CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALS PART II:

WHY WE BELIEVE

CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALS:

Summary of the ground we have covered:

1. The Christian Faith is rational and reasonable, not ‘blind’. It is based upon real events that happened, and the God of the Bible invites us to love Him with our minds and to reason with Him.
2. It takes far more faith to believe there is no God, then to believe there is. The law of cause and effect, the complexity of life, the encoded information we find in nature, the delicately balanced laws of the Universe, our conscience, and our universal longing for meaning all point towards a Creator being behind life and the Universe.
3. Jesus Christ claimed to be the Son of God, the promised Messiah, God in the flesh. Either Jesus is who He claimed to be, or he is a liar, lunatic or legendary development. When we examine the counter claims to Jesus of Nazareth considering the contemporary evidence both biblical and non-biblical, Jesus’ credentials authenticate His claims.
4. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is the one event that makes or breaks the Christian faith. What event could transform a group of cowards to martyrs and be the catalyst for Christianity to become the fastest growing movement in history. When compared to every other theory that has been proposed, it is more reasonable to believe that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead.
5. The Bible claims to the inspired, without error word of God. The Bible was compiled by over 40 different human authors, over a period of 1,500 years, with a unified message: The God of the Universe was and is working to reconcile sinful humanity to Himself through Jesus Christ. We talked about indications of Supernatural origin including specific prophecies detailing the history of the Jewish people, World Empires, and figures, and of course, the coming and return of Jesus Christ. It also contains scientific knowledge and insights ahead of man’s knowledge and understanding.
6. The Bible has more manuscript copies by far than (About 25,000 copies) any other collection of ancient writings, that date far closer to the events that are described than any other ancient writing. We talked about the Dead Sea scrolls as an example of how the copying and recopying of manuscripts over long periods of time was a trustworthy process with only minor grammatical variations that never affect the meaning of a passage or of a doctrinal truth. We also talked about how the canon of Scripture was solidified based on the authorship and content of the writings of the first century so that the early church could recognize what was truly Scriptural.
7. Archeology has continued to verify the background, events and key details surrounding biblical events. A pattern we have seen is that when archeology lacks verifying evidence of Scripture, over time subsequent discoveries have authenticated the Bible. Silence of archeological evidence is not the same thing as evidence against Scripture.
8. If we can accept the existence of God, who created space, matter, and time out of nothing then clearly, He is not bound by the laws He created. If one can accept creation, then every other ‘miracle’ can be accepted. There is no biblical reason to believe God is done with doing miracles.
9. Science and Faith are not at war, because science and faith ask different questions. It should be noted that almost every major founder of the fields of science as we know them today, was a believer in God.
10. We all know suffering and evil exist, yet as we grapple with how a good loving God can allow it, we talked about how suffering and evil are the price we pay for having free will. God allows suffering and evil, for a time, but actively works for our good and the good of His purpose in all suffering. We also talked about how we should not have a ‘karma’ mindset with suffering.
11. Christianity is both the most inclusive and exclusive message in the world. Jesus claims to be the ‘way, the truth, and the life’, and the only way to heaven. Every major religion in the world in some form or fashion claims that our achieving salvation is dependent on works. Religion is spelled D.O. and Christianity is spelled D.O.N.E. The differences between Christianity and other religions far outweigh any similarities.
12. Finally, we talked about how our personal experience is part of our witness to the truthfulness and validity of the Christian faith.
13. How to Defend Our Faith in a Challenging and Hostile World
14. How To Effectively Defend Our Faith:
15. Prepare/ Read *Jude 1:6, 1 Peter 3:15*
16. God has called us to be prepared to defend our faith and it is important that we get prepared to do so.
17. Loving God with all our minds does mean being acquainted with historical, scientific, logical reasons to defend our faith.
18. Reading various books on Apologetics is a must to be able to have a basis to defend your faith.
19. Maintain a daily growing nurturing relationship with Christ where you continue to learn and grow more in knowledge of *what* we believe, *why* we believe and in *whom* we believe.
20. Pray for whomever is in your sphere of influence that is without Christ, and for opportunities to share the Lord with them and defend Him.
21. Engaging/ Read *Colossians 4:5-6* and *2 Timothy 2:23-26.*
22. It is important that we remember to rely on the Holy Spirit’s leading for the words to share and speak in our discussions (see *Luke 12:12).*
23. It is important to remember that ultimately it is not even our defense of the Christian faith that will persuade someone to come to faith in Christ, but it is rather through the work of the Holy Spirit who may use the seeds we plant through our defense.
24. It is important to remember that we are engaged in a spiritual conflict, and not a personal one (*Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).*
25. It is important to know when discussions with a non-believer are going nowhere and it is time to disengage (see *Matthew 10:14-15).*
26. God has not called us to win arguments and debates but rather to cultivate dialogue with people whose worldview and lifestyle are opposed to ours.
27. The Bible encourages to dialogue in a loving, respectful, gentle way but also in speech laced with truth.
28. Understanding Our Culture/ Read *Acts 17:22-31*
29. Going overseas to share Jesus and the Christian faith taught me a lot about the importance of studying the language, beliefs, and culture you are ministering in. We must do the same with the culture we are submerged in.
30. A hundred years ago, society’s biggest problem with Christianity was over some of the key doctrinal truths and insisted Christianity must evolve or die. Ironically, churches and groups that changed on those truths have since died. Today, society’s biggest problem with Christianity is over the moral truths of Scripture, particularly over Sexuality and Gender Identity. Again, we are being told to change or die. The message cannot be changed, but the methods must if we will be effective in reaching this generation.
31. The Apostle Paul gives an example to us with the times in which we found ourselves from Acts 17 and how to adapt the methods to the audience you are dealing with.
32. Our culture is confused, and challenging, but now more than ever God needs His people to be the “salt” and “light” (see *Matthew 5:13-16)* with the people around us.

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“*A Christian is not simply someone who lives a certain way. A Christian is someone who believes certain things.” -Justin Dillehay*

1. Interview with a Former Atheist: A Conversation with David Leesnitzer
2. David Leesnitzer’s background: What was David’s past and how did he become an atheist?
3. From Atheism to Christianity: How did David go from being an atheist to a believer in Jesus Christ?
4. What Methods Helped or Hurt your journey from atheism to Christ?
5. What is your advice on how we as Christians can effectively defend and witness for our faith?
6. Q & A with David from those attending In-Person or Virtually
7. Concluding thoughts

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