



WHAT IS APOLOGETICS & WHY YOU SHOULD STUDY IT?

EXPLORE

Everyone has opinions on nearly every topic. And everyone has a reason for their particular viewpoint. When it comes to matters of faith, it is critically important to have good reasons rather than just blindly following.

Your Task: *First*, pick a person that you know well—a friend or family member.

Second, decide on a topic (non-faith-related). Think of something fun and simple, like sports, movies, or music.

Third, have a conversation on that topic. Ask them to try and convince you to like the team, movie, or type of music they love. Of course, assuming you disagree. For example, if your best friend prefers rap music over emo, ask them to convince you of their view.

Make notes of each reason they gave.

Did you find their reasons convincing?

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Why or why not?

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SAMPLE

Chances are if their reasons were convincing, they had some impact on you. Perhaps you decided to rewatch a movie you previously hated. Or maybe you have a newfound respect for a rival team or player. Or perhaps their reasons were terrible, and they had no impact on you at all. Either way, you were influenced by their efforts.

HERE IS THE POINT:

**GREATER REASONS GIVE GREATER CERTAINTY,
WHICH CREATES GREATER IMPACT.**



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READ ACTS 17:22-34

Think about the last time you disagreed with someone. Did you persuade that person to agree with you? Or did they convince you? Either way, you both likely gave your best shot giving the best reasons for your opinion or viewpoint. Perhaps finally, after enough convincing and even nagging, one of your friends gave you enough reason to give their argument a chance. Maybe they knew just how to explain it to you, pique your interest perhaps even get you curious enough that you wanted to watch it. Chances are the more reasons, and the better evidence they had, the more likely you were to agree with them. We can see a similar pattern with the Apostle Paul and the formation of the early church.

actually God Almighty (v. 23). We can break Paul's comments down into three reasons that there is more to this altar than they realize. First, God is the creator and sustainer of life (vv. 24-25). He is not made, nor does He live in a temple built by men. Second, He is both wholly sovereign and entirely relational (vv. 26-27). God's designed His activity in the world so that we would seek Him and come to know Him. And finally, as the pinnacle of creation, we are His children (vv. 28-29). And because we are His children, He sent Jesus as the atoning sacrifice for our sins and then resurrected Him from the dead to bring us back to a restored relationship with God.

The Apostle Paul, an academic, former persecutor of the church, a once devout Pharisee, and now the apostle to the Gentiles, understood maybe more than anyone just how to provide the best of reasons for why people ought to follow Jesus. Here in Acts 17, Paul arrives in Athens. First, he visits the local market and later the Areopagus, which is where we pick up the story.

APOLOGETICS DEFINED

Giving good reasons for what you believe

Paul's use of this obscure altar to explain what the Athenians did not know to introduce the gospel not only creates curiosity but begins to turn their hearts to Jesus. Paul had an incredible impact on these people because he gave better reasons, making what was uncertain, certain.

It was common practice in the ancient Roman world to worship gods for nearly every aspect of life. The gods governed everything from the weather, economy, health, fertility, peace, and war. The Athenians, in their uncertainty and ignorance, even had an altar to an *unknown god*, just in case something was missing. Using this altar, Paul gives the people of Athens greater reasons to follow Jesus—greater reasons to pursue what can be known rather than what is not.

While we may not be making altars to unknown gods, we can, however, draw a few parallels. No matter where you are in your spiritual journey, God has provided every available reason to believe and follow Jesus. The more we explore those reasons, the greater the certainty you will likely have. This not only creates a more firm foundation in your faith walk but also makes you more effective in sharing your faith with others. Because when you have greater certainty in your own walk you are able to have greater impact in the lives of others. Engaging in Christian apologetics means seeking out the best reasons to believe and follow Jesus and then sharing those reasons with others.

Paul lays out a simple yet very compelling argument for what the Athenians worship as something unknown is