

The Questions:

Hard Questions of Faith

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WEEK 2 | A Ready Defense

PRAYER

"Father God, we thank You for the strength You give us when we are faced with difficult questions or when our faith is challenged. Remind us that You are always with us, guiding us as we share the hope we have in Christ. Help us to respond with grace, humility, and love, reflecting Your truth with gentleness and respect. May Your Holy Spirit guide our words and actions as we stand firm in our faith. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

OPENING QUESTION (OPTIONAL)

"Can you share a funny or awkward encounter where someone asked you a difficult or unexpected question? How did you respond?"



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WORD

"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, 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 3:15-16 \(ESV\)](#)

"As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, 'These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.' And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And it came out that very hour."

[Acts 16:16-18 \(ESV\)](#)

As Christians, we will inevitably encounter hard questions—both from within our own hearts and from others who seek to understand or challenge our faith. These questions may revolve around difficult theological concepts, personal struggles, or moral dilemmas. How we respond to these inquiries is vital to representing Christ well and providing a "ready defense" of the hope we carry.

1 Peter 3:15-16 emphasizes the attitude we must have when we respond to questions about our faith. We are called to be prepared to give an answer for the hope that is within us, but we are also reminded to do so "with gentleness and respect." It's not enough to simply win an argument or provide the correct information; our posture must reflect Christ-like humility. It's about showing love to the person asking, no matter how difficult or confrontational the question may be.

An example of a challenging question that often arises is the issue of "theodicy"—why does a good God allow suffering and evil? This is a tough question that many struggle with, and it requires both a scriptural foundation and a compassionate response. We might explain that while sin and evil entered the world through human disobedience, God is still sovereign and working towards ultimate redemption (Romans 8:28). We can point to the cross, where Jesus suffered, as evidence that God is not distant from human pain but intimately involved in overcoming it.

Another challenging question could be about the "deity of the Holy Spirit". Some might question whether the Holy Spirit is truly God or just a force. To respond, we can turn to Scripture, showing that the Holy Spirit is referred to as God (Acts 5:3-4) and possesses divine attributes such as omnipresence (Psalm 139:7) and omniscience (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). But again, it's not just about winning

theological arguments; it's about lovingly inviting others to experience the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in their own lives.

In Acts 16:16-18, we see a practical example of how Paul dealt with opposition, particularly spiritual opposition. While the situation with the slave girl was more of a spiritual confrontation than a theological debate, it highlights the importance of discernment and knowing when to speak or act. Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, responds decisively, but always with the authority of Christ. In a similar way, when we are faced with questions or challenges, we can rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us in responding in a way that honours God and the person asking.

Ultimately, the goal is not just to "win" debates, but to point people towards Christ. Even when we are asked difficult questions, our aim is to reflect the love, wisdom, and truth of Jesus. We combine logic, Scripture, and compassion to lead people towards the hope of the Gospel.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

((NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE))

1. What are some common hard questions you've encountered about your faith? How did you respond, and what do you wish you had said?
2. According to 1 Peter 3:15-16, what is the key attitude or posture we should have when giving a defense for our faith? Why is this important?
3. How does the example of Paul in Acts 16:16-18 help us understand the importance of discernment and reliance on the Holy Spirit when facing opposition or challenging questions?
4. How can we address difficult questions about suffering, the nature of God, or the Holy Spirit with both biblical truth and compassion?
5. What are some practical ways we can better prepare ourselves to give a "ready defense" for our faith while maintaining humility and love towards others?

"Lord Jesus, we acknowledge You as the source of all wisdom and truth. Thank You for being with us when we are faced with difficult questions or challenges. Help us to respond with love, humility, and grace, always pointing others to You. We trust in Your Word and the guidance of Your Holy Spirit to give us the words to say. We pray for those who are seeking answers, that they may come to know You as the answer to their deepest questions. And for those who do not yet know You, may today be the day they accept You as Lord and Savior. We offer our lives to You, Lord, as we seek to live out Your truth in all that we do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."