

Title: “The Compassion of the Apologist”

Introduction: Peter laid out the pastors’ heart and mindset of the Apologist for the common faith. The apologist is one who demonstrates compassion for the brethren and certainly for the lost, whom they are trying to win to Christ. Peter gave specific instructions not to retaliate in any way toward those in the ministry. Furthermore, one should not engage in any kind of arguing or yelling at another brother. On the contrary one should be a blessing to their brothers in the Lord. Peter further warns to that the brethren should turn the other cheek when one wrongs you. Peter made a big deal about having a right spirit, and clearly stated Christians should reject evil and do good. All this instruction is a lead up to the well-known verse on apologetics. In verse fifteen Christians are once again instructed to have a right heart, and then be ready to answer the skeptic questions they have about faith and eternity. The other aspect of this verse is to prepare oneself for questions, and in doing so anticipate whatever maybe asked. So be ready.

Propositional Question: If the apostle Peter instructs Christians to have a right heart, and prepare oneself for questions, should that be a priority to every Christian?

Text: I Peter 3:8-15 “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:”

CONTEXT:

Who: The epistle of I Peter was written by Peter.

What: Peter offered excellent instruction to prepare ones heart in order to be an apologist.

Where: The message was delivered to the Christians in local churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

When: The epistle of I Peter was written in 60 AD.

How: Peter the preacher went and taught these spiritual preparation principles for the apologist.

INTERPRETATION:

Key theme: Personal spiritual development, interpersonal Christian skills, biblical apologetic development skills.

Key words: Compassion, brethren, evil, blessing, good, eyes, Lord, righteous, followers, sanctify, ready, answer, reason, hope.

Summary of the text: The Apostle Peter gave in depth instruction to the apologist, but a vast majority of the instruction was directed at the personal, spiritual development of the apologist himself. First Peter instructed the brethren that they should have compassion towards those they are ministering to, and trying to win to Christ. The brethren were told to resist evil and not engage in yelling at other brethren or skeptics, but rather to be a blessing to them. Peter was saying that it would be carnal to engage in arguments, but would be spiritual to seek peace and to be a blessing. The key verse of this passage continues to emphasize sanctifying ones heart before one even thinks about speaking for the Lord. The second part, still emphasizing personal spiritual development, discusses being prepared to respond to the younger brethren and the skeptics. Peter wanted to make sure the brethren had prepared themselves to give accurate reasons for their faith, knowing that each apologist will be accountable to the Lord for his words.

Summary of the passage: Peter really made the case for the apologist to have a pure heart and a righteous life. A largest part of the preparation was personal development. Even when an apologist is ready to give answers for his faith, Peter charges the apologist to make sure their heart is right with God. And after the reasons are given Peter charges the apologist to have meekness and fear of the Lord.

Summary of the main verse: I Peter 3:15 “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” This verse certainly speaks of spiritual warfare but not how one might think. Peter was preparing the brethren for their own spiritual warfare. The weight of responsibility is on the apologist and the obligation to have the proper answers from Scripture.

APPLICATION:

Original audience: The brethren at Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

To myself: Work on my spiritual development, and have a right heart attitude as an apologist.

To family: Continue to have compassion for one’s family, and offer reasons for my faith.

To church: Develop a right spirit in the church, and willing to help the lost find right answers.

My job: Continue to have a good, joyful spirit with associates, and to be right with the Lord.

To society: The skeptics in this world need to see truly authentic, humble people who love God.