

Giving a Defense

1 Peter 3:15 (NKJV)

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

People do not always have a god reason for what they are doing or even what they believe.

But Peter wants these people to be able to give an answer if anyone should ask.

I remember when I was pastor in Brimfield I was talking to a man who when he had moved to the area some 16 years before had come to town on a Sunday morning and asked someone where the church was. The fella said go two blocks turn right. So he did. He told me that if that fella had told him to go two blocks and turn left, I would have been a Methodist all these years.

Another time when I worked construction a young man told me he was having his baby baptized on Sunday. To which I said why he was doing that? He replied that his parents had had him baptized as an infant, and so the reasoning went.

I would hope that if someone asked concerning you faith and practice that you would have a better answer.

But before we get started we need to go back to see why that “but” begins this verse. Remember the previous verse?

1 Peter 3:14 (NKJV)

14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.”

So we are then not to be afraid of their threats but rather we are to have an answer for those who would question our faith in the Lord Jesus.

I. First, we need the Lord in our hearts.

A. The heart is the seat of affections.

1. Whatever we value, we value it in our hearts.

2. Matthew 6:21 (NKJV)

a. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

B. Paul said that it is with the heart that one believes.

1. Romans 10:9-10 (NKJV)

a. 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

- C. That was what was required of the Ethiopian.
1. Acts 8:37 (NKJV)
 - a. 37 Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
- II. "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts," Peter says
- A. When believers sanctify Christ as Lord in their hearts, they affirm their submission to His control, instruction, and guidance. In so doing they also declare and submit to God's sovereign majesty and demonstrate that they fear only Him. John F. MacArthur Jr., 1 Peter, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 200.
 - B. The word sanctify means to set apart or to make holy.
 1. We cannot make God any more holy than He is for He is infinitely holy.
 2. This does not mean to make Christ more holy, but to treat him as holy, to set him apart above all human authority. This sense is clearly seen in the Lord's Prayer, "Hallowed be thy name." "To 'hallow' the name means, not only to reverence and honor God, but also to glorify him by obedience to his commands, and thus prepare the coming of the Kingdom. *Peter H. Davids, The First Epistle of Peter, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990)*, 131.
 3. I hear people say all the time there is a special place in my heart for them.
 4. What does that mean?
 5. It means that of all the things we set our affections on or are in love with they are high on the priority.
 - C. Well Jesus is to be at the top.
 1. Above mother or father, son or daughter, or even your mate you promised to love till death parted the two of you.
 2. Jesus said that if there is anything that we love more than Him then we are not worthy of Him.
 3. Matthew 10:37 (NKJV)
 - a. 37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.
 4. Any degree of love for Jesus will satisfy many in this life but if they are

called on to suffer for Him then their weak love will probably fail.

D. Do we submit to His control, instruction and guidance.

1. That is the only way that we know that we have sanctified Him in our hearts.

III. We need to be ready to give a defense and a reason for the hope that we have.

A. The meaning of the word defense.

1. The word “defense” is *apología* from which we get our English word apologetics.
2. Paul used this word when he made his defense before the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 22:1)
3. and when he made his defense to King Agrippa (Acts 25:16).
4. To give an *apología* means simply to give reasons or a rationale for what you believe or for what you are communicating through your lifestyle.
Paul A. Cedar and Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *James / 1 & 2 Peter / Jude*, vol. 34, The Preacher’s Commentary Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1984), 164.

B. It is not just a defense but a reason for our hope. If there is no hope then there is no reason.

C. What is the reason for our hope.

1. We know that we were once sinners but we have been reborn.
2. Our hope is centered in Jesus Christ.
3. The forgiveness of our sins.
4. That although we were once children of wrath we are now children of righteousness.
5. That although we once walked in darkness we now dwell in the light.
6. That we were once without hope but now we are heirs of promise.
7. We were on our way to hell but now on our way to heaven.
8. That once our lives revolved around only temporal things but not eternal things.
9. We were lost but the good Shepherd found us and put us on the right path.
10. We once were in quicksand but now our feet are on the solid rock.
11. Once we wondered among the tombs but now we are setting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in our right mind.

12. And also we know that we have a home in heaven, and that Jesus will one day return for us and we will ever be with Him.
 13. That is our HOPE.
- D. Are you ready to make an apology an answer for all that Jesus has done for you.
1. We have a reason for everything else.
 - a. What political party we are a part of.
 - b. Which sports team we stand behind.
 - c. Even the soft-drink that we prefer.
 2. We need to put that together, Peter says we are to be prepared.
 3. Rather than fear the unbelievers around them, Christians, out of reverence to Christ, should be prepared to respond fully to their often hostile questions about the faith. *Peter H. Davids, The First Epistle of Peter, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 131–132.*

IV. With meekness and fear or reverence.

- A. With meekness, not arrogance.
1. 1 Peter 2:23 (NKJV)
 - a. ²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;
 2. 1 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)
 - a. ⁹ not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.
 3. Many times our defense sounds like a debate in which we are trying to score points.

B. And in fear, not of man but of the one in whom we put our trust.

1. The idea is that of reverence for God.
2. Since we represent Him we must always put our best side forward.
3. Don't give His enemies further reason to blaspheme His holy name.

2 Timothy 2:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

Titus 3:1–7 (NKJV)

¹ Remind them . . . , ² to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. ³ For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. ⁴ But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.