

How much of this did you do? 0%. How much did Jesus do? 100%

So why should we obey? I want to b/c I realize how much Jesus loved me in what he has done. Because of that love, I want to love him in return and follow him and his ways.

How do I start to live out of #3?

Repent and Believe! - turn from trying to be your own saviour and lord and believe in Jesus the true Saviour and Lord!

Invite to Read gospel accounts

### 3 Ways to Live (Basic outline)

1. - Religion says, "If I obey, the God will love and accept me"

- I think I can do this -> judgmental, proud - hypocrite
- I know I can't do this -> despair, hopeless, guilt / fear
  - try harder – problem: keep failing – vicious cycle
  - where does this lead? I am out of here!!!!

2. Irreligion says, "I will love and accept myself"

- relief! -why? no pressure, no more rules
- what about long term? I can't meet my own standards.
  - Guilt and fear become reality again

3. Gospel says, "God loves and accepts me proven by what Jesus has done; therefore I love God and love others."

- What the difference between 1,2, and 3? 1,2 - "I" but 3- Jesus
- What did Jesus do?
  - Died on the cross – died for my sins – Why? Why did Jesus have to die? Car Story
  - Lived the perfect life TWO CUPS
- Humble – start to realize I can't do it. Jesus did. He paid the price! Big price! Lack of humility usually comes from not being able to see the cost to Jesus.
- Confidence – Jesus was willing to do this! God must love me!

Repent and Believe

Invite them to read gospel accounts of Jesus