

**The
character
of a
contender:**

**Mentoring
faithful
spiritual
warriors**



Yes

Why don't you believe in God?



**I don't believe in silly
magic**

So who created the universe?



It came from nothing



**How many Christians see themselves in
their daily lives as contenders?**

**How many pastors see themselves as
spiritual warriors?**

**1 Peter 3:15, urges Christians
to be faithful spiritual warriors.
It also describes the character of us
as contenders for the faith –**

**Always being prepared to make a defense
to anyone who asks you for a reason
for the hope that is in you;
yet do it with gentleness and respect.**

To make a defense = ‘apologia’

8 times *apologia* is used as a noun,

3 of them deal with the defence of the gospel
(Phlp 1:7; Phlp1:16; 1 Pt 3:15),

1 is used to describe a congregation defending
itself (2 Cor 7:11),

4 describe Paul's defence of himself
(Ac 22:1; Ac 25:16; 1 Cor 9:3; 2 Tm 4:16).

**The focus of apologetics, accordingly, is to give a
reasoned response to the attacks of opponents;
as well as to answer the probing questions
of those who wonder about the gospel
and aspects thereof.**

Without using the term '*apologia*', other passages in Scripture also describe the apologetic task the Bible asks of Christians. According to these passages the task of **apologetics can be described as defending and contending**, for example:

demolishing arguments (2 Cor 10:5),
contending for the faith (Jude 3),

refuting those who oppose sound doctrine (Tt 1:9)
and use 'gentle instruction' (2 Tm 2:25).

Many pastors prefer to be good news teachers and pastoral comforters!

But those who we mentor must know that Christians are called by the living God to be contenders for the faith.

2 Cor. 5:11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.

But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.

The importance of persuade & conscience in the light of our fear of God

...

my conscience is captive to the Word of God.

...

*to go against conscience
is neither right nor safe*

Unless

I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason

*I do not accept the authority
of popes and councils,*

for they have contradicted each other –

my conscience is captive to the Word of God.

I cannot and will not recant anything

*for to go against conscience
is neither right nor safe.*

1 Peter 3:15

**Always being prepared to make a defense
to anyone who asks you for a reason
for the hope that is in you;
yet do it with gentleness and respect.**

To make a defense = 'apologia'
is a well thought through explanation
and rebuttal.

**Mentoring our students are necessary.
They must hear and see you doing it,
as Jesus's disciples did**

And the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, “There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. 2 The rich man had very many flocks and herds, 3 but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. 4 Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man’s lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”

5 Then David's anger was greatly kindled
against the man, and he said to Nathan,
"As the Lord lives, the man who has done this
deserves to die,
6 and he shall restore the lamb fourfold,
because he did this thing,
and because he had no pity."

7 Nathan said to David, "You are the man! .

John 8

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

2 Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. 3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, 4 they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?”

6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, though He did not hear.

7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.”

8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last.

And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

Acts 17

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

2 And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.”

4 And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.¹⁴

16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.

17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. 18 Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbler wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. 19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus.

22 So Paul, standing in the midst of the
Areopagus, said:

“Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way
you are very religious.

23 For as I passed along and observed the
objects of your worship,

I found also an altar with this inscription:

‘To the unknown god.’

What therefore you worship as unknown,
this I proclaim to you.

24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. 26 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, 28 for “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we are indeed his offspring.”

29 Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.

30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,

31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this." 33 So Paul went out from their midst. 34 But some men joined him and believed.

Romans 12 emphasises the importance
to support Christians not to

*be conformed to this world, but be
transformed by the renewal of your mind,
that by testing you may discern what is the
will of God, what is good and acceptable
and perfect. (v. 2)*

The main elements of Christians ready to
contend for the faith can be described as:

Contenders – With a conscience that encourage them and with insight in the reason for their hope, they are preparing themselves to answer and react to worldly views.

Action – Defend and commend – diligent, reasonable, effective and gentle.

Content – The Christian faith (or aspects thereof that are in debate).

Goal – Upholding Christianity as true and renewal of minds.

Context – To understand what answer (apologia) should be given, the people, place and reasoning should be kept in mind.

Matthew 5:11-16

11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

The last verse of **Matthew 4**:

“25 And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan”.

And the first verses of **Matthew 5**:

“When Jesus saw the crowd, he went up the mountain. After he had sat down, his disciples came to him, and he taught them, saying,”

Blessed are those who are persecuted for
righteousness' sake...

Blessed are you when others revile you and
persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against
you falsely on my account.

God the Holy Spirit leads us, as new people, that
seek Him and His will,
to make our lights shine in such a way that our Lord
may be glorified thereby.

Let it always be our approach at our Bible Colleges
to know Him in Whom we believe,

Let us train our students in what we believe and
why we believe it, grounded in His inspired Word,
as well as how we can communicate this to others
in such a way that it impacts our own lives,
impacts others,
as well as the society in which we find ourselves.

May God help us to do so.

