



The Equip Institute
First Baptist Church Baldwin
APOL101 – Basics of Christian Apologetics

INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course equips church members to answer real questions from real people with biblical clarity and Christlike posture. We will define apologetics from Scripture, survey key “tools” Christians have used in defending the faith, and practice responding to common objections in ways that honor Christ and rely on the Holy Spirit.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Define apologetics biblically and explain why it belongs to the whole church.
2. Recognize major apologetic approaches (methods/tools) and when each may be helpful.
3. Identify worldview assumptions underneath common objections (“What’s really being asked?”).
4. Respond with gentleness and respect—without compromising truth.
5. Write thoughtful, loving responses to objections (including suffering/evil) that are faithful to Scripture and centered on Christ.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Jones, Timothy Paul. *Why Should I Trust the Bible?* Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2020.
- Jones, Timothy Paul, editor. *Understanding Christian Apologetics*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2025.

OPTIONAL TEXTS

- Lewis, C.S. *The Problem of Pain*. New York: HarperOne, 2015.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly Reading + Reflection (most weeks)

- Complete assigned reading
 - *Rationale:* The readings give us shared vocabulary and a common foundation so that our class time can focus on discussion and practice—not just information transfer. Apologetics is learned over time, and steady reading keeps us anchored in Scripture, clarity, and the gospel.
- ½–1 page reflection answering classroom prompts (typed preferred; handwritten acceptable)
 - *Rationale:* Most weeks you will write a short reflection on questions given at the end of class. This is intentionally brief so it's sustainable for busy people, but still forces you to (a) process what you heard, (b) put it into your own words, and (c) begin applying it to real conversations. The aim is not polished writing; it's honest thinking and spiritual formation.

Apologetics Response Papers (2 times)

- Week 6: Apologetics Response (1–2 pages)
 - Respond to one provided objection using the response structure from class.
- Week 8: Final Response (1–2 pages) — Theodicy & Sovereignty
 - Respond with grace and truth biblically to a suffering/evil prompt, showing God's sovereignty clearly while preserving God's holiness and human responsibility, and keeping Christ central.
- *Rationale:* Later in the course you will write two longer responses to real objections. This is where we move from “I understand the concept” to “I can actually respond with clarity and gentleness.” These papers train you to (a) identify what's really being asked, (b) answer biblically without evasiveness, (c) keep the gospel central, and (d) communicate with a tone that honors Christ. The final response in theodicy is included because suffering and evil are among the most common and emotionally charged questions Christians face, and the church needs language that upholds God's sovereignty while preserving God's holiness and human responsibility.

Submission

Best case: email your work to equip@fbcbaldwin.com before class so I can read ahead and help you more personally.



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Week	Topic	Classroom	Reading	Assignments
1	Introduction	Definition, biblical foundation, overview of methods, and our heart posture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read UCA: Introduction • Read WSTB: Chap 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • ½-1 page reflection
2	Worldviews	Worldviews, “my truth,” moralistic therapeutic deism, presuppositions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read UCA: Presuppositional Apologetics • Read WSTB: Chapter 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • ½-1 page reflection
3	Can I Trust the Bible?	Reliability, canon, evidential & confessional apologetics, Constantine myths.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read UCA: Evidential Apologetics • Read WSTB: Chapter 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • ½-1 page reflection
4	Jesus and The Resurrection	The resurrection and the credibility of Jesus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read UCA: Ecclesial Apologetics • Read WSTB: Chapter 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • ½-1 page reflection
5	Gospel vs Moralism	“I’m a good person” vs the gospel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read UCA: Classical Apologetics • Read WSTB: Chapter 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • ½-1 page reflection
6	Science vs Religion	Common science objections and how to respond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read UCA: Cultural Apologetics • Read WSTB: Appendix 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Apologetics response (1-2 pages)
7	Theodicy Part 1	God, evil, suffering, and our posture.		
8	Theodicy Part 2	Continued...		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologetics response (1-2 pages)

Reading Codes:

- UCA - Jones, Timothy Paul, editor. [Understanding Christian Apologetics](#). Peabody: Hendrickson, 2025.
- WSTB - Jones, Timothy Paul. [Why Should I Trust the Bible?](#) Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2020.

Big Idea:

Apologetics is not a hobby; it is the church's Spirit-empowered defense of our hope in Christ, using God's Word and God's world. We all do it already—we just want to do it more biblically, clearly, and lovingly.

My Questions Coming Into This Class

What questions or doubts about Christianity am I bringing with me?

What questions have I heard from friends, family, coworkers, or online?

What Is Apologetics?**Key Text:** 1 Peter 3:15

“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,”

Working Definition (Dr. Timothy Paul Jones):

“The church's reverent, reasonable, and humble defense through Spirit-empowered words and lives of the hope that we have in the risen Christ, as this hope has been revealed in God's word and God's world.”

Notes on this definition:

- **The church's... defense** (not just professors or YouTubers)

- **Reverent** (apologetics as worship)

- **Reasonable** (using the minds God gave us)

- **Humble** (knowledge that doesn't puff up)

- **Spirit-empowered words and lives**

- **Hope in the risen Christ** (Jesus at the center)

- **God's Word and God's world** (Scripture + creation, history, experience)

In my own words, **apologetics** is:

Biblical Foundations for Apologetics

1 Peter 3:15 – Set apart Christ as Lord

What does this verse say about:

- Our heart posture?
- Our preparedness?
- Our tone?

Jude 3 – Contend for the faith

“[He] appeals to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”

What does it mean to “contend for the faith” without being quarrelsome?

2 Corinthians 10:5 – Taking thoughts captive

“We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,”

What kinds of “arguments” and “opinions” do we face today?

Acts 17 – Paul reasons and persuades

How does Paul’s approach differ between:

- The synagogue (Jews, Scripture)
- The Areopagus (Greeks, poets, creation, history)

What does this teach me about paying attention to the person in front of me?

Why Do Apologetics in the Local Church?

Reasons we're doing this here at FBC Baldwin:

- Our people are hearing objections all week (podcasts, TikTok, coworkers).
- Doubts don't disappear by ignoring them.
- Parents and grandparents need help discipling kids and teens.
- Evangelism and apologetics go together.

Notes / personal reflections:

Where do I feel the most tension when it comes to apologetics?

(Arguing online, talking with a friend, staying quietly faithful, something else?)

Four Major Apologetic Methods (“Tools in the Toolbox”)

You don't have to become an expert in all of these, but it helps to recognize the "tools."

1. Classical Apologetics – Starting with God's existence

(Geisler, Sproul, Kreeft)

- Uses reason, philosophy, and nature.
- Arguments from cause, design, and moral law.

Notes / examples:

2. Evidential Apologetics – Facts and evidence

(Montgomery, Habermas, McDowell)

- Historical evidence, manuscripts, archaeology, miracles, fulfilled prophecy.
- “Let’s treat the Gospels like other ancient sources.”

Notes / examples:

3. Presuppositional Apologetics – Challenging foundations

(Van Til, Bahnsen, Oliphint)

- Asks: “On your worldview, can you even make sense of logic, morality, meaning?”
- Points out how non-Christian views borrow from Christian assumptions.

Notes / examples:

4. Cultural Apologetics – Showing the gospel as true, good, and beautiful

(Keller, Watkin)

- Engages stories, values, and longings in a culture.
- Asks: “Does the Christian story make emotional and imaginative sense of life?”

Notes / examples:

Which method feels most natural to me right now? Why?

Lab: Real Objections & Which Tools Might Help?

Write down **3–5 real objections** you've heard (family, coworkers, media, etc.):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

For each one, which method (or mix) might be a helpful starting point?
(Classical, Evidential, Presuppositional, Cultural)

1. Method(s): _____
2. Method(s): _____
3. Method(s): _____
4. Method(s): _____
5. Method(s): _____

Any patterns you notice?

Additional Notes:

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This Week's Reading & Reflection

Reading for Week 2:

- *Understanding Christian Apologetics* – Introduction
- *Why Should I Trust the Bible?* – Chapter 1

Homework (½–1 page, to bring next week or email to equip@fbcbaldwin.com):

In your own words, answer:

1. **What is my biggest fear about doing apologetics?**
2. **What is my biggest hope for this class?**

One Takeaway & One Prayer

One thing God impressed on me tonight:

One way I want to pray as I learn apologetics:

What Is Apologetics?

Scripture, Methods, and Posture

Big Idea

Apologetics is not a hobby; it is the church's Spirit-empowered defense of our hope in Christ, using God's Word and God's world.

We all do it already—we just want to do it more biblically, clearly, and lovingly.



Welcome to Apologetics

WELCOME / AIM

Real questions, real people:

- your brother-in-law at Thanksgiving
- your kids in the car
- your coworker on break
- your neighbor in the driveway

Not an internet debate class.

Learn to answer biblically, clearly, and lovingly.

Rely on the Spirit — apologetics is more than words.



Welcome to Apologetics

NOT "I'M SORRY."

“...in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make an ἀπολογία to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”

1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)

ἀπολογία (apologia) = a defense / a reasoned reply (like in a courtroom).



Quick Table Icebreaker

3-4 MINUTES

1

What is one question or objection you've actually heard from someone in your life?

2

What is one question or doubt you've wrestled with personally?

Share briefly at your table, then we'll take a few call-outs.



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Reverent

Apologetics is an act of worship: honor Christ as Lord.



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Only the Spirit opens blind eyes and changes hearts.



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Hope in the risen Christ

The center is always Jesus—crucified and risen.

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God’s Word and God’s world

We answer from Scripture and from the world God made.

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Biblical Foundations



SCRIPTURE SHAPES OUR POSTURE

1 Peter 3:15

Start with worship.

Honor Christ as Lord.

Be prepared to give a reason.

Do it with gentleness and respect.

Jude 3

Contend for the faith.

Defend what was once-for-all delivered to the saints.

2 Corinthians 10:5

Take thoughts captive.

Answer ideas with truth in order to obey Christ.

Acts 17

Different starting points.

Scripture with Jews;
creation/history with Gentiles.
Same gospel.

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Why Apologetics?

WHY WE'RE DOING THIS HERE

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- Doubts don't disappear by ignoring them.
- Parents & grandparents need help answering kids' questions.
- Evangelism and apologetics go together.

Apologetic Methods



TOOLS IN THE TOOLBOX

Classical

Start with God's existence (reason, philosophy, nature).

Evidential

Start with facts: history, resurrection evidence, manuscripts.

Presuppositional

Question the foundations: what assumptions make logic/morality possible?

Cultural

focuses on what a culture finds believable, attractive, and meaningful.

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REAL OBJECTIONS & TOOLS

Step 1 — List objections (3–5)

Write down 3–5 real questions you've actually heard.

Examples:

- “The Bible was written by men.”
- “I’m a good person.”
- “If God is good, why evil?”

Step 2 — Match a tool

For each objection, choose a helpful starting point:

- Classical
- Evidential
- Presuppositional
- Confessional

Wrap-Up

READING & HOMEWORK

Reading for Week 2

Understanding Christian Apologetics
— Introduction

Why Should I Trust the Bible?
— Chapter 1

Homework (½–1 page)

In your own words:

- 1) What is my biggest fear about doing apologetics?
- 2) What is my biggest hope for this class?

If possible, email your reflection before next week:

equip@fbcbaldwin.com

Don't worry about being polished—just be honest.

Closing



READ TOGETHER

“...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 Peter 3:15 (ESV)