



Defending Your Faith

Expository Apologetics

“Always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you.”

PROVIDENCE REFORMED

BAPTIST CHURCH



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- For the course of this study, we will be referencing “Expository Apologetics: Answering Objections with the Power of the Word” by Voddie Baucham.
- Chapter 3: Why Unbelief?



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- A pattern emerges as we engage in everyday expository apologetics. This is called the “Cycle of Foolishness.” (pg. 49)
- It seems that each time we answer an objection, immediately another objection is raised. It is not enough that we provided an answer, because those raising objections are not usually wanting to be proved wrong. Their goal is to sidetrack us, discredit us, or confuse us.



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- In Scripture, Proverbs 26:4-5 tells us, “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you yourself also be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.”
- Did we just find a contradiction in the Bible? Are we supposed to answer a fool, or not?
- In the first case, to answer a fool according, or after his folly, is to take his question or proposition seriously. It is to give a foolish idea credibility when it has none. To answer a fool like this makes you “like him”. It puts you on his side – it makes you just as much a fool as the fool you are answering.



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- In the second case, answering according to his folly, is to “decidedly and firmly reject” his folly. It is to give his foolishness the serious answer it deserves and in so doing to demonstrate just how foolish his foolishness is.
- Doing this prevents him from continuing in the delusion of thinking he is wise and not a fool.



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- Romans 1:18 reveals to us one of the foundational principles upon which our approach to apologetics rests.
- “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”
- “This shows us a man’s spiritual condition in relation to the truth we are trying to proclaim.” (pg. 50).
- “Our hearers do not have an information problem, they have a sin problem.” (pg. 50) And this is not a matter of ignorance, but of suppressing the truth.



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- If the problem is that a person is uninformed, then our approach is just a matter of educating, or informing him. We look for where he lacks information and fill in the blanks for him, hoping that the facts will convince him.
- However, if the true problem is a sin problem then information won't make a difference. "The answer to sin is not information, but repentance!" (pg. 50)
- The gospel reveals the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:16-17) and as we have seen, sinful men "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (vs. 18).



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- To move from unrighteousness to righteousness requires faith.
- “Therefore we should never divorce apologetics from gospel proclamation.” (pg. 51)
- If we do, “we will fail to meet our hearers greatest need, neglect the greatest tool at our disposal, and ignore the spiral of ungodly belief.” (pg. 51)



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- Men know God! God has revealed Himself to us – to all of us.
- Romans 1:19-20 – “because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, both His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- Men “are without excuse.”
- God has made the truth “evident (plain) to them” by means of general or natural revelation. It takes no effort on their part.
- “God has made it evident”- He has shown it to them. It is not hidden or a secret. It is not some great mystery to be uncovered.
- The truth has been “clearly seen” in the creation itself. It can only be missed on purpose – it is plain and so must be suppressed if it is to be ignored.
- This is a willful choice. Men want to miss it! And are therefore without excuse.



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- Romans 1:21 – “For even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened.”
- Those who suppress the knowledge of God do so by refusing to glorify, or honor Him. They also will not give thanks to Him – they will not admit Who He is and all He has done for us in His marvelous creation.
- As a result of this purposeful behavior and attitudes, they become fools, literally, “morons.” They think they are so wise, but they aren’t.



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- “People who claim to be wise apart from God are not just acting foolishly in the moment; they are demonstrating the lifestyle and worldview they have adopted, and the impact thereof.” (pg. 52).
- What sounds wise to the fool is foolish to the wise.
- Knowing that we are dealing with fools does not give us license to look down on them or despise them. But we must recognize that they are blind and cannot help it on their own.



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- Men exchange the glory of God for idols. Romans 1:22-23 – “Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image...”
- “We become what we worship” (pg. 54).
- We are made in God’s image, created to reflect His glory. Idolatry perverts the reflection.



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- Romans 1:24-25 – “Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”
- Exchanging the worship of the true God for idols leads directly to being ruled by the lust of our fallen flesh as God turns one over to their sin.



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- At the end of this spiral into sin, men lose their minds. God gives them up to a debased mind. Debased means “unfit.” They can’t think straight – they are not in their right minds (Eph. 4:17-19).
- They know God’s law and willfully violate it.
- Knowing the truth about their futile thinking and foolishness, we must not be intimidated by those who seem, to men, to be wise. Their true need is the gospel. It is salvation! They need to be born again. So even if they have questions that need to be answered, their greatest and most urgent need is to hear the gospel.



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- When we drive the conversation toward the gospel, many people will be offended by that, even irritated and angry. That's ok. Remember, “The Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.” (John 3:19).
- They hate Jesus. They will hate those who love and obey Jesus. See John 15:18-19.
- So how do we approach apologetics knowing these things?



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- Believe no one who calls himself an atheist.
- Remind people of what they already know: 1) There is a God, 2) people know there is truth, 3) people know there is right and wrong (“that’s not fair”), 4) people know they are not righteous (“nobody is perfect”), 5) people know judgment is necessary, and 6) people know they need a Savior.
- Refuse to make the fool God’s judge. Do we appeal to the mind of man, or the Word of God? Who/What is the final authority?



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- Don't try to cure unrighteousness with information.
- We should answer honest questions, but remember to take that answer and find a gospel application.
- We should keep things simple. The gospel is simple!
- Always find a way to get to the gospel.



Lesson 3 – Unrighteousness and Unbelief

- Next week: Lesson 4 – Answers to Everyday Questions.