Stoa Apologetics Preparation for Monument Members

Season 22 Monument Release #9



Directions: Work through the source material in this download to help you understand this week’s selection of apologetics prompts. This release addresses approximately 5% of the total number of prompts you will need to be prepared for in your next tournament, so keep up the studying from week to week to ensure your knowledge in Apologetics. This week’s prompts are:

**Category 5: Christian Worldview Application (Part 1)**

1. Respond to the critique that Christians are intolerant and unloving.
2. What will happen to the people who have never heard about Jesus and the Gospel?\*
3. Why was Jesus known for associating with sinners? To what extent should Christians follow His example?
4. Compare and contrast God’s view of marriage with the world’s view of marriage.\*
5. Respond to the statement by Debasish Mridha: “There is no absolute truth. There is only your truth.”
6. Respond to Dwight L. Moody’s quote: “Church attendance is as vital to a disciple as a transfusion of rich, healthy blood to a sick man.”\*
7. Respond to the belief that everyone will be saved eventually because of God’s unconditional love.\*

\*This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. A worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

For a list of all the prompts for the year and all other downloads for NCFCA apologetics, visit your download page at <https://club.monumentmembers.com/stoa-apologetics/download-category/stoa-apologetics>.

Christian Intolerance *by Maggie Topper*

Respond to the critique that Christians are intolerant and unloving.

Bible Verses

1 Peter 3:15

Colossians 4:6

John 14:6

Matthew 7:13-14

Quotations

“Jesus is not one of many ways to approach God, nor is He the best of several ways; He is the only way. - A.W. Tozer

“If you believe people could be going to hell, and you think that it’s not really worth telling them this because it would be socially awkward, how much do you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?” - Atheist, Penn Jillette

“Remember! It is Christianity to love your neighbors as our self. It is Christianity to be gentle, merciful and forgiving!”- Charles Dickens

“What kind of monster would I have to be to believe everything I do and not tell people about it? You’re asking me to hold the free cure of eternal cancer and withhold it from people who desperately need it. In short, that’s asking me to hate you, and I can’t do that.” -Webcomic writer, Adam Ford

Recommendations

https://carm.org/christianity/devotions/christianity-intolerant

http://www.gotquestions.org/tolerance-Christian.html

http://coldcasechristianity.com/2015/is-christianity-intolerant/

http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/obstacles-to-the-eternal-life-of-muslims

Commentary:

You’ve probably seen those “Coexist” bumper stickers when you’re driving along the road. You know, the ones with an Islamic moon, Star of David, cross, yin-yang and peace signs all used to spell out the word “Coexist.” It was created in an effort to promote the “tolerance” movement, and Christianity is constantly frowned upon for its refusal to “coexist” with other religions. This is the reason the question is being asked. It can be a tough one to respond to. We want to shout, “*no!*” of course we’re not intolerant! We bear a message of incredible grace and a salvation that is available to everybody! But that’s not really what people are asking, and we know it. Our culture has warped the definition of “tolerance” to essentially mean that if you voice disagreement with somebody, or if you try to say that what someone believes is wrong then you are an intolerant bigot. That’s not what tolerance has meant historically. Several hundred years ago, tolerance meant that you didn’t kill masses of people who held to different religious beliefs. Today, tolerance says you shouldn’t even talk about your religion because you might offend someone.

As Christians, we can’t live by that kind of philosophy. The message we bear as heralds of Christ *will* offend people. People don’t want to be told that they are sinful, broken and depraved, and if they see their need to be saved, they’d at least like to do it themselves. They definitely don’t want to be given a lengthy list of rules to live by. Does that mean we just stay quiet and say nothing? No! Christ’s last words when He left His disciples and ascended to heaven were to tell them that they needed to make disciples! As His disciples, that’s our job. We *must* share the salvation we have received, and trust God to use that obedience to accomplish His will. Not only because we’ve been commanded to, but also because it’s the most loving thing we can do for those around us. Think for a moment about what we must believe if we believe the Bible to be true. We believe that all people are sinners, and all sinners must pay the price for sin. That price is death and everlasting torment. We believe that we know the way out, and that our way is the *only* way out! Jesus makes explicitly clear that He is *the* way. Therefore to remain silent is to let people walk by when we know they are headed to the worst of fates. Like Adam Ford put it, it’s like holding the cure to eternal cancer and hiding it from people who desperately need it. But to share that message necessitates that Christianity *is* intolerant by today’s standards. The gospel holds the only way of salvation from your sins. No other religion holds the truth. To teach and believe those sentences is not going to gain you a great amount of popularity in our world. By today’s definition, then, Christianity isa religion of intolerance. But we don’t need to be ashamed of that. We should never be ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16)!

Now this doesn’t mean that Christians should act hateful towards people who hold differing beliefs. Christ never says that we should be harsh or rude to people who disagree with us. In fact, He teaches quite the opposite: He tells us that the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. He tells us that when people curse at and hate us, we must turn the other cheek. Paul tells us to imitate him as he imitates Christ, and Christ showed immense amounts of grace, love, and gentleness to people that despised Him. He died for them! Peter tells us that we must show gentleness and respect to anyone who asks us about our faith (1 Peter 3:15). Someone who says they are a Christian and then turns around and treats another person with cruelty or incivility does not fully grasp the gospel. Christianity does teach that it is the only way to God, but it also teaches that its followers must be loving and gracious to those around them.

It is very important that you understand the above concepts before you write this speech. You need to get your mind around what the question is really asking before you jump into answering it. And you need answer in a Christ-like, gracious manner. With that said, there are a lot of different ways to go about answering this question. You can honestly answer the question with either “yes” or “no” and have logical, persuasive support. But you have to identify what definition of tolerance you are dealing with. Are you going to speak to society’s definition of tolerance, or the historical understanding of the term? Either is legitimate, and either could make for a great speech! I do believe the former is more pertinent, and will prepare you more for answering someone asking this today, but you might be able to make the latter relevant and tie-in to today’s issues on the subject. Consider your own personal beliefs on the issue, and how you will approach it from your perspective.

Once you have decided on and explained the definition you’ll be using to answer the question, you can get to the heart of it. If you decide to go by the route of answering “yes,” explain why Christianity is intolerant by today’s standards because of its teachings on the narrow road of salvation. But don’t just leave it there. Explain why it’s so important that you share the great news of Christ, and why you cannot abide by society’s standards on tolerance. Point out that if the goal of “coexistence” is to promote greater kindness, love, and respect between disagreeing people, then the loving thing for you to do is share the gospel. The Penn Jillette quote is a really strong support for this point. He’s a famous magician and very vocal atheist, but he strongly agrees that Christians ought to evangelize. We cannot believe the things we do and not tell people. It’s almost cruel when you think about it.

There are so many nuances to this question, and so much to dive into! Six minutes is hardly enough to address it all, but it’s an incredibly important question to be able to answer. Due to the rise in the tolerance movement, this is one of the most frequently asked questions on Stoa’s list. You will most likely have to discuss it with people in the real world at least a couple times. This is why you MUST remember to answer this question with an incredible amount of love, respect, and graciousness. This is practice for how you will represent Christ when you are really being asked this question. Be a faithful bearer of His message.

Eternity for Unbelievers

What will happen to the people who have never heard about Jesus and the Gospel?

This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. This worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

Bible Verses

Quotations

Recommendations

Commentary

Sinners *by Zack Seals*

Why was Jesus known for associating with sinners? To what extent should Christians follow His example?

Bible Verses

*God hates sinners:* Psalm 5:5-6, Psalm 11:5, Leviticus 20:23, Proverbs 6:16-19, Hosea 9:15, John 3:36

*God is love:* Psalm 103:8-14; Psalm 118; John 3:16; 1 John 3:16, 4:7-8, 16

*How both are displayed:* Romans 5:5-11, 2 Corinthians 5:21

Quotations

“The gospel reveals eternal realities about God that we would sometimes rather not face. We prefer to sit back, enjoy our clichés, and picture God as a Father who might help us, all while ignoring God as a Judge who might damn us.” – David Platt, *Radical*

Recommendations

*Follow Me* by David Platt, Chapter 2

*Radical* by David Platt, Chapter 2

“The Scandal of the Gospel,” Sermon by David Platt, preaching on Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Commentary

NOTE: This prompt was originally written as, “Does God hate the sin but love the sinner?”

This is a powerful, yet extremely common statement that is all too frequently assumed to be true without a full examination of important biblical passages. The short answer to the question is both yes and no. Although that isn’t all that can be said, it needs to be clearly explained as a foundational point before the main thesis of the speech is reached. Remember, this question is the perfect gateway to the Gospel and it needs to be powerfully displayed in your presentation. Whether you are in a room in competition or on the street with a random stranger, this question is an excellent way to show the beauty of God’s message of salvation. How does this message of salvation begin? It must start with the nature of who God is.

There is absolutely no problem with there being “sin” or a “sinner” in any state if there is not an absolutely holy and morally pure God who is just enough to condemn a guilty person. If the “God” being asked about in the question does not possess these qualities then the very definition of “sinner” has been redefined before you even get to an answer. Recognize that the biblical explanation of God’s holy and righteous nature is essential to setting up your answer to the question. A brief review will be helpful. The Bible says that God’s very nature is one that is holy (Leviticus 19:2), and therefore, it cannot look upon any evil (Habakkuk 1:13). The result of having this perfectly holy nature is that He not only always does what is right (Genesis 18:25) but that He is utterly and completely righteous as well (Psalm 7:9).

What then is the consequence of these clear truths? God hates unrighteousness. Therefore, God hates sinners. It is an unwarranted assumption of the question to somehow divide into two categories a “sin” and a “sinner” as if God views them in a separate way. In Romans 7:18 Paul says “For I know that nothing good dwells in me that is my flesh.” It is a fundamental part of human nature to oppose God and therefore it is a necessary component of a sinner to act in accordance with his nature (Romans 8:5-8). Once this close connection is realized, God’s righteous hatred of both the sin and the sinner begins to become clearer. Listen to the perspicuity with which the author of Psalms describes the nature of God. It says in Psalm 5:5-6 that “The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evil doers. You destroy those who speak lies; the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.” Notice the verse does not distinguish between the *action* of the man and the *man itself* like the question is asking you to do. The verse says the Lord not only hates evil, but that he also abhors the *man* committing the evil*.* This isn’t an isolated occurrence though. Take another example in the book of Leviticus for example. It says in Leviticus 20:23 “And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation that I am driving out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore *I detested them” (*emphasis mine). Hate, abhor, and detest are the words found to describe the sinner both individually as well as nationally, and this is only after an examination of two verses! In fact, the verses could be multiplied.[[1]](#footnote-1)

We must not end there though, for the clear witness of Scripture is also that God is loving. Indeed, it not only states that God is loving as an action that He does but as a description of the very nature of who God is! 1 John 4:7-8 is startlingly direct when it states the reason we are to love one another is precisely because God is love. John 3:16 undoubtedly shows this love on display. In summary then, the Bible presents us with these two propositions:

1. God hates sinners, and
2. God loves sinners.

How are we to answer this apparent contradiction?

The cross. It *must* go back to the cross. It is only at the cross of Christ on Golgotha where God’s *hatred* of sinners was poured out in a demonstration of His *love* for sinners at the same time. The beauty of the amazing love that God has for his children is that “*while we were still sinners*, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8, emphasis mine). The incredible truth of the cross is that although Jesus wasn’t a sinner like every other human being he stood as our representative and was *treated* like we all deserved to be treated on that cross. 2 Corinthians 5:21 powerfully summarizes the Gospel when it says “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” The perfect God-man Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, *was made to be sin*! How was this done? Did Jesus become a sinner? Of course not! 1 Peter 2:24 explains “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree”. The very sin that deserved God’s unyielding wrath was *borne* by Christ on the cross so that he was treated as a sinner in the way we were meant to be treated.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The cross saves us from our sin and solves any apparent contradiction that may arise between God’s hatred of sinners and love for sinners. Both statements are true and both are left unanswered unless the wonder of the cross is proclaimed. Praise be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit forever.

Marriage

Respond to the statement by Debasish Mridha: “There is no absolute truth. There is only your truth.”

This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. This worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

Bible Verses

Quotations

Recommendations

Commentary

Absolute Truth *by Luis Garcia*

Respond to the statement by Debasish Mridha: “There is no absolute truth. There is only your truth.”

## Bible Verses

Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Samuel 7:28

Psalm 31:5; 33:4; 119:160

Isaiah 1:18-20; 44; 45:22; Matthew 7:13-14

John 8:24; 14:6; 17:17; 18:37-38; Acts 4:12

Hebrews 4:12-13; Revelation 20:11-15

## Quotations

“Truth by definition is exclusive. If truth were all-inclusive, nothing would be false. And if nothing were false , what would be the meaning of *true*? Moreover, if nothing were false, would it be *true* to say everything is false? It quickly becomes evident that the denial of truth as an absolute either ends up denying itself or else in effect not making any truthful assertion about truth.” –Ravi Zacharias (In his *General Editor’s Introduction* to *The Kingdom of the Cults* by Walter Martin)

“[A]ll truth, by definition, is very narrow. It has one right answer and many wrong answers. For example, 2 + 2 = 4, not 5, not 11, 67 (one right answer and many wrong answers). There is only one person who is the president of the United States right now (one right answer and many wrong answers). I would expect when it comes to eternity that there would one right answer and many wrong answers. And that is exactly the case. There is only one truth, and it's found in the Bible...People need to think about *truth* rather than just *belief*. I might believe that the earth is flat, but it isn't. I might believe the sky is green, but it isn't. I might believe you will send me a thousand dollars, but you probably won't! We must help people to distinguish between their beliefs and what is true.” - Mark Cahill, *One Thing You Can't Do in Heaven*

## Recommendations

<http://carm.org/are-there-absolutes>

## Commentary

NOTE: This prompt was originally worded, “How do you know that there is absolute truth?”

All the above quotations and sources are pretty self-explanatory. Your goal is to defend the absolute nature of truth and, as in the words of 2 Timothy 2:15, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Start with showing who would disagree with truth being absolute. Then, move to show the fallacious nature of their either pluralistic or relative notions. Lastly, I would highly to show the significance of why truth is absolute, moving the focus on the bigger picture that there is one narrow way and a broad path filled with multiple avenues. A person's choice on what he or she believes is truth and why will have eternal consequences. Truth is a matter of life and death.

Church Attendance

Respond to Dwight L. Moody’s quote: “Church attendance is as vital to a disciple as a transfusion of rich, healthy blood to a sick man.”

This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. This worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

Bible Verses

Quotations

Recommendations

Commentary

Unconditional Love

Respond to the belief that everyone will be saved eventually because of God’s unconditional love.

This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. This worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

Bible Verses

Quotations

Recommendations

Commentary

1. Please see the above list of verses provided. Take the time to read each one in its full context as you consider which ones to use in your speech. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Check Isaiah 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)