

Forward by David Kinnaman,
Author of *unChristian*

APOLOGETICS FOR A New Generation

A BIBLICAL &
CULTURALLY
RELEVANT
APPROACH
TO TALKING
ABOUT GOD

Sean
McDowell
GENERAL EDITOR



Study Guide



APOLOGETICS FOR A New Generation

Apologetics for a New Generation

Discussion Questions

CHAPTER 1: A Different Kind of Apologist—Dan Kimball

1. What challenged you most about Dan’s chapter?
2. Do you agree with Dan that there is an “increased need and interest in apologetics” in our emerging culture? Why or why not?
3. Think about the discussions you have had about apologetics over the past month. How many have been with Christians and how many have been with those who are not Christians?
4. Why is it so important to listen *first* before launching into an apologetic argument for Christianity? What happens when we don’t take the time to genuinely listen?

CHAPTER 2: Truth Never Gets Old—Brett Kunkle

1. Have you seen the impact of relativism on younger generations today? Try to come up with some practical examples from popular media (movies, music, TV, etc.) or from your personal experience with youth.
2. Do you think relativism is a threat to the Gospel? Why or why not?
3. Discuss the difference between objective and subjective truth. Come up with some additional examples of both kinds of truth.
4. Do you think there are objective truths about religion and morality? If so, how would we discover those truths?
5. How can we connect abstract discussions about truth to everyday life?

CHAPTER 3: A Fresh Apologetic: Relationships that Transform—Josh McDowell

1. Did Josh’s surprise or shock you? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think outsiders have extremely bad impressions of Christians? Do you agree with Josh that much of it is because they don’t like what they see in us? How do we counter these negative impressions?
3. What relationships have been most influential in the formation of your worldview?
4. What do you think is the most powerful apologetic today? A rational argument? A loving community? Or both?

APOLOGETICS FOR A New Generation

CHAPTER 4: Christianity and Culture: Defending our Fathers and Mothers—John Mark Reynolds

1. What is the difference between the Christian as pilgrim and the Christian as citizen?
2. What is the relationship between a valid argument and truth?
3. What should our view be towards media and pop culture?
4. How can we express beauty in our daily lives?
5. How can we find beauty even in cultural events that were produced by people with whom we disagree?

CHAPTER 5: A Human Apologetic: Tilling the Soul—Dale Fincher

1. How important do you think “imaginative apologetics” is for soul transformation? Can analytical arguments alone transform the soul? Why or why not?
2. Why is it so critical to have an accurate view of God? What happens to our souls when we view God incorrectly?
3. Do you think the church as a whole does a good job of allowing people to experience doubt? How can we create an environment in our church, families, and communities that allow for genuine doubt?
4. How can doubt lead someone to a deeper faith in God?
5. What false ideas about God can be most damaging to the soul?

CHAPTER 6: Capturing the Imagination before Engaging the Mind—Craig Hazen

1. Share examples you have seen of apologetic truths being taught creatively, such as in drama, comedy, or film.
2. Do you agree with John Warwick Montgomery’s distinction between those who are “tough-minded” and “tender-hearted”? Which category would you put yourself in?
3. Are you convinced by the claim that “there are archetypes in human cultures throughout the ages that capture basic the basic themes of human experience and universal human need?” Can you see how these archetypes appear in Sleeping Beauty, Mother Goose, and the Lion King?
4. How important is it that we proclaim and defend Christianity in creative ways that engage the imagination? What factors are necessary for such proclamations to be successful?

APOLOGETICS FOR A New Generation

CHAPTER 7: *Conversational Apologetics: Evangelism for the New Millennium*—David Geisler

1. Have you seen the disconnect between apologists and evangelists that David talks about? How so? Why do you think there is such a disconnect in the first place?
2. Do you agree with David that one of the big reasons why many Christians don't see the value in apologetics is that they haven't been taught how to use it in practical ways that actually produces results? How can we make apologetics practical?
3. What is a "heart-bridge"? How important do you think building heart-bridges is for evangelism today?
4. What is the value of "apologetics-lite"? When is it necessary to give a more heavy apologetic?

CHAPTER 8: *Storytelling and Persuasion*—Brian Godawa

1. What are some stories (from books, movies or any other medium) that have impacted your life in a significant way? Explain what about the stories affected you most.
2. Name some examples of stories that you think are subversive of a worldview or culture.
3. Talk about important secular or godless authors or communicators that you familiar with, and explain why you think it is important for Christians to know their work. Pick one of their works that you are familiar with and talk about its relevance.
4. Talk about where you draw the line in exposing yourself to narrative of a specific godless worldview. At what point do you think it may begin to affect you negatively? What can you do to protect yourself against negative effects?

CHAPTER 9: *Apologetics and Emotional Development: Understanding our Ways of Knowing and Finding Meaning*—Mark Matlock

1. How important is it today to teach biblical doctrine to younger generations today? What happens if we teach doctrine to young people lacking emotional health?
2. Do you agree with Mark that "few people make decisions based on sound arguments as opposed to gut feelings"? If so, why is apologetics even important?
3. Do you think the prevalence of relativism could be largely due to, as Mark suggests, the breakdown in community and not just a rejection of the concept of truth?
4. What is the difference between explicit and implicit knowledge. Think of practical examples that illustrate the difference. How important is implicit knowledge to the success of our explicit message?

APOLOGETICS FOR A New Generation

CHAPTER 10: *Making Apologetics Come Alive in Youth Ministry*—Alex McFarland

1. Why do you think many youth ministers have a low view of apologetics? Do you agree with Alex that we've set the intellectual bar too low for students?
2. Alex says that, based on his experience, teens want to know the reasons why we believe what we believe. Has your experience been the same, or different?
3. What do you think happens to teens that are not trained in apologetics?
4. How can we motivate young people to care about apologetics? What are the most effective strategies to capture their attention?

CHAPTER 11: *Home-Field Advantage*—Chris Sherrod

1. What role does the development of a biblical worldview play in why many kids leave the faith?
2. What was your home life like? Did your parents model and teach you biblical truth? How did they do it (or not do it)?
3. In one concise sentence, what would you say is the goal of Christian parenting?
4. What can parents do to give kids the freedom to ask troubling questions? How can parents knowingly or unknowingly undermine kids' freedom to ask such questions?

CHAPTER 12: *Jesus: Risen for a New Generation*—Jason Carlson

1. Jason mentioned the concept of “bridges for the gospel” (p. 176). When you think about the non-Christian friends in your life, what potential “bridges” for sharing your faith can you identify in those relationships?
2. When asked to “boil it all down” and explain his “bottom line” for why he was a Christian, Jason pointed to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If you were asked this question by a stranger, what would you say? What compels you to put your trust in Jesus?
3. In 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 the apostle Paul says that without the resurrection following Jesus is “useless” and even “futile”. Along this line of reasoning Jason highlighted three points (pp 181-183) for why he believes the resurrection is central to the Christian’s faith. What were those three reasons and which of them do you personally find most significant?
4. If given an opportunity to speak to someone facing death or dealing with the loss of a loved one, how might a biblical understanding of Jesus’ resurrection influence your ability to provide hope and comfort to them?

APOLOGETICS FOR A New Generation

CHAPTER 13: *Apologetics and Race*—Alison Thomas

1. What racist statements have you heard a Christian use the Bible to back up?
2. What prejudices might you be harboring against Christians of a different race?
3. What can Americans learn from the way Christianity is practiced in other countries?
4. If you were to paint a picture of Jesus, what would he look like? How does your conception of his race and cultural background affect your understanding of Christianity?

CHAPTER 14: *Homosexuality: Know the Truth and Speak It with Compassion*—Alan Shlemon

1. What are some of the ways the church has hurt its effectiveness with the homosexual community?
2. What are three practical things a Christian can do to reach out to homosexuals?
3. How would you respond if a Christian friend told you they struggled with same-sex attractions?
4. What are some of the ways we treat homosexuals or the sin of homosexuality different than other sins? Is this difference justified?
5. Can you think of some ways that knowing the truth about homosexuality might cause you to speak it with more compassion?

CHAPTER 15: *Abortion and Common Ground*—Stephen Wagner

1. Have you had a conversation about abortion in the past year? Was it productive? Explain.
2. Do you agree that discussing abortion can be the key that helps a hurting person find healing for a past abortion experience? Have you seen this happen?
3. Do you agree that elective abortions (those not necessary to save the mother's life) are wrong? What aspects of this belief are difficult for you to accept?
4. Many people say they think abortion is wrong but it should be legal. Can you identify with this belief? Is there a sound defense for the view?
5. Stephen believes having a conversation with a friend can sometimes be much harder than having a conversation with a stranger. Can you think of a few people you know well with whom you've never discussed abortion? Why haven't you discussed the topic? What are your fears about discussing abortion with this person? Do you lack confidence in your views, courage to share them, or do you lack practical tools?



APOLOGETICS FOR A New Generation

CHAPTER 16: *Defending Femininity*—Jonalyn Grace Fincher

1. What do you find valuable about women, or if you are a woman, what do you like about being female?
2. Have you discovered any pagan (or non-Biblical) ideas about femininity in the church? If so, what are they?
3. How does Jesus' interaction with women prove his value for them? Some suggested passages: Woman at the well, John 4:7-30; Martha and Mary, Luke 10:38-42; Women financial supporters, Luke 8:1-3; Mary at the tomb, John 20: 1-18; Woman with hemorrhage, Mark 5:24-34.
4. Was the idea that Jesus valued women more than other religious founders a new one for you? Which comparison meant the most to you? Can you think of a few friends who might be interested in Christianity because of this comparative study?
5. Have you noticed women being blamed for any of the church's problems? If so, which ones? How can you act like Jesus and stand up for women in your local body?
6. How might a dogmatic position about complementarianism (some offices reserved for men) or egalitarianism (all offices open to women as long as they are gifted) prevent a person from meeting Jesus? What arguments can both positions use to show how God is a fan of females? (hint: TNIV, is God male?, all in the family)