

## **Defend Your Faith - Brad Harrub, Ph.D.**

### **You Can't Defend What You Don't Know**

**"...knowing that I am set for the defense of the Gospel." Phil. 1:17**

Walking through the Atlanta airport I had the opportunity to walk along-side three individuals dressed in military fatigues. As I often try to do, I smiled at them, and said: "I appreciate what you guys are doing." They smiled, thanked me, and went on their way. Deep down I recognize that without them doing their job, it would make it much harder for me to do mine. We live in a free country—a country in which the majority of Americans are proud of those who are willing to defend our freedoms. These special men and women hold a place of honor in our hearts, and we even take time out to recognize special holidays for their willingness to defend (and sacrifice for) our freedom.

**Sadly, this proud and honorable service of "defense" does not translate over to Christian life.** Oftentimes, we simply give lip service to the notion of defending the Bible, the existence of God, or the deity of Christ. In 1 Peter 3:15—a passage that most have read (and heard from the pulpit) countless times, we read: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a reason for the hope to everyone who asks you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." As you read these words, ask yourself honestly: Are **you** ready to defend your beliefs? Consider how many people you personally know who can (and do) stand up and defend God's Word. Far too often Christians relegate "those duties" to elders, preachers, deacons, or Bible class teachers. Consider the excuse given by an adult who has been a Christian for five-ten years who responds "Well, I'm just a new Christian,"—as though that exempts them from any responsibilities. Or what about the son or daughter of a preacher or elder who relies on his or her parents to provide all of the answers. The excuses are countless—the resulting truth is tragic. For many people, the idea of defending their beliefs is uncomfortable, and something to be avoided. And yet, as Christian soldiers, each and every one of us should be ready and willing to actively defend.

Let me encourage you to change your entire mindset of Christian life. Get out of the Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night mentality and determine to live fulltime on the

front line for Christ. Stop viewing church as a social club, but instead consider it to be a body of believers who want nothing more than to honor and praise God in the fashion that He prescribes—and are willing to stand up for those practices. Be a defender of His Kingdom.

It would be great if I could simply list five things that would help each of us to become better defenders of God’s Word. **But the truth of the matter is that it takes time in the Book—something that my generation has tried to get around.** There are no short cuts to learning the Truths found within the pages of God’s Word. You’ve just got to make time for it, and then do it. We have no problem setting aside an hour for our favorite television show or ballgame, so why not set aside time for God?

Does this mean every person has to memorize entire chapters of the Bible? While that would be great, I’m simply encouraging each of us to “up the ante.” **If you don’t read your Bible daily, make a commitment to start.** If you already do then spend a few extra minutes each day digging deeper into God’s Word. How different would this world be if Christians knew their Bibles as well as they know many television shows?

Another good practice is to surround yourself with people who are strong Christians. Learn from them. Analyze their priorities in relation to your own. Talk about spiritual things with them. One of my greatest pleasures is to “spar” with my close friends regarding biblical questions. By having to defend your position, it forces you to dig deeply into the Book. For those who are older and well-studied in God’s Word allow me to encourage you to become mentors. Consider what Paul did for Timothy, and how he earnestly wanted to see him grow stronger in the faith. You can help young fighters be better prepared for combat.

Let me strongly encourage you to become an **active** Christian. Cast off any feelings of lethargy and apathy, and get on the front line. You’ll be amazed at how much fruit you can produce for Him.