

What to Do When Your Faith In Christ is Attacked

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." 1 Peter 3:15

- I. **Before the Battle Begins, Prepare a Good Defense!**
 - A. **Make Christ Lord of your life. (Romans 10:9-10)**
 - B. **Study the Word regularly and thoroughly. (2 Tim. 3:14-17)**
 - C. **Realize that persecution is inevitable and often provides wonderful opportunities to testify for Christ. (2 Tim. 3:10-12)**
 - D. **Study the "theology" of the opposition. (Col. 2:6-9)**
 1. **their basic arguments ie:**
 - a. **atheism (humanism is often the replacement for a belief in God)**
 - b. **agnosticism**
 - c. **pantheism**
 2. **the underlying causes of their beliefs ie.**
 - a. **laziness (theology by default)**
 - b. **misconceptions about the truth (theology by stereotype)**
 - c. **moral decadence (theology by rebellion)**
 - E. **Remember that your "attacker" is not the enemy (he is simply deceived). Satan is your enemy. (Eph. 6:12-13)**
- II. **Prepare a Strong Counter-Attack and Know When to Launch It**
 - A. **Learn quickly to discern when to fight with courage and when to retreat with dignity. (ie. to argue with a pagan professor during his class period is "askin for a lickin".) *Story about Dr. Dobson on Donahue**
 - B. **Establish Some Ground Rules With Your Opponent (if he will not agree or**

if he will not adhere to the rules once you have engaged in your debate, kindly bring the discussion to a halt.)

1. Determine if you have enough time to deal thoroughly with the spiritual issue in question (ie. How long would it take you to intelligently answer the following question: "Does your God hate homosexuals?")
 2. Determine if the opponent(s) and audience, if any, could profit from the debate. Do you think there are some open minds or would you be "casting your pearls before swine." (Matt. 7:6)
 3. Determine to love the other person no matter how he behaves toward you; it is foolish to win a battle and lose the war. (Col. 4:5&6)
 4. Ask your opponent to agree to deal with the issue(s) and not allow the conversation to become "personal" or a battle of egos. (Prov. 3:7&8)
- C. Listen carefully to your opponent as he speaks (good salesmen know that as long as the customer is still asking questions and/or voicing opposition there is still an opportunity for a sale!)
- D. Develop and use some deep, probing questions yourself. Lovingly press for answers. We can be firm and aggressive and still be loving.
- E. Develop some simple "napkin" illustrations for key Biblical truths.
- F. Listen carefully to the leading of the Holy Spirit (God still grants believers supernatural gifts of wisdom, knowledge, etc. 1 Cor. 12:4-11)
- G. Know when and how to end the discussion ie:
1. "We have had a great discussion today; could we continue this next Wednesday?"
 2. "Is there anything keeping you from receiving Jesus right now?"
- H. Pray and believe that God will use you. (If at all possible, have your believing friends pray, too!)