



*Christians for the Defense*  
Small Group Questions  
Week of August 23, 2020

**Icebreaker:**

*Reflect on a time when you have been confronted by someone asking aggressive or hostile questions about your faith. What did you say in response to the questions? What was your manner and demeanor like as you answered the questions? Is there something you think you could have done to improve either the content or delivery of the answers you gave?*

**Discussion Questions:**

1. A recurring theme in 1 Peter is the persecution being experienced by the churches to which Peter is writing.
  - What are some of the passages in 1 Peter that address the persecution of these churches?
  - How does the persecution described by Peter parallel (or not) our own situation in an increasingly secular society?
  - In addition to the direction given at 3:13-15, what are some of the ways Peter suggests for responding to this persecution, e.g., 1:14-16; 1:22-23; 2:1; 2:11-12; 3:8-9; 4:1-6; 4:12-13.
2. In light of the several passages on persecution, are you surprised that at 2:13f, Peter exhorts his readers to “[b]e subject for the LORD’S sake to every human institution, whether it be to emperor as supreme, or to governors ...”? How should we as 21st century Christians respond to this teaching?
3. Another recurrent theme of 1 Peter is the concept of “hope.” For example, at 1:3, Peter refers to Christians as having been “born again to a *living hope*.” At 1:13, he exhorts his readers to set their “*hope* fully on the grace that will be brought to [them] at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” At 1:21, he notes that believers “*faith and hope* are in God.” And, at 3:15, the passage addressed in the sermon, Peter urges believers to “always be[] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the *hope* that is in you.” What does Peter mean by this frequent reference to “hope”? How do other New Testament writers use this term? (See e.g., Paul at Romans 5:2-5 and 8:20-25; Hebrews 3:6 and 6:11-19; and John at 1 John 3:3.)
4. As noted in the quotes from Mark Noll’s *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* and J. P. Moreland’s *Love the Lord Your God with All Your Mind*, both authors take the position that the American church has lost its intellectual edge over the last several decades:
  - Do you believe this to be true or untrue and why?
  - If true, what must the Church do to regain that intellectual edge so as to reclaim its voice in society’s debates over competing philosophies and ideologies?