
EVERYONE BELIEVER CONFIDENT: APOLOGETICS FOR THE ORDINARY CHRISTIAN

by Mark J. Farnham

Book of the Month

R. Carlton Wynne

Westminster Presbyterian Church

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EVERY BELIEVER CONFIDENT

Apologetics
for the
Ordinary
Christian

MARK J. FARNHAM

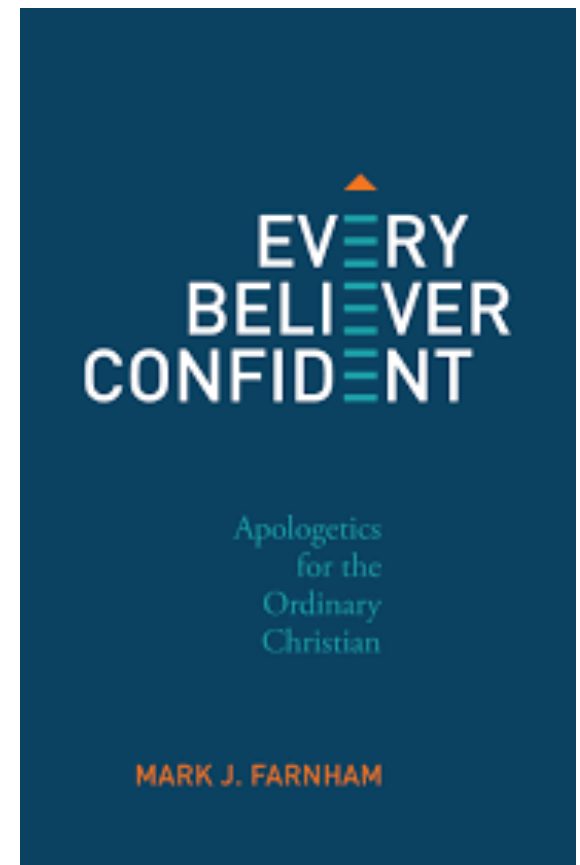
MARK J. FARNHAM



- Pastor for seven years in New England.
 - Director of the M.A. in Christian Apologetics program at Lancaster Bible College and Capital Seminary in Lancaster, PA.
 - Ph.D. (Apologetics) from Westminster Theological Seminary, in Philadelphia, PA.
 - Th.M (New Testament) from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.
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THE PLAN

- I. What is “Apologetics”?
- II. Why This Book?
- III. Various Approaches to Apologetics
- IV. Farnham’s Best Points



I. WHAT IS “APOLOGETICS”?

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- “Apologetics” comes from the Greek word *apologia* (ἀπολογία), which means, “defense” or “the act of making a defense.”
 - **Phil 1:7** – “... *I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense [τῇ ἀπολογίᾳ] and confirmation of the gospel.*”
 - **Jude 3** – “*Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.*”
 - **1 Pet 3:15** – “... *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense [ἀπολογία] to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect...*”

I. WHAT IS “APOLOGETICS”?

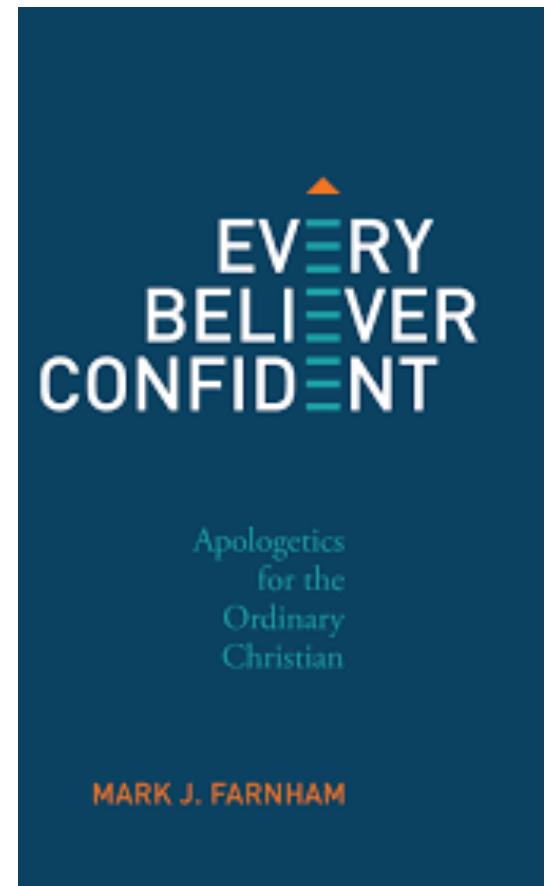
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 - Apologetics goes hand-in-hand with evangelism, as it seeks to defend the God of Scripture and the Christian gospel!
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I. WHAT IS “APOLOGETICS”?

- DEFINITION: The practice of defending the Christian faith in the face of unbelieving challenges.
 - Where did everything come from? Who am I? (origins/identity)
 - What is the fundamental problem in the world? (good/evil)
 - How can I find deliverance and fulfill the meaning of life? (purpose)
 - What happens when we die? Is there an afterlife? (death)
 - What is the nature of reality? (metaphysics)
 - How do we know anything, or does truth even exist? (epistemology)
 - How should we behave (ethics)?

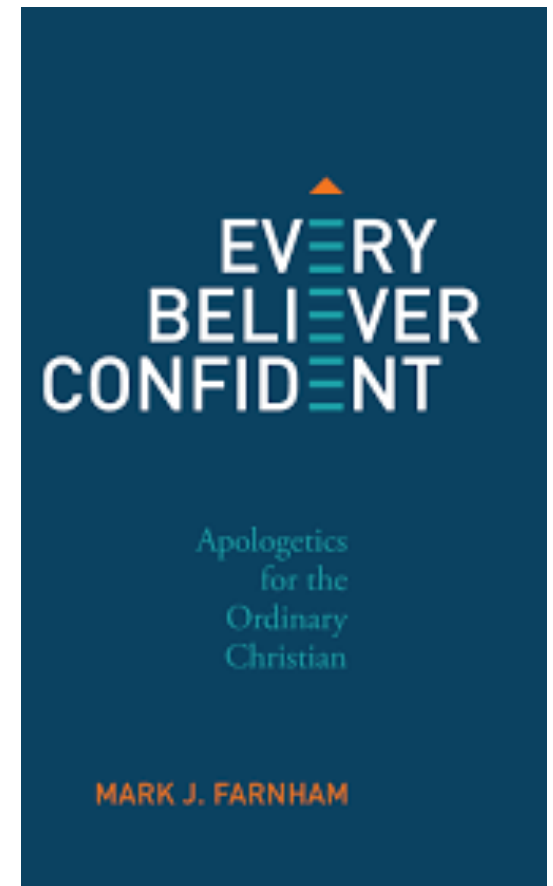


II. WHY THIS BOOK?



II. WHY THIS BOOK?

- God has called all of us, in our own spheres, ways, and experiences, to “be ready” to defend the hope that you have in Christ!
 - Farnham wants to make a specific kind of apologetic approach accessible to the person in the pew!
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EVERY BELIEVER CONFIDENT

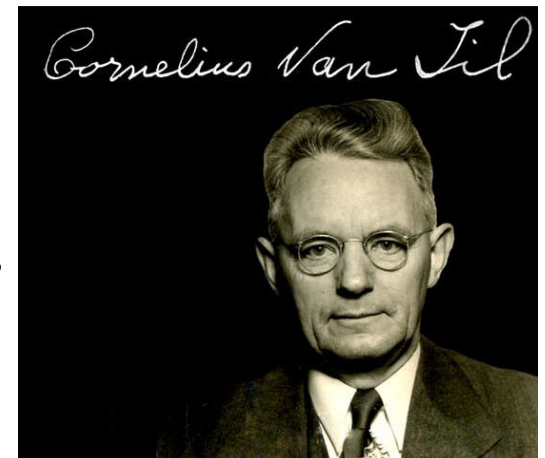
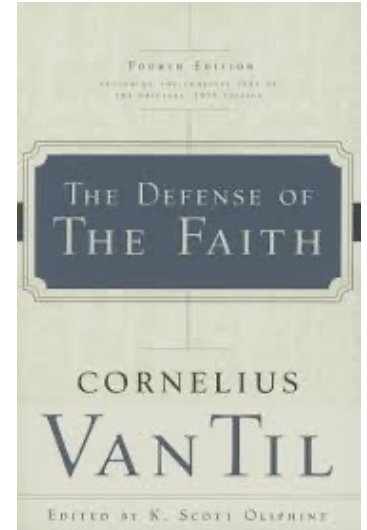
PODCAST

HOW CAN EVERY BELIEVER CONFIDENT
HELP YOU BECOME A BETTER APOLOGIST?

II. WHY THIS BOOK?

Cornelius Van Til (1895–1987)

- Born in Grootegast, Holland, to a dairy farmer.
 - Emigrated to Highland, IN, in 1905 (age 10)
 - Studied at Calvin Theological Seminary, then transferred to Princeton Theological Seminary (Th.M., 1925) and Princeton University (Ph.D., 1927)
 - Pastored a Christian Reformed church in Spring Lake, MI, for one year (1927), only to return to Princeton to teach apologetics (1928–29)
 - Accepted J. G. Machen's invitation to teach apologetics at WTS (1929) and joined the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (1936)
 - Wrote *The Defense of the Faith* (1st ed., 1955), *Survey of Christian Epistemology* (1969), *Introduction to Systematic Theology* (1974), etc.
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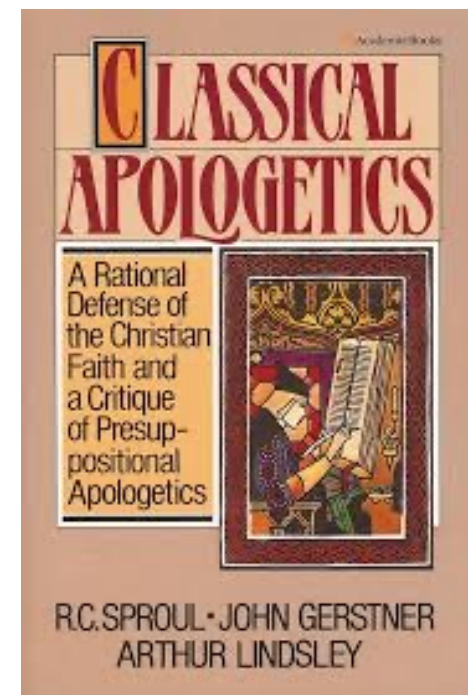


III. VARIOUS APPROACHES TO APOLOGETICS

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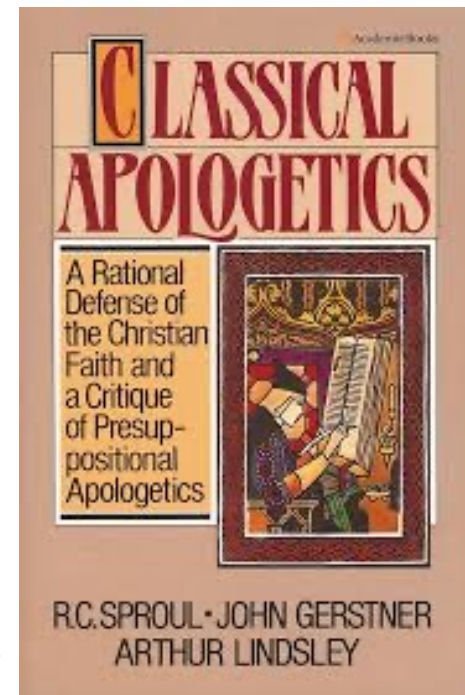
- CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS
- Motto: “Faith based on Reason”
 - “The **classical method** is an approach that begins by employing natural theology to establish theism as the correct worldview. **After God’s existence has thus been shown, the classical method moves to a presentation of the historical evidences** for the deity of Christ, the trustworthiness of Scripture, et cetera, to show that Christianity is the best version of theism, as opposed to, say, Judaism and Islam”

(Five Views on Apologetics, 15)



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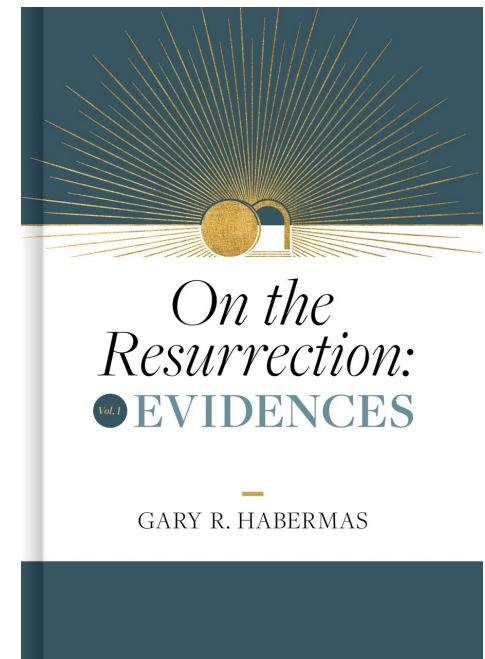
- CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS
- Motto: “*Faith based on Reason*”
- *BUT* what about ...
 - **Rom 1:18** – “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*”
 - **Rom 8:7** – “*For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.*”
 - **Eph 4:18** – “*They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.*”



III. VARIOUS APPROACHES TO APOLOGETICS

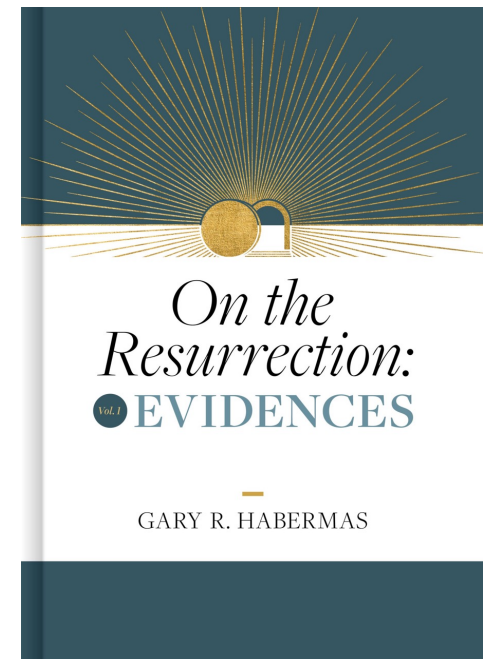
- EVIDENTIALIST APOLOGETICS
- Motto: “Faith based on Evidence”
 - “**Evidentialism** as an apologetic method may be characterized as the ‘one-step’ approach ... This method is fairly eclectic in its use of various positive evidences ... Yet **it tends to focus chiefly on the legitimacy of accumulating various historical and other inductive arguments for the truth of Christianity.** Given this focus, evidentialists may and will argue both for theism and Christian theism at the same time without recourse to an elaborate natural theology.”

(Five Views on Apologetics, 17)



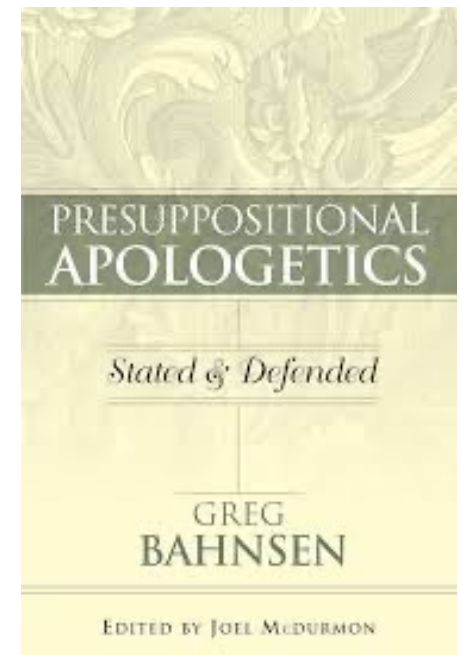
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- EVIDENTIALIST APOLOGETICS
- Motto: “Faith based on Evidence”
- *BUT* what about ...
 - **Luke 16:31** – “He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”



III. VARIOUS APPROACHES TO APOLOGETICS

- PRESUPPOSITIONAL APOLOGETICS
- Motto: “Reason based on Revelation”
 - Presuppositional *apologetics* seeks to analyze the deeper structures (the “presuppositions”) of an unbelieving worldview, aiming to show how only on the basis of existence and revelation of the God of Scripture can we make sense of any feature of God’s world.
 - **2 Cor 10:5** – “We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ ...”



IV. FARNHAM'S BEST POINTS

A logo on a dark blue rectangular background. The text 'EVERY BELIEVER CONFIDENT' is written in white, uppercase letters. The word 'EVERY' is on the top line, 'BELIEVER' is on the middle line, and 'CONFIDENT' is on the bottom line. The letter 'E' in 'EVERY' and 'CONFIDENT' is stylized with three horizontal teal bars passing through it. The letter 'V' in 'BELIEVER' is also stylized with three horizontal teal bars passing through it.

EVERY
BELIEVER
CONFIDENT

IV. FARNHAM'S BEST POINTS

- The CHRISTIAN
- The KEY CONCEPTS
- The ACTUAL CONVERSATION



IV. BEST POINTS: THE CHRISTIAN



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- Farnham speaks to the ordinary Christian.



IV. BEST POINTS: THE CHRISTIAN

- Farnham speaks to the ordinary Christian.
- *“Many believers live with a quiet fear regarding challenges to the Christian faith. They hold firmly to the Bible but don’t want to have to think hard about why they believe it. As a result, many Christians avoid conversations with non-Christians about anything spiritual, since they have no confidence that they could provide answers if asked.” (15)*



IV. BEST POINTS: THE CHRISTIAN

- Farnham speaks to the ordinary Christian.
- Farnham offers tips for fruitful conversation.



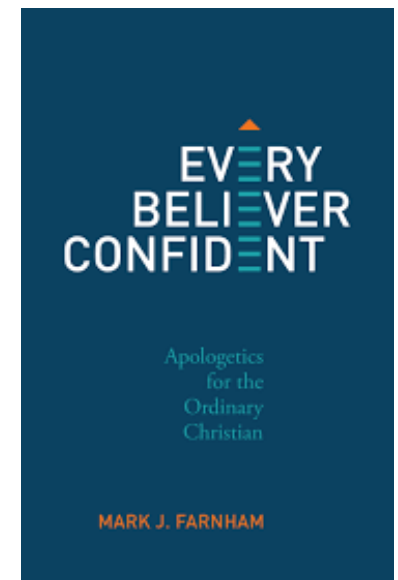
IV. BEST POINTS: THE CHRISTIAN

- Farnham speaks to the ordinary Christian.
 - Farnham offers tips for fruitful conversation.
 - *“Learn the Christian faith thoroughly ... Many believers try to defend the faith without knowing what they believe.” (41)*
 - *“Know as much as you reasonably can about your conversation partner’s beliefs. This isn’t always possible, but if you are having a second or third discussion about the Christian faith with someone, it is helpful for you to know at least a little about what that person believes.” (41)*
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- Farnham speaks to the ordinary Christian.
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- Farnham urges us to “get them to Jesus.”



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- Farnham speaks to the ordinary Christian.
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- Farnham urges us to “get them to Jesus.”
 - *“What is the goal of evangelism and apologetics? It is not to argue endlessly or to merely agree or disagree ... your primary goal is to get them to consider Christ’s claims and his work on the cross ... What people do with Jesus determines their eternal state. Nothing else is as important.” (110–111)*



IV. BEST POINTS: THE KEY CONCEPTS



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- **Rom 1:18–21** – *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth**.¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them ...²¹ **For although they knew God**, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*



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- **Rom 1:18–21** – “... *who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*
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they knew God they did not honor him ...”



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- **2 Cor 10:3–5** – *“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ **We destroy arguments** and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, **and take every thought captive to obey Christ.**”*
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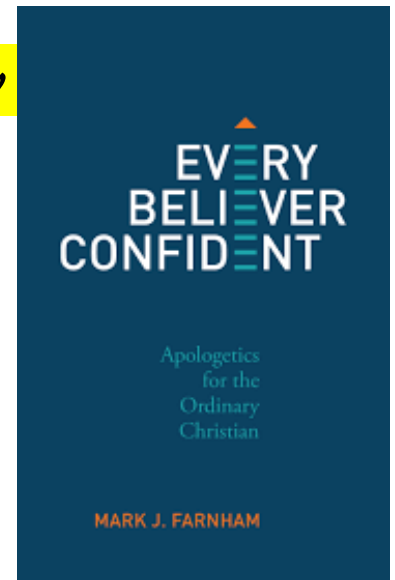
IV. BEST POINTS: THE KEY CONCEPTS

- 2 Cor 10:5 – “*We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.*”
 - “We should try to discern the authority (the stronghold) on which unbelievers are relying. Some people’s authority is human reason; for others, it is science. Other authorities on which people rely include religion, particular thinkers, their parents, or their own experience ... Once we have identified a stronghold, we can challenge its authority.” (87)



IV. BEST POINTS: THE KEY CONCEPTS

- 2 Cor 10:5 – “*We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.*”
 - “It starts with our showing interest in non-Christians and asking questions that get to the heart of their worldview and belief system. After beginning a conversation, we may then steer it toward spiritual matters in any number of ways ... The key is for your question to move the conversation as naturally as possible into questions of ultimate meaning.” (89)

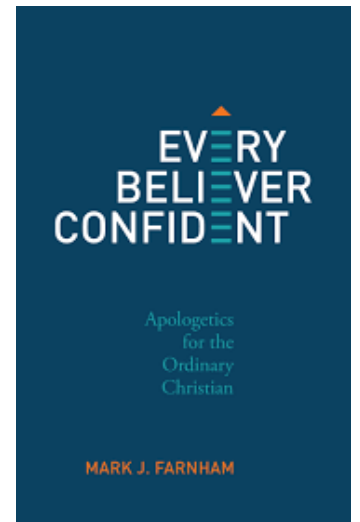


IV. BEST POINTS: THE KEY CONCEPTS

- **The Situation:** The unbeliever “knows God” (Rom 1:21)
- **The Task at Hand:** Destroy arguments and take captive thoughts for Christ (2 Cor 10:5)
- **The Strategy:** Try to get to ultimate matters! (2 Tim 2:21)
 - *OKAY ... HOW???*



IV. BEST POINTS: THE KEY CONCEPTS



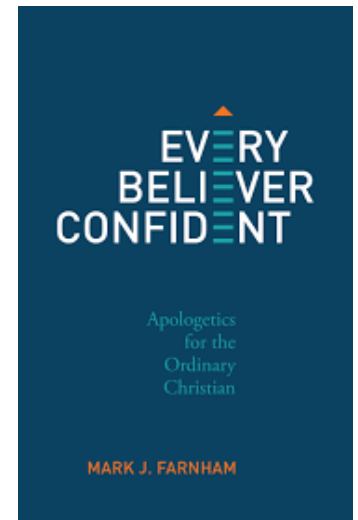
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- **FIRST, ask good questions.**
 - “This indirect method teaches Christians to ask the right kinds of questions for undermining the unbelieving worldview of non-Christians ... Rather than trying to have all the answers, we put the burden on unbelievers to justify their objections to the Christian faith.” (87)



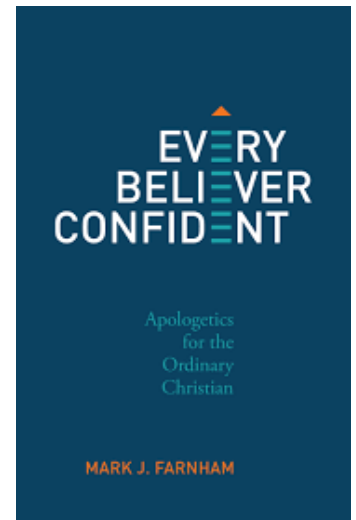
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 - “Why do you believe that?”
 - “Why do you think is the purpose of _____?”
 - “How do you know that?” “What led you to believe that?”
 - “What do you mean by that?”
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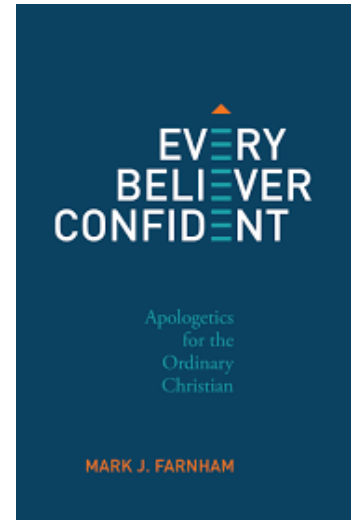
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- **FIRST**, ask good questions.
- **SECOND**, take the other position for the sake of argument.
 - “Once you understand what a non-Christian believes, your next step is to take their position for the sake of argument and show them its implications.” (95)



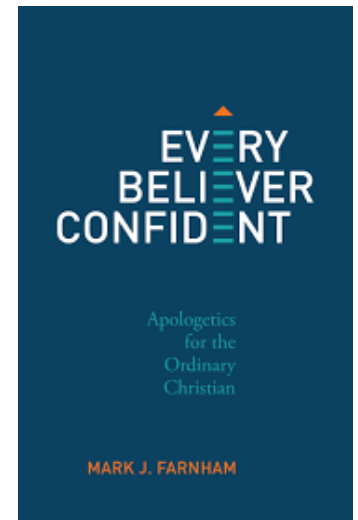
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 - E.g., “gender identity,” LG vs. T in “LGBT,” Oppressor-vs-oppressed ideology, etc.



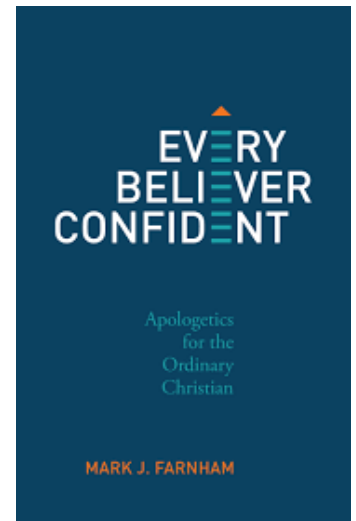
IV. BEST POINTS: THE KEY CONCEPTS

- **FIRST**, ask good questions.
- **SECOND**, take the other position for the sake of argument.
- **THIRD**, present the **Christian** alternative.
 - “The gospel of Jesus Christ answers the deepest longings of the human heart ... Therefore, you should present the gospel to them clearly and in compelling fashion. The truth should be attractive. While you are moving the bricks from the wall of another person’s worldview, present Christ as the alternative with the real answer to their longings.” (101)



IV. BEST POINTS: THE KEY CONCEPTS

- **FIRST**, ask good questions.
 - **SECOND**, take the other position for the sake of argument.
 - **THIRD**, present the **Christian** alternative.
 - “One of the most powerful things you can do when encountering a question or challenge to which you don’t know the answer is to say those three little words: ‘I don’t know.’ Many people think doing this is admitting defeat, but in reality, not knowing the answer to an unbeliever’s question shows that you are a real person.” (101)
-



IV. BEST POINTS: THE KEY CONCEPTS

- **Acts 8:35–35** – *“And the eunuch said to Philip, ‘About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?’”*³⁵ *Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture **he told him the good news about Jesus.**”* (ESV)
- **Acts 8:35** – *“... Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and **preached unto him Jesus.**”* (KJV)

