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Sunday, April 8, 2018  
Did You Know?

## Playing Offense

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect (1 Pet 3:15)

This is a great verse that summarizes our lives as witnesses of Jesus Christ. First, we make sure Christ is Lord of our lives. Then, we become prepared to explain our faith. Third, we do this with the utmost gentleness and respect. I love this verse for its succinctness in explaining how we are to live in this world. However, for many Christians, the “gentleness and respect” may be interpreted as something that is very passive and not active. Or, it’s taken to mean “not to offend,” as if that were possible. Remember, the Gospel, in and of itself, is already offensive. Because of this understanding, we Christians often times go on the defensive when it comes to explaining our faith. We even define apologetics as ‘defending the faith’, which of course has the notion of playing defense.

When, if ever, should Christians go on the offense? The answer is “Often!” If Christians never went on the offensive, we would never initiate a spiritual conversation, let alone go to foreign missions. Paul’s evangelistic model was to go to city after city, go to religious centers and to the market to communicate the Gospel with all who would hear. If they questioned his message, he would give a reply. Remember, Christianity is not merely a religion, making conversion a change from one religion to another. It’s more like the changing of worldviews—our system of belief regarding the way we understand reality and to have an evangelistic conversation about conflicting worldviews, we not only have to better and more fully understand our Christian worldview, but we also have to understand the other person’s worldview. We have to appreciate the good parts of their worldview, but more importantly, we have to help them see the deficiencies and inconsistencies of their worldview.

Let me give you an example. Imagine a coworker saying that she cannot accept the Christian belief that only through Christ can people go to heaven. How will you respond? There are two ways to go. Path A: explain to her more thoroughly the Christian belief and why it makes complete sense to believe this. This is playing defense. Path B: Ask her on what basis then, should God allow people into heaven? Why does she think her way should be the accepted view, over against the Christian view? Is that not also being exclusive like the Christian? Or, even before that, confirm their belief in God, in God’s holiness and justice, and the logical conclusions that arise from God’s character. Or, ask why she thinks God should allow anyone at all into heaven. Or, you can speak about morality and what the basis of morality is. Doesn’t any standard of morality imply that there exists a perfect standard? Otherwise, all morality is relative.

So, did you see what I did? We can play both defense and offence when it comes to apologetics. Most of us however, get stuck with our backs against the wall. That’s why we need to go on the offensive as well, and do it, of course, with gentleness and respect.

Attend the Reach Conference to get your offensive tools sharpened for the sake of the Gospel and our not-yet Christian friends.

Soli Deo Gloria.  
*Pastor Peter*