

WHY I BELIEVE: **THE RATIONALITY OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF**

Session I: Introduction to Apologetics



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, BUT WITH GENTLENESS AND RESPECT— I PETER 3.15

The Apologist...

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The Apologist...

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 - Is ready
 - Makes a defense (to anyone)
- Gives an account (of Christian hope)
 - Is gentle and reverent

MOTIVATIONS FOR APOLOGETICS

-
- Instructed to
 - To love God with our mind
 - Strengthens faith and conviction
 - Opportunity to share the credibility of Christianity

WHAT IS NEEDED TO DO APOLOGETICS WELL?

- Know your Bible well
- Act like a Christian: practice active listening, be humble, gentle, honest, be aware
- Take time to think through objections
- Be honest with your own questions, doubts, wrestling
- Be yourself
- Remember that people don't have an information problem but a spiritual problem

ALEX O CONNOR

"I have, to put it mildly, been looking for God. I made a career out of engaging with religious arguments. At university I visited numerous churches. I attended Bible groups. Just recently I agreed to embark on a series of study of the wisdom literature specifically, reading it *again* in the hopes that this time I might finally feel a divine presence seeping from between the lines. I moved into a house for a year with two devoutly Christian housemates with the express intention of seeing if the obvious truth of Christianity and theism that people talk about can be found in the minutiae of daily life. I have looked in other words, in a great deal of places. I have read Athanasius and Anselm. I read Augustine and Aquinas. I looked in Julian of Norwich and Catherine of Sienna.



ALEX O CONNOR

I looked at the sociological origin of religious belief in Durkheim and Marx and Freud and Jung. I looked at religious experience in William James and Rudolf Otto. I've looked in modern works of people like Ed Feser and Bill Craig and Michael Murray and Richard Swinburne and Alvin Plantinga. I have looked in poetry. I have looked in the Psalms. I have looked in Job. I have looked in Ecclesiastes. I've looked in Dostoyevsky. I've read C.S. Lewis. I've listened to worship music. I've prayed. I've studied the gospel. I even got an actual degree in theology from a university and *nothing*. Nothing. Not once, not nearly, not ever, not even briefly have I experienced anything that speaks to the existence of a God in the universe."



OUTCOMES

-
- To have your faith strengthened
 - To be aware of the arguments for and against the Christian faith
 - To be ready to give an answer

THE MORAL ARGUMENT FOR GOD

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1. Objective moral values and duties exist
 2. The best explanation of objective moral values and duties is God
 3. Therefore, God exists

1. OBJECTIVE MORAL VALUES AND DUTIES EXIST

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- Right and Wrong are universally recognized
- Our perception of moral reality
- We criticize other cultures and civilizations
 - The Roman practice of adult males having sex with underage boys
 - Hitler's extermination of the Jews
 - In 7 countries same-sex acts are punishable by beatings and death

2. THE BEST EXPLANATION OF OBJECTIVE MORAL VALUES AND DUTIES IS GOD

- Brute Fact
- Human Flourishing

2. THE BEST EXPLANATION OF OBJECTIVE MORAL VALUES AND DUTIES IS GOD

- God
 1. God accounts for the universality of moral values and duties
 2. God accounts for the standard of Right and Wrong. He is the standard
 3. God accounts for why humans feel obligated to act rightly, (even when it's against their self interest) and why we want to avoid acting wrongly
 4. God accounts for why human flourishing is an objective Good and Right thing

**THEREFORE,
GOD EXISTS**

KEY TAKE AWAYS

- All Christians are required to give a defense
- Be yourself
- Think through your own doubts and concerns
- People have a spiritual problem not an information one
- God exists because he is the best explanation for objective moral values and duties

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