

INTRODUCTION of Evidences of our Christian Faith

The purpose of the following studies is not to win arguments, or, even to prove God's Word is true, but, rather, their purpose is to glorify and magnify Jesus Christ by providing a basis for our faith, in presenting an interpretation of indisputable facts of the Christian faith in a logical and intelligent presentation of Biblical truths.

The presentation of the evidences of our Christian faith is never a replacement for the Word of God.

Because it is hoped that there will be occasions when one can use the presentation of the evidences of our Christian faith to satisfy the curiosity of a sincere seeker, these lessons will involve a systematic, scientific, defense of the Christian faith, in all its aspects, against the intellectual attacks of the adversaries, setting forth concrete reasons for accepting the Bible as God's Word and accepting Jesus Christ as one's Lord and Savior. It is important, however, to keep in mind that these evidences should be presented with a proper attitude and that the Christian faith is an *objective* faith...a faith that establishes one's relationship with Christ (the Object)...and it is a faith that is diametrically opposed to the average *philosophical* use of the term "*faith*."

Because the Christian faith is not in the one believing, but, rather, in the One believed...Jesus Christ...it is imperative that the conversation always be centered on one's relationship with Jesus Christ. It is also imperative that, in an endeavor to help motivate the honest seeker to consider Jesus Christ...[Who is the central issue of the Gospel]...these evidences are presented with the right attitude, with "*a gentle and reverent spirit*" (1 Peter 3:15).

IT IS PRAYERFULLY HOPED THAT THE STUDY OF THESE LESSONS WILL:

1. Confirm and solidify the faith of the student, enabling him to withstand the attacks of both rational, and irrational, unbelief
2. Prepare the student to witness more knowledgeable and effectively to people of this present generation who have been influenced, as they have been, with the pervasive attitudes of skepticism and unbelief that are so characteristic of today.
3. Equip the student to maintain, under all circumstances, a clear and uncompromising stand on the full integrity of God and His Word.

The emphasis of these lessons will be on the **truth** of God's Word rather than on the **relevancy** of the Christian faith. The question will be, "*Is the Word true?*" rather than, "*Is Christianity fulfilling?*"

Despite the fact that those who adhere to a *false* system of unbelief often profess to have found a real peace and satisfaction as a result of their submission to these false beliefs, this fact hardly proves that all such diverse, and contradictory, systems are, therefore, true.

A credulous faith in some artificial Christ of one's imagination, rather than in the real Christ of Biblical history, is **not** that faith by which men are saved.

1. God's Word commands one to study Christian Evidences:

1 Peter 3:15, "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

Philippians 1:7, "It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me."

Philippians 1:17, "The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains."

Jude 1:3, "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints."

Colossians 4:6, "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Titus 1:9, "He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

2. The early Christians consistently used Christian Evidences in their witnessing:

Acts 4:33, "With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all."

Acts 14:15-16, "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. In the past, he let all nations go their own way."

Acts 26:9-22, "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them. `On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It

is hard for you to kick against the goads.' Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen."

Romans 1:20, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."

1 Corinthians 15:1-8, "Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance : that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born."

1 Timothy 1:12-16, "*I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.*"

3. The almost universal climate of skepticism and unbelief today, together with an appalling ignorance of the Bible, makes it almost mandatory that, when one is endeavoring to win someone to Christ, he accompany his presentation of the Gospel with a sound exposition of Christian evidences.

An emotional decision for Christ, without a firm foundation in God's Word, will not stand when times of testing come, according to Matthew 13:20-21, which states, "*The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.*"

4. The judicious use of Christian evidences has not only been the means by which strong and

faithful Christians have been won to Christ, but it has also been the means by which their faith, and witness, have been strengthened.

On the other hand, those who have relied exclusively on personal feelings and experiences in their belief in Christ have too often lost their zeal and have settled into the rut of a routine, and fruitless, Christian life.

A WORD OF CAUTION

1. The purpose of these lessons, I repeat, is not to enable one to **win** an argument because, in fact, one should take special precaution to *avoid* developing an overly argumentative attitude toward all opponents.

Skill at persuasion and argumentation is neither a substitute for prayer and sincere concern for souls, nor for the use of the Word of God itself!

2. One is also to be cautioned against the danger of becoming so *intellectual* in his presentation of Christian evidences...or *cold* in his attitude toward eternal souls. Because, it is possible to convince the *mind* - while the *heart* remains unaffected!

The presentation of the Gospel must not only be warm and interesting, but it must also manifest a genuine concern for the one being witnessed to. Keep in mind that a mere recital of Christian Evidences is not enough to win a soul to Christ because one needs the supernatural anointing of the Holy Spirit working in his heart as well.

3. The presentation of Christian Evidences strictly on *subjective*...[*the knowing of the mind*]...basis of personal need, rather than on the basis of *objective*...[*purpose to live out*]...truth, tends to produce converts who are self-centered rather than God-centered.
4. We must remember that, no matter how clear the evidence and Scripture exposition may be, a person who is *unwilling* to believe cannot be argued into believing!

Because Christian Evidences can never replace the convicting, and illuminating, work of the Holy Spirit, one must never allow a presentation of the Gospel to degenerate into a heated argument!

5. One's presentation of the Gospel should never consist of a glib, superficial, recital of the "*hear say*" evidences that are unaccompanied by documented fact. One must be willing to spend time in diligent study and preparation if one desires to be well grounded, and founded, in the evidences of his Christian faith.

The fact that, as a Christian, one is to **be** a "*witness*" for God [Acts 1:8] does not mean that one will always have an *intelligent* answer to all the questions that are put to him. When one does not know the answer to a particular question, the most honest and proper thing one can say is, "*I do not know the answer to your question, but, if at all possible, I will try and find the answer.*" To make an outward show of pretense to have the answer to a certain question when, in reality, one does not...perhaps because of an unwillingness to study...very often has the effect of evoking a sarcastic, ridiculing, rejection of the Gospel presentation from those whom one is endeavoring to win to Christ