

**ACTS 20:28-31:** “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. <sup>30</sup> Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. <sup>31</sup> So be on your guard!”

## HOW DO WE CONTEND FOR THE FAITH?

**2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5:** “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

## 2. We are called to \_\_\_\_\_ the faith & give \_\_\_\_\_ to believe.

**1 PETER 3:15-16:** “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, <sup>16</sup> keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

“Our English word *apology* comes from the Greek word translated “answer,” but it does not mean “to say I am sorry.” Rather, it means “a defense presented in court.” “Apologetics” is the branch of theology that deals with the defense of the faith. Every Christian should be able to give a reasoned defense of his hope in Christ, especially in hopeless situations. A crisis creates the opportunity for witness when a believer behaves with faith and hope, because the unbelievers will then sit up and take notice.” Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989).

## THREE TRUTHS ABOUT DEFENDING THE FAITH from 1 Peter 3:15-16

➤ Defending the faith requires \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_.

- Defending the faith should be done with \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_.
- Defending the faith has two primary \_\_\_\_\_.

**PURPOSE #1:** To provide \_\_\_\_\_ to believe (3:15).

**PURPOSE #2:** To \_\_\_\_\_ by responding to their arguments (3:15-16).

## THE APOSTLE PAUL: *An Example of Defending, Contending, & Persuading.*

PHILIPPIANS 1:7, 15-16, 27-28; 4:3  
2 CORINTHIANS 5:9-11, 19-20

## PAUL IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

**ACTS 9:19-20:** “Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. <sup>20</sup> At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. <sup>21</sup> All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?” <sup>22</sup> Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and **baffled the Jews** living in Damascus **by proving** that Jesus is the Christ.”

**ACTS 9:29:** “He talked and **debated** with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him.”

**ACTS 17:1-3:** “When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. <sup>2</sup> As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days **he reasoned** with them from the Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> **explaining and proving** that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead.”

**ACTS 17:16-17:** “While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. <sup>17</sup> So **he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.**

**ACTS 18:4:** “Every Sabbath *he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade* Jews and Greeks.”

**ACTS 19:8:** “Paul entered *the synagogue* and spoke boldly there for three months, *arguing persuasively* about the kingdom of God.”

**ACTS 22:1:** “Brothers and fathers, listen now to *my defense*.”

**ACTS 24:10:** “When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: “I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make *my defense*.”

**ACTS 25:8:** “Then Paul made *his defense*: “I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar.”

**ACTS 26:1-3:** “Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” So Paul motioned with his hand and began *his defense*:<sup>2</sup> “King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make *my defense* against all the accusations of the Jews,<sup>3</sup> and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

**ACTS 26:24-29:** “At this point Festus interrupted **Paul’s defense**. “You are out of your mind, Paul!” he shouted. “Your great learning is driving you insane.”<sup>25</sup> “I am not insane, most excellent Festus,” Paul replied. “**What I am saying is true and reasonable.**”<sup>26</sup> The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner.<sup>27</sup> King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.”<sup>28</sup> Then Agrippa said to Paul, “**Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?**”<sup>29</sup> Paul replied, “Short time or long—I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.”

## FINAL THOUGHTS

According to the Apostle Paul, the Christian faith is both ‘*true and reasonable*’ (Acts 26:25). We have a faith that is rational, reasonable and defensible because it is built upon evidence. When “The Truth” under attack, an *Ultimate Fighting Christians* defends the faith and gives reasons to believe.

## ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHRISTIAN

Today’s Message: “Defending the

Faith” Jude 3-4; 1 Peter 3:15

Pastor Cory Anderson / SMC / 08.09.09

### INTRODUCTION:

#### 1. We are called to \_\_\_\_\_ *for the faith against* \_\_\_\_\_.

**JUDE 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.”

“What does it mean to “contend for the faith”? The Greek word is an athletic term that gives us our English word *agonize*. *It is the picture of a devoted athlete, competing in the Greek games and stretching his nerves and muscles to do his very best to win. You never fight the Lord’s battles from a rocking chair or a soft bed! Both the soldier and the athlete must concentrate on doing their best and giving their all. There must also be teamwork, believers working together to attack and defeat the enemy. Sometimes you hear well-meaning people say, “Well, it’s fine to contend for the faith, but don’t be so contentious!” While it is true that some of God’s soldiers have been the cause of quarrels and divisions, it is also true that some of them have paid a great price to defend the faith. As Christian soldiers, we must not fight each other or go around looking for trouble. But when the banner of Christ is in danger of being taken by the enemy, we cannot sit idly by, nor can we ever hope to win the victory by wearing kid gloves.” Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989).**

#### WHY IS CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH SO IMPORTANT?

**JUDE 4:** “*For* certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”