

## What Personal Evangelism Looks Like: Defend your faith, from 1 Peter 3 and Colossians 4

Something to think about before we begin:

What would you say to “anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you”? Have you ever **really** thought about this? Have you prayerfully **prepared** some type of a response to this question or similar ones? How difficult do you think a response to a question like this would be for you? Is there anything you think you could do to make responding easier?

### **1 Peter 3:13-17**

I believe that many of us know fairly well – and perhaps can even quote from memory! – Peter’s exhortation about “being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you”, in verse 15. But as you read this fuller text, what is the context under which Peter is writing? [look carefully at verses 13, 14, 16, and 17]

These words from the apostle are an **exhortation**. Biblical exhortations really serve a double function: to **comfort** (the word comes from the same root as the word Jesus used in calling the Holy Spirit the “Comforter” in John 14:16 and context) and to **urge to action** (this is the way Peter uses it in 1 Peter 5:3, for example). For the following questions, consider Peter’s words of exhortation *in the light of Personal Evangelism*:

“Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?” [1 Peter 3:13]

- In the face of the possibility of “harm”, what is the proper response? [cp Rom 12:21; do you believe that in this country at this time personal “harm” is a reality as we share the gospel?]

“But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed.” [1 Peter 3:14, 17]

- If you knew ahead of time that teaching someone the truth would get you “persecuted” (lose your job, lose your friend/loved one, suffer ridicule, or worse!), would you find a way to teach them anyway? [cp Php 1:29; Matt 5:10-12; do you believe that our culture’s avoidance of anything uncomfortable (“persecution”, or *perceived* persecution?) robs us of blessings?]

“Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy...” [1 Peter 3:14-15]

- In the face of real fear, what does Peter say is the proper response? (note that Peter sets the two parts of this phrase as contrasts: not **this**, but **that**) [cp Daniel 3:13-18]

"...always being prepared to make a defense..." [1 Peter 3:15]

- In practical terms, how might we "prepare" a "defense" (argument) of our hope and faith?

"...yet do it with gentleness and respect..." [1 Peter 3:15; cp 2 Tim 2:24-26; Matt 5:10-12, 43-48]

- In what ways might we be tempted **not** to respond gently and respectfully to those we are seeking to reach? In practical terms, what might we do to fight such a temptation?

"...having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame." [1 Peter 3:16; cp Paul's "defense" in Acts 23:1]

- Besides that it is the right thing to do, what is part of the practical value of living a life "in good conscience" before the Lord? [cp the concept of "blameless" used in 1 Tim 3:2, 7 and Titus 1:6]

### **Colossians 4:2-6**

Though the apostle Paul was **literally** in prison **because of** the things he was teaching, what was his prayerful request of the Colossian saints? [Colossians 4:2-4]

What did Paul urge the Colossians (and us, by application) to do with regard to "outsiders" (i.e. unbelievers)? [Colossians 4:5]

- In practical terms, how did Paul further **qualify** what he meant by "walk(ing) in wisdom toward outsiders"? [Colossians 4:6] How might we grow in our ability to do this well?

**May God help us to be willing to SUFFER for the sake of the gospel and those WHO NEED it!!**