

Defending Your Hope

Ponder: The hope of eternal life

Scripture: “. . . be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15 NKJV).

Why do you have the hope of eternal life? If someone asked you, could you give an adequate reason? Peter said you should.

First, he presumes that you really do have that hope within you. Remember, Biblical hope is not mere wishful thinking or dependence upon blind luck. Rather, hope consists of ardent desire coupled with the confident expectation of the fulfillment of that desire. Such hope motivated the early Christians to evangelize vigorously, as well as to endure plunder, imprisonment, torture, and even death rather than renounce Christ. No wonder people were asking them to explain why!

Next, Peter said to be ready to give a “defense” to those who asked for a “reason” for our hope. From Peter’s word “defense” (apologia) we get our word apology. It doesn’t mean to say “I’m sorry.” This apology is a logical explanation. We must defend our hope with sound reasoning. In fact, apologia is from the same root word as reason (logos, which gives us our word logic). There is no discrepancy between faith and logic. Biblical faith comes from the Scriptures (Romans 10:17), with abundant evidence that they are, in fact, the word of God. A proper defense of Christianity does not consist of personal testimony about feelings or opinions. Instead, it is composed of the soundly-reasoned presentation of God’s word.

Finally, in explaining our hope, Peter says to use meekness (gentleness) and fear (respect). God’s word is not a club with which to beat someone into submission, nor is rudeness helpful in defending the truth. May God help each of us to have the right attitude as we give a Scriptural, logical defense of the hope within us!