



PART THREE – Study Guide

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Jesus taught in parables, using everyday situations and items to reveal spiritual truths. But He was also always ready and willing to answer questions. That takes courage. It takes preparation. It takes confidence in your faith, in what you know, Who you know, and Whose you are. Let's see if there is something we should be doing, so that we can participate in this Gospel-telling, open, approachable way of sharing the Good News.

Note: Get started early on the "How Does This Apply" question. Read it and meditate on it this week. Let God speak to you in specific areas!

Where Am I Today?

- 1) Am I prepared with a two-minute, clear and concise version of what it means to come to Christ and how that happened in my life?

- 2) Do I have an on-going relationship with God, so that I can give testimony to the *current work* of God in my life in *recent* history?

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- 3) Do I know enough about the Bible—or how to *find* pertinent scripture in my Bible—that I am comfortable bringing up faith topics to others outside my church family?

Into the Bible

- 4) There are many verses in the Bible about how we must overcome. In matters of sharing, being prepared to answer questions, or speak about God, there seem to be some specific things we can do. And there are several things in common. Read all the passages below and note actions we are advised to take.

a. **1 Peter 3:14-17**

b. **Matthew 10:16-20**

c. **Acts 4:29-31**

- 5) **Let's practice answering questions "off the cuff." Break up into groups of two or three.** Below are a few questions from the weekend. Choose two or three to practice with. Imagine someone at your office (or in your neighborhood, or club, or class) asking you a similar thing over soda or coffee. Let a group member ask the question—and you reply as best as you can. How would you answer? Don't list Bible verses as you would for your Life Group or your believing friend. Instead, have a conversation, using Biblical principles and using actual Bible verses that come to your mind, as they would naturally occur in your discussion. **Now reverse roles on a different question.** If you have a group of 3, the "observer" can offer feedback on how well you did!

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These are actual questions that were asked as part of the series this past weekend:

- a. "I've been betrayed over and over and I've forgiven them. If they betray me again, do I still have to forgive them again?"
- b. "Why is it that the closer a person draws to the Lord, the harder the challenges in life get?"
- c. "What would you tell me: I'm a new believer. I'm a/mother father that is struggling to lead his/her family in Christ. How do I do that?"
- d. "Do you believe in angels? Do they ever appear to us in human form?"
- e. "My friends talk about Christianity as a relationship. What does that mean and how is that different from religion?"
- f. "How do I explain to my agnostic friends how I know Jesus and God are real?"
- g. "What is your view on Halloween?"

How Does This Apply?

- 6) When God really shows up in someone's life—yours or someone you know—it is for one purpose only. Whether it's the death and resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:1-44) or your personal rescue from illness, marital trouble, or financial collapse, it's an opportunity to bring glory to God. **Read Acts 3:1-10 and Acts 4:1-22.**
 - a. What things can you learn from Peter and John's dealings with the crippled man?
 - b. What happens when you obey God?

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c. Because the crippled beggar was instantly healed, it brings up another question. Does God always heal when we pray? What does that change about our responsibilities to go, invest, respond, or pray?

d. What is at least one specific choice you will need to make?

Digging Deeper on Your Own

7) Here's a question that came in from Facebook: "Why doesn't the Church teach Apologetics?" – Mooresville Campus, ASU student

The last few weeks, as we've been taking spontaneous questions live, or grouping them to go deeper for a specific message, the speakers are in fact doing the work of an apologist. They are giving an answer, making a defense of a Biblical stand or rebutting a worldview, say on a lifestyle issue, or divorce, or what it means to be saved.

a. Traditionally, what does being a Christian apologist means?

b. What are typical topics to "debate" in defense of the Christian faith?

c. All believers should be ready to explain their personal faith. Some are called to defend the faith against the world in a bigger way or larger platform. If this is something you are deeply motivated to pursue, 1 Peter 3:15 contains a mandate and a caution. What are they?

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Here is a short list of resources that will give you a fuller, deeper understanding of some of the issues, arguments and counter-defenses of apologetic theology.

- New Evidence That Demands a Verdict by Josh McDowell. Historical evidence that supports the Christian faith, plus answers to many other questions.
- The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable? by F.F. Bruce. Manuscript, language, and historical evidence about the authenticity of the Bible.
- More Than a Carpenter by Josh McDowell. Evidence for the life of Jesus as the Christ.
- The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel. An investigative reporter's search for evidence to disprove Jesus and his journey to faith in Him.
- The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief by Francis S. Collins. Collins is a geneticist and believer who lead the Human Genome Project and currently heads the National Institutes of Health.
- Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis. A rational case for God and the Christian faith.