

## Loving While Defending

Defending God is not necessarily the same as loving God. There is an inherent danger in practicing the skills of an apologist. The apologist can be “drawn away from love of the thing he tells, to love of the telling” (C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*). This session looks at four pertinent necessities to the Christian life that have a direct bearing on those who serve as apologists.

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Introduction: C. S. Lewis, in *The Great Divorce* warns of a danger to all of us as apologists. He writes: “every poet and musician and artist, but for the grace of God is drawn away from love of the thing he tells, to love of the telling” (Lewis, 79). “There have been men before now who got so interested in proving the existence of God that they came to care nothing for God Himself” (Lewis, 68). Those of us who think ourselves beyond this unfortunate possibility are more likely to become its victim. It is easy in the excitement and heat of battle to fall victim to Lewis’s point. Christians often tend to be people of faulty logic in this way. Here are four areas which, if managed well, can keep Christian apologists from this danger.

- I. Importance of wisdom from above
  - a. In the context of teaching and the right use of words. James 3:17 “But the wisdom from above is first pure then, peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.”
  - b. Paul: “walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person” (Col. 4:5-6).
    - i. Human wisdom is not a match for addressing the complexities and spiritual deceptions of this world.
    - ii. Read the needs of humanity from theology, not from culture.
  - c. Wisdom to resist reaching the world on the world’s terms.
    - i. Talk about what the world is not talking about or at least talk of it differently.
  - d. The focus on wisdom from above keeps the soul closer to God.

## II. The importance of reinforcing right sentiments

- a. The primary concern of Jesus with Peter is: “Do you love me?” asked three times (Jn 21:15-17).
  - i. If we are going to work for God, we must know what it is to love God.
  - ii. Doing is not necessarily loving; obedience is.
- b. Sentiments, like beliefs, need to be closely audited, as they are easily disordered in a world that is disordered.
  - i. Sentiments/affections reflect the things we love, what we think is important.
  - ii. Nothing moves us away from our first love quicker than success—we start loving the telling rather than the one of whom we are telling.
  - iii. The attraction of the world is more powerful than most realize.
- c. Controversy can corrupt proper sentiments. Schaeffer: Beware of habits learned in controversy.

## III. The importance of understanding the nature of the battle

- a. Awareness of the spiritual world.
  - i. Ephesians 6:12 “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”
  - ii. Human tools by themselves do not work well against the enemy (this includes the digital world).
  - iii. Truth trumps power.
- b. Dependence on the leading of the Holy Spirit.
  - i. Organization must not replace the Holy Spirit.

## IV. The importance of developing the mind

- a. Know the true nature of the world.
- b. Critical thinking is essential to understanding the world (Ro 12:1-2).
- b. Keep the mind properly ordered.
  - i. Sort the essential from the trivial (Phil 1:10).
- c. Critical thinking involves asking good questions, questions that get to assumptions, questions that get to the trouble in the heart (existentially thinking) or mind.
- d. Think comprehensively in terms of theology and this includes history.
  - i. Particularly the history of ideas.