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EXPOSITORY  
APOLOGETICS

Answering Objections  
with the  
Power of the Word

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VODDIE BAUCHAM JR.

“Voddie Baucham’s book is both scriptural and fresh, aware of biblical principles, cultural trends, and human nature. I especially appreciate Baucham’s expository approach, by which he brings God’s Word into every apologetic conversation. I recommend it as an excellent introduction to apologetics as it needs to be practiced today.”

**John M. Frame**, J. D. Trimble Chair of Systematic Theology and Philosophy, Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando

“I am a fan of any book that takes apologetics out of the tower and puts it in the pew. Baucham does a wonderful job of just that. His pastoral style and sensitivity stand out as he takes a method of apologetics straight from the Scriptures and lays out how everyone can defend the faith with confidence.”

**C. Michael Patton**, Founder, President, and fellow, The Credo House, Edmond, Oklahoma

“Voddie Baucham’s expository approach to apologetics reminds us of the power of God’s Word for responding to objections to the Christian faith. This book hits all the right notes and guides the reader to think biblically, confessionally, and theologically when engaging with those who reject Christianity. Baucham’s book will encourage the church to engage unbelief from the perspective of Scripture, rather than from a lesser perspective.”

**K. Scott Oliphint**, Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology, Westminster Theological Seminary; author, *Covenantal Apologetics*

“Any biblical apologetic must rely on the Bible itself for its content and its force. Expositing the Bible in clear and cogent theological categories is essential for apologetics. By learning and applying the truths of this book, Christians can become better prepared to give a defense of the hope that is within them.”

**Douglas Groothuis**, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Apologetics and Ethics Master’s Degree, Denver Seminary; author, *Christian Apologetics*



## Expository Apologetics

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# EXPOSITORY APOLOGETICS

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VODDIE BAUCHAM JR.

*Expository Apologetics: Answering Objections with the Power of the Word*

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To David Shiflet  
My friend, brother, and colaborer  
for the sake of the gospel  
and the man who encouraged me  
to write this book



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# Introduction

Several years ago, a dear friend and brother came to me with a proposal that would change the trajectory of my ministry. We were working together in a leadership/elder training program in our local church. I was teaching a section on preaching, and he asked me a simple question, “Have you ever thought about formalizing the process you use to do that thing you do in your preaching?” He was curious as to whether (1) I was doing it on purpose, (2) I had a process I used to do it, and (3) it was something that could be taught to others.

Of course, that question led to a number of discussions about “that thing I do.” They centered around a tendency I had to argue with myself during sermons. I would make a point, then immediately say something like, “I know what you’re thinking . . .” I would then express common objections to the proposition I had just made, then proceed to answer those objections.

People would come up to me and say things like, “That was exactly what I was thinking,” or, “I had a discussion with someone the other day and that is *exactly* what he said.” People referred to this as “relevance” or “insightfulness” in my messages and interactions. However, David Shiflet saw something else. He saw a consistent application of a set of techniques that shaped the way I dealt with certain issues. Eventually, I gave that *thing* a name. I called it *expository apologetics*. *Expository* because it was based in my commitment to expository preaching. *Apologetics* because it was essentially about answering objections.

Of course, as I explored, I discovered that this process did not originate with me. The more I listened and evaluated what was going on, the more familiar it sounded. When our pulpit ministry turned its attention to preaching through Romans, I found the source of my method. I was

doing nothing more than imitating Paul's common practice in Romans. I had gravitated to it because of my own background and experience, and it had become second nature. However, what I was doing in my sermons was definitely not new.

Having grown up in a non-Christian home and come to the gospel late, I am accustomed to looking at Scripture through the lens of a skeptic. While I am grateful that my children are growing up surrounded by and saturated with the gospel, I see the unique perspective God gave me as a result of my experience, and am grateful that he has used it to shape my understanding and approach. Had I not been an "outsider," I probably would have looked at Paul's use of the questions of his interlocutors and moved on. However, having walked in the shoes of those who asked those pointed questions, I could not shake Paul's approach. I was drawn to it. I imbibed it!

This book is an attempt to introduce a new way of thinking about apologetics, which is actually not new at all. At its core, it is a practical expression of presuppositional apologetics. However, instead of discussing the various approaches to apologetics, or the broader issues associated most commonly with apologetics, this book is about the *nature* and *practice* of apologetics.

The goal here is not to advance a new set of arguments for the existence of God, or to tackle the question of evil and suffering, or to debate origins. The goal here is to introduce an approach to apologetics that is accessible and effective. The audience is everyone who claims faith in Christ through the power of the gospel.

Despite popular opinion, apologetics is not a discipline for elite Christians. Nor is the practice of apologetics limited to formal debate. Apologetics is as practical as anything in the Christian life. Every believer is required and expected to be an apologist (1 Pet. 3:15). As such, every believer is required and expected to think and prepare like an apologist. Of course, if apologetics is the highly philosophical, formal process we have come to expect, this sounds like an impossible task for most Christians. However, if apologetics is as simple as knowing what we believe and why we believe it, and being able to communicate that to others in a humble, winsome, biblical manner, that's a horse of a different color!

It is this latter definition to which this book is devoted. Thank God for apologists who can stand up at Harvard, Stanford, or Oxford and debate leading scientists on the origin of man and the Genesis account. It is a blessing to have men like James White who can stand toe-to-toe with leading Islamic scholars and debate the intricate nuances of the New Testament with references to the original languages, textual variants, and manuscript counts, all while referring to the Qur'an in the original Arabic and distinguishing between auras written in Mecca and those written in Medina. However, the majority of Christians will never have the capacity or the opportunity to do any of this. And if our definition of apologetics does not encompass more than this, most Christians will think it's not for them, it's for the "experts."

But once we understand apologetics to be an essential part of the Christian life and experience, and see those formal debaters as no more than Christians who are using their particular training to apply the basic principles to a different context, then we can see ourselves rightly and engage at whatever level we are able. That is the heart of expository apologetics! Not only *can* you be an apologist; you *must* be! Once you understand that, your understanding and approach change. Then comes the question, "Where do I start?" That's where this book comes in.

We begin by defining apologetics and placing it in its biblical and theological context. This includes a discussion of Peter's foundational teaching in 1 Peter 3 and Paul's teaching in Romans. The focus then shifts to the practical application of apologetics, including the importance of creeds, catechisms, and confessions as tools for preparation, the interactive "expository apologetics waltz" as a model for individual interaction, and the application of expository apologetics to preaching, teaching, and disciple making. We conclude with an example of an expository apologetic sermon.



# What Is Expository Apologetics?

In the fall of 1987, I met a man whom God would use to change my life. Steve Morgan was a Campus Crusade staffer. It was my first year of college, and my first year as a starter on the football team. Not many true freshmen play, let alone start in their first game in Division 1 college football. This was a big deal. It was such a big deal that everyone knew my name, including Steve Morgan. However, while the rest of the campus was abuzz because of my prowess on the field, Steve had other ideas.

Steve had heard that I was a Christian. This was welcome news to a young man committed to spreading the gospel on a college campus. One day he simply walked into the locker room and introduced himself. I reciprocated, and a relationship that would span decades was born. However, Steve had been misinformed. I wasn't a Christian. In fact, I didn't know much at all about Christianity. So his encounter with me was not at all what Steve expected.

I was raised in South Central Los Angeles at a time when drugs, gangs, and violence were common fare. My mother was a single parent. She gave birth to me shortly after her eighteenth birthday. She and my father married, because that's what you did in 1969. However, their marriage lasted only a couple of years. From then on it was just the two us. And no, my mother didn't raise me in church. She was a Buddhist.

Steve figured out very quickly that he wasn't talking to a fellow

believer. And like the soul-winner he was and is, immediately he turned the conversation to the gospel. But he figured out that his “four spiritual laws” approach was not going to be effective with someone with my spiritual background. So the Wisconsin native and Green Bay Packers fan did his best Vince Lombardi imitation. Steve held up his Bible and, mimicking Vince’s famous “Men, this is a football” line, said, “Voddie, *this* is a Bible.” From that day on we spent weeks examining the claims of Christ.

In this process, I would ask questions, and Steve would answer them. If he didn’t have an answer, he got back to me. About two weeks into this process, however, he began to show me how to find the answers myself. I have often said that I was trained in apologetics before I was even converted. But converted I was! Friday, November 13, 1987. Steve was coming to meet me, but he was late. While I sat waiting, I realized I didn’t have any more questions. I also realized that God was at work in my heart. I lay down on the floor in the locker room, and, in my own simplistic way, I repented of my sin and placed my faith in Christ. Steve came in and we rejoiced together.

However, I also mourned that day. As we sat there together, I wept. All I could think about was a cousin with whom I had grown up in Los Angeles. Jarmal was like the brother I never had. Steve slapped me on the back and said, “Let’s go call him.” I looked at him through tear-stained eyes and replied, “I can’t. He was killed in a drug deal in Oakland last year. I watched him being lowered into the ground about six months before the start of my freshman year.”

Steve did two things that day that I will always appreciate and never forget. First, he did not try to come up with a mystical explanation that would assuage my pain by assuring me of Jarmal’s place in heaven. Second, he turned my focus from the pain of my sudden realization to the hope I had yet to realize. He said, very simply, “What about other people you need to call?” I then reached out to everyone I knew and told them about my new-found faith. I simply started with the Bible and the claims of Christ. I gave answers where I could, and when I didn’t have answers, I searched until I found them.

Thus was born my passion for souls and my penchant for apologetics. From that day to this, I remain grateful to Steve Morgan and com-

mitted to doing for others what he did for me: introducing them to Jesus Christ through bearing with them patiently and passionately, believing that the Lord will use the gospel to save his people (Rom. 1:16). Make no mistake: I am committed to apologetics as a consequence of my commitment to evangelism. This is not about winning arguments; it's about winning souls. My desire is that Christ might have the fullness of the reward for which he died.

If legitimate objections are standing between someone and his embrace of Christ, I want to address those objections and point him to Christ. In fact, when I encounter such objections, I assume that God has placed me in that conversation by his providence in order to give an answer for the hope that is in me (1 Pet. 3:15). I do not see my presence in a person's life as a tool of condemnation, "for God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17).

Nor is this understanding contradicted by my belief in predestination. As Loraine Boettner contends:

The objection that the doctrine of Predestination discourages all motives to exertion, is based on the fallacy that the ends are determined without reference to the means. It is not merely a few isolated events here and there that have been foreordained, but the whole chain of events, with all of their inter-relations and connections. All of parts form a unit in the Divine plan. If the means should fail, so would the ends. If God has purposed that a man shall reap, He has also purposed that he shall sow. If God has ordained a man to be saved, He has also ordained that he shall hear the Gospel, and that he shall believe and repent. As well might the farmer refuse to till the soil according to the laws disclosed by the light of nature and experience until he had first learned what was the secret purpose of God to be executed in His providence in regard to the fruitfulness of the coming season, as for any one to refuse to work in the moral and spiritual realms because he does not know what fruitage God may bring from his labor. We find, however, that the fruitage is commonly bestowed where the preliminary work has been faithfully performed. If we engage in the Lord's service and make diligent use of the means which He has prescribed, we have the great

encouragement of knowing that it is by these very means that He has determined to accomplish His great work.<sup>1</sup>

The use of means, then, is completely consistent with the belief in sovereign predestination. Let no one embrace the lie of hyper-Calvinism and neglect his duty to preach the gospel: “For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Cor. 9:16). To that end, let us examine apologetics from the understanding that it is to aid gospel proclamation.

## DEFINING EXPOSITORY APOLOGETICS

In its simplest form, apologetics is knowing what we believe and why we believe it, and being able to communicate that to others effectively (Titus 1:9; 1 Pet. 3:15; Jude 1–4). Expository apologetics is merely the application of the principles of biblical exposition to the art and science of apologetics. It is based on the inerrancy, infallibility, sufficiency, and authority of the Bible. This approach to apologetics is not based on acquiring the latest knowledge in fields like astronomy, geology, physics, psychology, or comparative religion. This approach is based on the believer’s need to have a firm grasp on basic truths and a willingness to share those truths when and where opportunities arise. Our view is always toward gospel proclamation.

In its simplest form, expository apologetics is about three things. First, it is about being biblical. We answer objections with the power of the Word. Second, it is about being easy to remember. If we can’t remember this simplicity, we won’t use it in our everyday encounters. Third, it is about being conversational. We must be able to share truth in a manner that is natural, reasonable, and winsome.

I’m not talking about preparing to defeat Christopher Hitchens in a formal debate. The goal here is to be able to answer him or anyone else in the normal flow of everyday conversation as you share your faith in a natural way. This is about freeing you up to do what every believer is called, commanded, and expected to do in the process of living out the Christian life. There are “things most surely believed among us” (Luke 1:1), and we ought to be prepared to defend them.

The picture of apologetics as formal debate is what often keeps “normal” Christians from pursuing the subject. We think, “That kind of debate is not consistent with my personality, nor with my gifting/training, therefore, I must not be called to apologetics.” Consequently, we not only take a pass on apologetics; we feel completely justified in doing so. All the while, a biblical mandate is staring us in the face.

Expository apologetics takes into account the fact that the gospel, by its very nature, is limited and limiting. It is limited because we are operating from a closed canon. No new truths are being revealed. It is limiting because the objections that must be answered cannot exceed the propositions being put forth. Thus, there are a limited number of objections. Additionally, the objections to the gospel are not new. In fact, there was much more opposition to the gospel in the early days of the church, when the truths being proclaimed were new and radical, than there are now after two millennia have passed and those objections have been asked and answered again and again.

If there are a limited number of objections to the gospel message, and these objections have been answered by biblical authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, then their answers will certainly be more effective and authoritative than any we could devise on our own (Prov. 30:5; 2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:20–21). Moreover, it is incumbent upon us to present these arguments in a clear, concise manner while paying close attention to the historical, grammatical, and contextual issues surrounding the biblical texts (2 Tim. 2:15). This, in essence, is expository apologetics.

## DEFINING APOLOGETICS

Cornelius Van Til defined apologetics as “the vindication of the Christian philosophy of life against the various forms of the non-Christian philosophy of life.”<sup>22</sup> This will serve as the philosophical baseline for our approach to expository apologetics. When we preach or teach, when we witness to a stranger, or when we are making disciples in our home or church, it is important to keep this definition in mind. We stand before people who have been bombarded every day of their lives by philosophies of life that contradict Christianity. When they open their Bibles, they are rarely aware of how many presuppositions they bring to the

encounter, let alone how contradictory they are. They need someone willing to vindicate a Christian philosophy of life.

This is not the same as vindicating ourselves, or our own opinions (Rom. 12:19–21). The object of this vindication is God’s truth. Nor is our approach to this vindication left to chance. An examination of the principal apologetics texts in the New Testament reveals at least three forms this vindication should take. We will take them in order of magnitude from the least confrontational to the most.

### **Vindication through Answering Objections**

The least confrontational/aggressive form of vindication is answering objections. People may have objections to the Christian faith for a variety of reasons. Some have never heard the message. Others have never understood it. Still others have had experiences that seem to contradict it. Regardless of why these objections exist, the fact is, they present us with an opportunity to provide an answer. This is the message of 1 Peter: “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, 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” (1 Pet. 3:15).

I’ll say much more about this in chapter 9. For now, it is enough to note that we have clear biblical evidence and examples of this first kind of vindication of the Christian faith. All believers are called to engage in this practice.

### **Vindication through Wrestling with Error**

The second way we are called upon to vindicate the Christian philosophy of life against the various forms of the non-Christian philosophy of life is by wrestling with error.

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation,

ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” (Jude 1–4)

This wrestling can take many forms.

First, we must wrestle with our own contradictions and inconsistencies. We are frail, fragile, sinful people. And we live in a fallen, evil world that opposes our God, his Christ, and his gospel. Thus, between our own fallenness and the falseness of the world around us, there are innumerable areas where our thinking is compromised. It is naive to think that we have it all figured out. Therefore, we “destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete” (2 Cor. 10:5–6). We do this, at least in part, through refusing to be “conformed to this world, but [by being] 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” (Rom. 12:2).

Second, we must wrestle with contradictions that come to us directly. Have you ever met one of those heresy hunters? You know, those people who ask you theological questions not because they desire to learn or to engage in thoughtful Christian dialogue, but because they’re checking to see where your “flaws” are? Unfortunately, I have run into far too many people like that.

I remember a pastor’s conference I spoke at a few years back. I remember it so well because I was as sick as a dog. It was one of those trips where I arrived at the hotel, asked for some medicine, then told the host not to bother calling me for dinner. The next day, things were no better. Nevertheless, I preached my guts out. I love preaching, but I love preaching to preachers most. It is both a blessing and an honor. And this time in particular, God was extremely kind to me. Pastors were approaching me to tell me how encouraged they were, and to compliment my keen insights and applications. Then it happened!

I was lying under a table waiting to preach the final time. That’s right: I was so sick I couldn’t stand and sing. I found a book table in the back of the room that I could lie under and asked someone to alert me just before it was time for me to preach. Just then a thoughtful pastor

came by and asked if he could pray for me. “Absolutely!” I said as I closed my eyes and came up to my knees. When he finished praying, he leaned over and said, “I don’t think I’ve ever heard finer preaching, or seen better handling of the Word. I just can’t believe you would use a modern translation and not the ‘authorized version.’” This type of “heresy hunting” is a perfect example of the kinds of contradictions with which we must be prepared to wrestle.

Third, we must wrestle with the contradictions that we know to be common among those whom we are responsible to teach. This is as true for the parent as it is for the pastor. Whenever God places us in a teaching position, part of our responsibility is to root out contradictions in the lives of our hearers. If I am aware of ideas contrary to the truth of God’s Word that are plaguing and corrupting the thinking of those who sit under my teaching, it is only natural for me to address it, and to do so in a normal, natural, scriptural way.

Paul writes of the elder: “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9).

## THE NEED FOR APOLOGETICS

Apologetics has waxed and waned in terms of its popularity among Christians in America. At times there has been more emphasis on mercy ministry, social outreach, or church growth. At other times evangelism and apologetics take center stage. Currently, we are in the midst of a surge in the popularity and practice of apologetics. More and more, Christians are beginning to recognize the need. Apologetics is necessary today because of issues such as biblical illiteracy, postmodern/post-Christian thinking, open opposition to biblical truth, and the growing presence of opposing religions.

### **Biblical Illiteracy**

One foundational reason why we need apologetics is the basic biblical illiteracy we find in both the culture at large and in the church. People simply do not know what the Bible says. People don’t read the Bible anymore. As a result, some of the most basic tenets of Christianity, ones

that once would have been known and assumed to be true by most Americans, are today considered obscure and suspect.

Almost no one knows the Ten Commandments anymore, let alone believes that they are relevant. And catechesis is a foreign concept even to the most committed Christians. As a result, our culture is no longer filled with people who grew up steeped in these basic ideas. Today, not even those who attended church as children have heard foundational biblical truths. Consequently, we cannot assume anything. We must be prepared to defend the most basic claims and ideas of our faith.

### **Postmodern/Post-Christian Thinking**

The belief that truth is relative directly opposes the concept of apologetics. I learned this the hard way when I was a student at Oxford. I was finishing one doctoral program in the United States while simultaneously starting another doctoral program in the United Kingdom. My first week at Oxford, I was introduced to my primary instructor, Dr. M. When he learned that I was an American working on an apologetics-oriented dissertation back in the United States, he immediately set out to chart a course for me that included reading and writing on the subjects of inclusivism and pluralism. It was a very trying time.

I came face-to-face with postmodernism in its most powerful form. Here I was in the third oldest and arguably most respected university on planet Earth, and everywhere I turned truth was being denied, ambiguity affirmed, and certainty vilified. I had to learn very quickly how to hold my own and defend my faith among academic elites. I also learned that academic elites were just making slightly more sophisticated attempts at the same arguments with which I was familiar. In the end, I used the power of the Word to shape my arguments and forced others to acknowledge their lack of authoritative support.

### **Open Opposition to Biblical Truth**

Another issue giving rise to the resurgence of apologetics is the open opposition to biblical truth prevalent in Western society. Gone are the days when the truths of the Bible were assumed and men held accountable to them. Today, Christianity is seen as a threat to freedom, or even

a pathological condition. Schools accept the “theory” of evolution, but view the idea of creation as a dangerous myth. Judges see the biblical view of sodomy as a hate crime. In fact, Child Protective Services has at times listed regular church attendance as one of the hallmarks of abusive parenting.<sup>3</sup>

In this landscape, Christians must have a ready answer for those who believe that we are not just wrong—we are evil. Expository apologetics can be a powerful tool in the midst of such opposition. I am not proposing that the ideas outlined in this book will necessarily shut the mouths of our detractors. That is the job of the Holy Spirit. However, we can most certainly expose their hypocrisy and point them to the truth using the powerful, active, two-edged sword at our disposal.

### **Opposing Religions**

The contemporary idea of religious freedom is a modern invention. People today believe that the Pilgrims had Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus in mind when they crossed the ocean to be free to worship God. However, a cursory glance at history dispels that myth. For example, both the Mayflower Compact and the Charter of New England make it very clear that the freedom early American settlers sought was not the freedom of syncretism or pluralism, but the freedom to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ:

We according to our princely Inclination, favouring much their worthy Disposition, in Hope thereby to advance the in Largement of Christian Religion, to the Glory of God Almighty . . . <sup>4</sup>

These days are long gone. Today Christian exclusivity is numbered among the greatest evils in the land. It’s wicked and un-American! How ironic.

### **THREE AUDIENCES OF EXPOSITORY APOLOGETICS**

So who is this book for? Which Christians need to be concerned about expository apologetics? This is a question that drives me crazy! When I entered the publishing world, I learned very quickly that “you can’t write for everybody . . . you have to pick an audience.” Well, this book literally *is* for everybody. Why? Because apologetics is for everybody.

Because apologetics is for everybody, this book is for everyone. But I realize that I cannot write specific applications for every Christian in every conceivable situation. As such, I have had to narrow my focus a bit. I have done so by identifying three main audiences with whom readers of this book might interact.

The first audience is the heathen. This is the person who is both ignorant of and antagonistic toward the gospel. This audience requires an evangelist. The second audience is the churchgoer. This is a person who, whether converted or unconverted, is sitting under the regular preaching and teaching of the Word. This audience requires a preacher/teacher. The final audience is the disciple. This person is brand new to the things of God. This is the child being raised in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4), or the new convert unlearning and relearning everything he thinks he knows.

### **The Evangelist as Expository Apologist**

The evangelist is the most obvious audience of this book. He is confident, energetic, engaging, and active in bringing the gospel to bear in conversations with non-Christians. For the evangelist, expository apologetics is an invaluable tool. He must be equipped and prepared to confront ideas that stand opposed to the Christian world and life view.

Much of this book is targeted toward the evangelist. That is because whether we are evangelists, preachers/teachers, or disciples, our goal is the same. As expository apologists, we point people to Christ and call them to repent and believe. We are constantly showing people how foolish and dangerous it is to trust in anything but Christ. At bottom, the expository apologist is an evangelist.

However, here we are talking about evangelism in the truest, most comprehensive sense of the word. The kind of evangelism envisioned in the Great Commission:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matt. 28:18–20)

Evangelism is more than merely convincing people of the rightness of Christianity or getting them to walk an aisle and pray a prayer. Evangelism is about making disciples—calling people away from the kingdom of man and into the kingdom of God. This kind of transfer of allegiance is at the heart of expository apologetics.

For the evangelist, the most important aspects of expository apologetics are (1) why unbelief exists (see chap. 3) and (2) knowing how to turn any conversation into an expository apologetic opportunity (see chap. 7). Ironically, while the evangelist is the most obvious candidate for expository apologetics, he is not the candidate most likely to use it on the most consistent basis.

### **The Preacher/Teacher as Expository Apologist**

While the evangelist is the most obvious audience of this book, the preacher/teacher is the reason I wrote it. For years people have commented on the uniqueness of my preaching. Most people simply offer kind words of thanks. Others, however, have put their finger on what it is they see as distinct. One man put it best when he said, “It is as though you see the text as an outsider.”

What he was trying to say is that I have a tendency not to assume things where others most likely would. I often argue with myself during a sermon, taking on the persona of someone who disagrees with what I’m saying and then answering the objection. I think psychologists have a name for that, and psychiatrists have a drug for it. However, I have managed to avoid treatment long enough to figure out what I’ve been doing all these years and to give it the name *expository apologetics*.

What follows here is an attempt to help other teachers do the same. I want to encourage them to look at a text and ask, “What questions does this text raise?” or “What doctrine am I expounding, and what objections are common?” and, “What would a person hostile to the gospel be thinking if they heard me say this?” These are just a few of the questions that can turn any sermon or lesson into an exercise in expository apologetics.

Nor is this to say that everything we do should be geared toward the unbeliever. In fact, I am not talking about the unbeliever at all here. Unlike the evangelist, the pastor/teacher is, for the most part, dealing with

Christians. However, Christians have areas of unbelief and doubt. They live in a world that is constantly challenging their thinking both overtly and covertly. They watch television, go to school, read magazines and newspapers, surf the Internet, and interact daily with people and things that influence their thinking. They need to be reminded constantly of the apostle's admonition: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:1).

Doing this requires constant vigilance. The pastor/teacher must always be ready and able to "give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9). He must be on guard, "for the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths" (2 Tim. 4:3–4). Expository apologetics is a bulwark against the tendency to forget how hard it is to believe in the face of constant opposition.

For the pastor/teacher, the most important elements of expository apologetics are (1) finding and teaching expository apologetic texts and (2) turning any text into an expository apologetic opportunity.

### **The Discipler as Expository Apologist**

Interestingly, the one least likely to be considered an apologist is the one most likely to engage in expository apologetics. Neither the evangelist nor the pastor/teacher will have a fraction of the expository apologetic encounters the discipler will. The discipler is a parent raising children or the more mature believer taking a new believer by the hand and introducing him or her to the fundamental truths of the Christian faith.

Think about it: apologetics is about knowing what we believe and why we believe it, and being able to communicate that to others in a clear, cogent, winsome manner. It's all about answering questions posed by skeptics. What are our children? Some of them are people who do not believe. They are ignorant. They are curious. They ask questions. Lots and lots of questions, all the time. And we need to be ready and able to answer those questions. Hence, expository apologetics!

As parents we have a tremendous opportunity to shape the faith of our children. We can either do that well or we can do it poorly, but we

will do it. View this book as a guide to help you map out a right way—not *the* right way, but at least *a* right way. For the discipler, expository apologetics is a means of following the apostle’s admonition: “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

There are millions of Christian parents who have gone before you, and they have provided paths on which to tread. They used mysterious tools called catechism, formative discipline, Christian education, and family worship. I have written about all of these. However, I have yet to spend a great deal of time on catechism. I intend to change that here. I believe catechism is the best apologetics training tool we have at our disposal. Please note that I did not say “the best training tool *for children*.” I believe it’s the best tool, period.

This incredible duty to prepare the next generation to hold and defend the truth we confess has long been the goal of Christian parents. In fact, in the preface to the Second London Baptist Confession, the authors make this point quite clear:

And verily there is one spring and cause of the decay of Religion in our day, which we cannot but touch upon, and earnestly urge a redresse of; and that is the neglect of the worship of God in Families, by those to whom the charge and conduct of them is committed. May not the grosse ignorance, and instability of many; with the prophaneness of others, be justly charged upon their Parents and Masters; who have not trained them up in the way wherein they ought to walk when they were young? but have neglected those frequent and solemn commands which the Lord hath laid upon them so to catechize, and instruct them, that their tender years might be seasoned with the knowledge of the truth of God as revealed in the Scriptures; and also by their own omission of Prayer, and other duties of Religion in their families, together with the ill example of their loose conversation, have inured them first to a neglect, and then contempt of all Piety and Religion? We know this will not excuse the blindness, or wickedness of any; but certainly it will fall heavy upon those that have thus been the occasion thereof; they indeed dye in their sins; but will not their blood be required of those under whose care they were, who yet permitted them to go on

without warning, yea led them into the paths of destruction? And will not the diligence of Christians with respect to the discharge of these duties, in ages past, rise up in judgment against, and condemn many of those who would be esteemed such now?

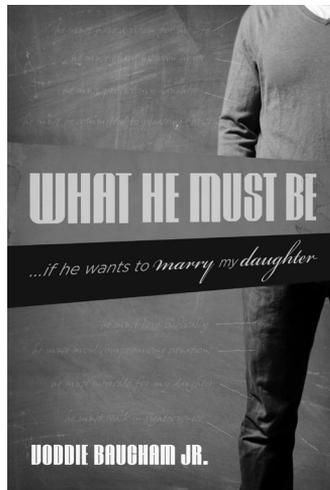
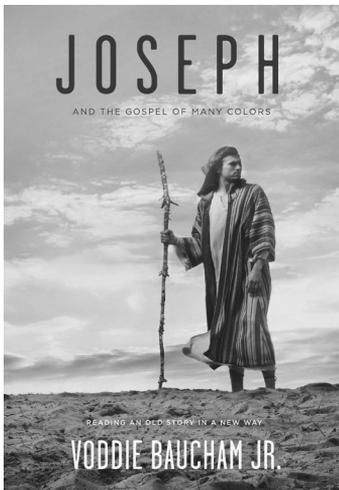
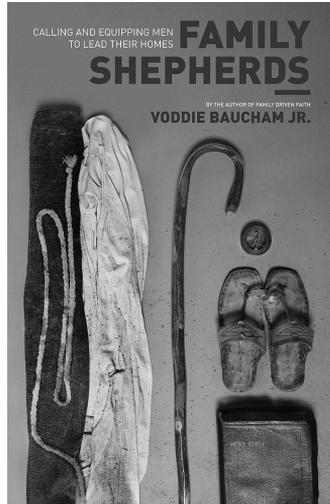
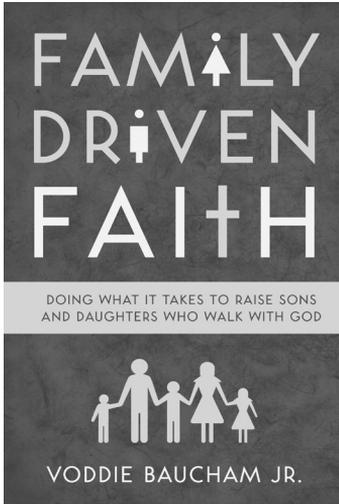
Our responsibility as parents is to teach our children those things most surely believed among us. And as we do that, we must do it with a view toward equipping them to always be “prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks [them] for a reason for the hope that is in [them]” (1 Pet. 3:15). This is the goal of expository apologetics.

But what about disciplers who are working with people who are not their children? What about the person working with new converts or those who are not quite converted? The answer is simple: treat them like children! In other words, adult new believers also need their questions answered. And they need systematic roadmaps laid out before them. This is the same thing we do as we disciple our children. Thus, expository apologetics has much to offer the nonparent discipler.

For the discipler, the most important elements of expository apologetics are (1) the role of the law in expository apologetics (chap. 7) and (2) using catechism as an expository apologetics training tool (chap. 5).



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