

“Back to Basics, Pt. 10 - Defending Our Hope”

1 Peter 3:15-17

March 12, 2023

1 Peter 3:15–17 (NAS) - ¹⁵ but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; ¹⁶ and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

I. Our Hope Questioned

- A. Two possible exchanges about hope are imagined in vs. 15:
 - 1. An unbeliever asks a Christian to *defend* their objective Christian hope.
 - 2. An unbeliever asks a Christian the reasons for their *hopefulness*.
- B. Either scenario above fits the context and exhortations of 3:15-17.

II. Our Hope Defended

- A. All believers are called to be prepared to defend their hope.
- B. That's not too difficult when someone really wants to know, but it's often tricky when the questioner is antagonistic to the Christian faith.
- C. Still, all believers should have at least one go-to defense of the faith.
- D. Our job is not to convince (see below) but to leave the other person with at least one less excuse for unbelief.

III. Our Gentle Defense

- A. The Lord is very concerned with the *manner* of our defense.
- B. Believers are called to interact *gently* with critics of the faith, not harshly or defensively.
- C. Paul's words from 2 Timothy are helpful in explaining why:

2 Timothy 2:24–26 - ²⁴ The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may

come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

IV. Our Need for Christ

- A. Thankfully, we have the death of Jesus to atone for our sins and His perfections to cover our remaining imperfections.
- B. We continue to need Him for fruitful Christian living.

***John 15:4–5** - ⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

- C. As we abide in Christ through prayer, His word, and in worship, we become people of hope who can offer a good defense.
- D. In doing so, we will increasingly become the salt of the earth and lights to the world.

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