

S E S S I O N 1

WHY I BELIEVE

RETHINKING APOLOGETICS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



TAKE IT IN

Watch Chip Ingram's video teaching and follow along with the outline provided. Jot down an exclamation point next to something that really stands out to you. Add details from the video, and underline thoughts and topics you want to learn more about.

Chip takes us on a journey that challenges us to rethink our apologetics in our rapidly changing culture—a culture that is more like the first century than the last century.

“Apologetics must start with how you live and how you treat people. We make an impact when we demonstrate that we deeply, deeply care. It’s not about a competing philosophy anymore. No one wants to hear what the Bible says or anything about Jesus until they see a life that’s attractive, that’s loving, that’s caring.”

— Chip Ingram

As we walk through this study together, it is good to know that we can trust God's Word and the Person of Christ. At the same time, let's take this opportunity to rethink our apologetics: how we explain and communicate our faith.

Rethinking Apologetics

Chip's Journey

- Apologetics: making a defense for our faith
- The apologetics approach of the past is not working in today's culture
- Dr. P's question: "I just don't understand how someone who appears to be as intellectually astute as you are could actually believe in a literal Jesus and this 'born-again' stuff and that the Bible is really God's Word."
- The desire to answer Dr. P's question birthed three convictions:
 1. I was not going to throw my brains in the trash to follow Christ.

2. I'm not going to let someone I admire intimidate me to give up my faith.
3. I made a commitment to dig in and do the research.

Rethinking Our World

- Christians are viewed as bigoted, hypocritical, irrelevant, and intolerant.
- Many believe that sharing your faith is offensive to others.
- The lifestyle of the Christian community and non-Christian community looks very similar.
- 68% of children who grew up in church abandon their faith within five years after high school.
- People under the age of 35 with no religious affiliation has grown to the highest percentage in our country's history.
- We are much more like the first century than the last century.

Rethinking Our Communication

- **YESTERDAY** apologetics were about what we believe and why. And it was aimed at answering the skeptic's questions.
- **TODAY** we need to aim apologetics first and foremost toward believers, especially young people.
- **YESTERDAY** we needed to master facts, data, and history to intellectually prove what we believe is true.
- **TODAY** we need to model a concerned and compassionate lifestyle that proves that what we actually believe is relevant.
- **YESTERDAY** we needed to win the debate.
- **TODAY** we need to win an audience.
- **YESTERDAY** we communicated on a level playing field that presumed that TRUTH was objective reality.
- **TODAY** we communicate on the shifting sands of "TRUTH" as a subjective reality.

- **YESTERDAY** the Church and the culture shared a general knowledge of the Bible.
- **TODAY** both the Church and the world are biblically illiterate.
- **YESTERDAY** committed Christian men or women were admired.
- **TODAY** committed Christian men or women have been called dangerous.
- **YESTERDAY** we could begin with the truth and then express grace.
- **TODAY** we must begin with grace in order to share the truth.
- **YESTERDAY** the moral climate and the values of major institutions like education, medicine, and the media reinforced our values.
- **TODAY** the moral climate of major institutions challenge and ridicule our faith.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia ... May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope ... to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you ... In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials.

1 Peter 1:1-4, 6 NASB

- **The early Church had a living** _____.
- **They believed they had an** _____.

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:13 NASB

- **You need to be _____ in your thinking.**

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior.

1 Peter 1:14-15 NASB

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again ... through the living and enduring word of God.

1 Peter 1:22-23 NASB

- **We need to have a faith that is rooted in _____ that leads to living a _____ life, which leads to a _____ love for others.**

Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow.

1 Peter 2:1-2 NASB

- **Get rid of all _____, get rid of _____, and stop _____.**
- **Have lips of _____ and _____.**
- **The number one apologetic is your _____.**
It's a holy life with an eternal perspective that's radically loving.

For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

1 Peter 2:20-24 NASB

To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 3:8-9 NASB

- **We are living in a day where what Christians need to be and become are first and foremost godly, loving, kind, and winsome.**

TALK IT OVER

*Work through the following questions
with a friend or your group.*

Question #1 Share with the group. What Christian influenced you by their life the most? What attracted you to become a follower of Christ?

Question #2 What does God want to do in you and in those around you as you begin to embrace this new apologetic?

Question #3 Do you agree or disagree that the apologetics of the past is not working today? Explain.

Question #4 What do you think about this statement, “Yesterday we needed to win the debate; today we need to win an audience.” Do you see this to be true in today’s culture? Give examples.

Question #5 Have you seen a shift in belief from “objective truth” to “subjective truth”? Explain. Has it changed the way you communicate your faith? How?

Question #6 Chip shared that the number one apologetic is your life. What is your life saying about your apologetics?

Question #7 What does living a holy life with an eternal perspective and radically loving others look like? Who is a person in your life that models this? What stands out to you the most about them? Why?

L I V E I T O U T

• Read and meditate on 1 Corinthians 13 (NASB)

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

- **Write down all the attributes of love (patient, kind, not proud, doesn't envy, doesn't boast, is not self-seeking, etc.).**

- **Pick one of the attributes to focus on during the week and decide how you want to put it into practice each day.**
- **Pray daily and ask God for His help.**

Dear God, help me to see what changes I need to make in my life and give me the courage to do them so that my life proclaims the love and truth of God before my mouth does. Amen.

- **Share with a friend what you have learned about apologetics and what stood out to you the most from this session.**