



Developing An Apologetic That Works

By

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Three questions I hear often are:

1. What martial arts style do you teach?
2. What church do you attend?
3. What apologetics method do you use?

I know that when people ask those questions they are usually prepared to make a decision about me and what I do based on a judgment grounded in a presupposition. They already believe a particular martial art is the best martial art. They already believe one church denomination is the best denomination. They already believe one apologetic method is the best method. Their interest is often less about learning from me than discovering whether I can learn from them.

The question I don't hear, but wish I did, is "does it work?" Does the martial art style I teach work in real life? Does the denominational church I attend work in real life? Does the apologetics method I use work in real life?

If a martial art is fun to learn but doesn't work in a real-life physical situation, you might want to question whether it's the right self defense to study since your physical life may depend on it some day.

If a denominational church is fun to attend but doesn't work in a real-life spiritual situation, you might want to question whether it's the right denomination to attend since your spiritual life may depend on it some day.

If an apologetic method is fun to study but doesn't work in a real-life worldview situation, you might want to question whether it's the right apologetic method to use since the spiritual lives of other people may very well depend on it some day.

If you're interested in martial art styles that work, please visit our [Grace Martial Arts Blog](#). If you're interested in denominational churches that work, I would point you to a four-part series titled [A Prophet's Perspective About Preachers](#). If you're interested in developing an apologetics method that works for you, please continue reading.

A martial arts instructor can teach students how to punch, kick, trap and throw according to a particular system or style, but eventually every student will need to develop a self defense methodology that works best for them – whether it comes from Judo, Aikido, Karate, Kenpo, Kung Fu or some other system.

I believe the same is true when developing an apologetics methodology that works for Christians. While we can look at each of the main apologetics systems (e.g. Classical, Evidential, Presuppositional, Reformed, Cumulative Case) for insights into how to best “defend” Christianity, each of us needs to develop a system unique to our calling, gifts and talents.

I converted from atheism to theism (specifically Christianity) because God sent two apologists and an evangelist into my life. Each one of the three men had different gifts and talents and used different apologetic methods,

but they all had one important thing in common: they were responding to the Lord's command to make disciples.

The first apologist attacked my mocking atheism with two basic apologetic arguments:

1. Cosmological
2. Teleological

That got my attention.

The second apologist rocked my atheism with the the Moral Argument and evidences from biblical history, archaeology and philosophy.

The evangelist told me about faith and how God loved me in a real and personal way, then asked if I could think of any "reason" why I shouldn't believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. After all I had learned from the apologists during an investigation into the truth claims of Christianity, I had no more "reasons" standing between me and the God who loved me. I thanked God for loving me and sending His Son to die for my sins. I repented of my sins and asked God to forgive me, which He did. I believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and was saved (Acts 16:31).

God used the apologists to answer hundreds of questions about the existence of God, the reliability and credibility of the Bible, and the reality of the hope they had as Christians. God used the evangelist to point to my sinfulness and personal need for God's forgiveness and to pray with me to

be saved. I like to think of that as 'evangelistic apologetics' – God using apologists and evangelists together to lead people to Christ. Apologists often lead the way in laying the groundwork and destroying the arguments people have for not believing in God and the Bible as His Word to the human race.

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would “convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8) and He certainly did that in my life. Though I am extremely thankful to the three men God used to bring me to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ, I know that the One Who convicted me, cleansed me and placed me into the family of God is the Holy Spirit. I am eternally grateful to God the Father for sending God the Son to die for my sins and for God the Holy Spirit to convict me of my sins and desperate need for a Savior.

The first couple of years after I became a Christian were filled with Bible studies, church meetings, evangelism classes, reading scores of Christian books and sharing my testimony with anyone who would listen. No one told me at the time that I was developing an 'apologetic method,' but I was. I attended Bible college for several years and deepened my knowledge about God and the Bible.

In the years that followed, I talked to hundreds of people about their need for Jesus Christ. Many were atheists and agnostics, others were polytheists and pantheists. My years as an atheist and a student of Eastern philosophies helped me share with them at a deeper level because I once believed as they did and understood the meaning and intent of their words.

I learned that two of the best apologetic methods were love and compassion. I often reflected about the love I felt and compassion I experienced from the apologists and evangelist God used in my life. Many upset and angry Christians had yelled at me about my burning in hell for being an atheist, but God's love through kind, thoughtful and intelligent words were far more powerful in bringing me to faith in Christ.

So, which method of apologetics did I find worked best for me? Was it Evidential Apologetics? Classical Apologetics? Presuppositional Apologetics? Reformed Apologetics? Cumulative Case Apologetics? or something else?

What I have discovered that works best for me is the one that works. Each person we talk with about the truth claims of Christianity is a special individual, deserving of special and individual attention from me. In the weeks to come, I'll share some insights about developing an apologetics method that works best for the people God brings into your life. That's really what matters – the people you talk with about God.

Apologetics is not about winning an argument or 'bettering' an opponent. If we view unsaved people as 'opponents' to beat, we have veered away from the path our Lord has given us to follow.

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