

# WHY DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU BELIEVE?

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## INTRODUCTION

How would you respond to the question, "Why should I believe in the God of the Bible instead of in any of the other god's of other religions? Are you able to answer that question?"

The vision of MBCC is, "Knowing Jesus more in my life and making Him known to others."

In order to make Him known to others, we need to be equipped to do so and we need to be able to answer at least the basic questions people have about Jesus, the Bible and Christianity.

## SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

### 1 Peter 3:13-16

1Pe 3:13 Who will harm you if you are devoted to doing what is good?

1Pe 3:14 But even if you should suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. "Never be afraid of their threats, and never get upset.

1Pe 3:15 Instead, exalt the Messiah" as Lord in your lives. Always be prepared to give a defense to everyone who asks you to explain the hope you have.

1Pe 3:16 But do this gently and respectfully, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak evil of your good conduct in the Messiah will be ashamed of slandering you.

### 1 Peter 3:15, AMP

But in your hearts set Christ apart [as holy—acknowledging Him, giving Him first place in your lives] as Lord. Always be ready to give a [logical] defense to anyone who asks you to account for the hope and confident assurance [elicited by faith] that is within you, yet [do it] with gentleness and respect.

In 1 Peter 3:15, Peter says two very important things here.

1. We need to set Christ apart & exalt Him in our hearts
2. Be prepared to give a defense, a reason why you are so confident (hope) in what you believe.

## 1. SET CHRIST APART IN OUR HEARTS

Peter is quoting from Isaiah 8:13.

### Isaiah 8:13, ESV

But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

### Isa 8:13, ISV

The LORD of the Heavenly Armies—he's the one you are to regard as holy. Let him be the one whom you fear, and let him be the one before whom you stand in terror!

Isaiah is encouraging and telling the people not to fear the invasion of the Assyrians, but to have God as their true fear. When persecution, trouble and attack come, fear God more than the enemy attacking you. Be faithful to God above all other things.

So, why does Peter quote Isaiah 8 here? Peter is trying to achieve the same thing that Isaiah did. He quotes Isaiah's words to tell the followers of Jesus in his day that the same principle applies to them as it did to those in Isaiah's day who were facing external threat from an enemy, the Assyrians. We need to regard the LORD as our Protector. Be afraid of him, and not of what man can do. In the midst of dangers, be not intimidated; dread not what man can do, but rely on a holy God, and flee to him with confidence. If we fear the LORD, we need not to fear anything else.

When our faith, values and belief system are confronted in this world, focus on the LORD. Peter does not want believers to be alarmed in view of the persecutions to which they might be exposed to; the trials which would be brought upon them by people. Like Isaiah, Peter says, "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." That is, "in order to keep the mind calm in trials, sanctify the Lord in your hearts; regard him as your holy God and Saviour; make him your refuge. This will help diminish all your fears, and secure you from all that you dread.

The main point is this: "Sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts and having a proper confidence in Him as a Holy and Righteous God, will deliver us from all other fear."

## **2. GIVE A REASON AND DEFENSE WHY YOU BELIEVE**

As followers of the LORD we must always be ready to give a reason and defense to everyone. When people come against us, against what we believe and the morals we uphold, how should we respond? We don't fear them and we are not troubled by what they say. How? By focussing and giving Christ the primary place in our heart. We need to anchor ourselves in Christ and then from that position, we give a defense of why we believe what we do.

### **1Pe 3:15b**

... Always be prepared to give a defense (answer) to everyone who asks you to explain the hope you have.

Are you "always" ready to give a defense and to explain to "everyone" why you believe what you believe about Christ and why it gives you hope. Are you ready to give that answer?

### **Romans 5:5**

and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

When people slander you or when they are not trusting your Christian motives to do good, to go beyond yourself to bless others, to help and not expect anything in

return, you must be able to explain to them why you do it. When they question the reasoning behind your faith and actions you must be ready and prepared to explain to them. When Christianity is slandered and when you are in an interpersonal setting where you are slandered because of your Christian life, you need to give, in gentleness, the reason for your hope.

## **APOLOGIA MEANING**

The word "defense" or "answer" in 1 Pet 3:15 is the Greek word apologia. Apologia means 'a plea', 'an answer', 'defense'. It is linked to the idea of "to give a rational or logical argument for a belief system"

This word occurs about 16-17 times in the New Testament, either in its noun or verbal form. The word is an old Greek term that has a legal connotation. Apo-logia, reasoning, getting yourself off the "charge". The world brings a "charge" against us that we are old fashioned in our beliefs, superstitious, etc. and we need to explain to them why we believe what we believe. We are defending Christianity and especially defending the hope that we have, which is Christ. We have a hope in an eternal future, not just in this life.

Very often we don't feel competent to defend the Truth or even our own Christian actions.

Have you ever encountered questions like:

- How do we know the Bible is true?
- Why is there evil and suffering?
- Why does a loving God allow people to suffer?
- What about those who never hear of Jesus?
- How can Jesus be the only way to God?
- Isn't Christianity just a psychological crutch?
- It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you're sincere.
- How can you believe in something that can't be scientifically proven?

The answers to these and other similar questions are available and they are not as complex as many Christians believe.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the idea of Apologia, a whole field of study has been developed called Apologetics.

Apologetics is all about giving a reason and proof for your beliefs and actions in Christ. Apologetics is the process of giving people the reason why our actions are justified. Why you believe what you believe. Apologetics clears away obstacles to faith! As Christians we should not only encourage people to believe in Christ, but to act on that belief.

### **1Pe 3:15b**

... Always be prepared to give a defense (answer) to everyone who asks you to explain the hope you have.

Our HOPE is an anticipation, a confident expectation with pleasure of our eternal future in Christ. Let's share this with the world!

### **Life Group Questions for Discussions**

1. Why are you or have you been hesitant to talk to people about your Hope in Jesus Christ?
2. What are some of the most difficult questions you have been asked about Jesus and the Bible?
3. What do you think are the "things" or "tools" that will give you more confidence to share your faith with people?