

Every Believer Confident: Apologetics for the Ordinary Christian
by Mark J. Farnham
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“... always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you ...” – 1 Pet 3:15

“Ordinary Christians can learn to defend the Christian faith, share the gospel, shake the unbelief of non-Christians, present the Christian worldview, and lead people to saving faith in Jesus Christ.” – Mark Farnham

I. Introduction

- A. *Every Believer Confident: Apologetics for the Ordinary Christian*, by Mark J. Farnham

II. What is Apologetics?

- A. Defined: “apologetics” is the practice of defending (and commending) the Christian faith in the face of unbelieving challenges.
1. **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; ten apologia] and confirmation of the gospel.*”
 2. **1 Pet 3:15** – “... *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense [ἀπολογίαν; apologian] to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect ...*”

III. Why THIS Book?

- A. 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!
- B. Cornelius Van Til (1895–1987) – Dutch theologian and apologist, pioneer of “presuppositional apologetics”

IV. Various Approaches to Apologetics

- A. Classical Apologetics (motto: “Faith based on Reason”)
1. “*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).*
 2. Proponents: R. C. Sproul, John Gerstner, Norman Geisler, William Lane Craig

B. Evidentialist Apologetics (motto: “Faith based on Evidence”)

1. *“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).*
2. Proponents: Gary Habermas, John Warwick Montgomery, Josh McDowell

C. Presuppositional Apologetics (motto: “Reason and Faith Rooted in Revelation”)

1. 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. Proponents: Cornelius Van Til, Greg L. Bahnsen, Lane Tipton, Mark Farnham

V. Farnham’s Best Points

A. The Christian

1. Know the Faith: *“Learn the Christian faith thoroughly ... Many believers try to defend the faith without knowing what they believe.” (41)*
2. Get them to Jesus: *“[Y]our primary goal is to get them to consider Christ’s claims and his work on the cross ... Nothing else is as important.” (110–111)*

B. The Key Concepts

1. The Situation: Suppression of the Truth (Rom 1:18ff)
2. The Task at Hand: Destroy Strongholds (2 Cor 10:4–5)
3. The Strategy: Get to ultimate matters (1 Cor 1:20)

C. The Conversation

1. *“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)*
2. *“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)*
3. *“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)*