

2011-2012 NCFA Edition

# Fearless Apologetics

“So we speak, not to please man,  
but to please God who tests our hearts.”

- 1 Thessalonians 2:4

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# Table of Contents

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<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Introduction &amp; Overview .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Chapter 1: NCFCA Overview.....</b>	<b>13</b>
NCFCA Apologetics Category Questions .....	14
NCFCA Rules for Apologetics.....	19
NCFCA Ballot .....	21
<b>Chapter 2: Preparing and Presenting.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Understanding the Concepts .....	23
Illustrating the Concepts .....	26
Creating Your Cards .....	27
Presenting Your Speech.....	31
Tips to Excel.....	32
Two Sample Cards.....	33
<b>Chapter 3: NCFCA Questions Regrouped by Topic .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>The Existence and Nature of God .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Topic 1: God is Triune</b>	
Explain the meaning and significance of the Trinity.....	41
What is the role of the Holy Spirit? .....	42
<b>Topic 2: God is Transcendent and Immanent</b>	
Explain the meaning and significance of the omnipresence of God.....	43
Explain the meaning and significance of the transcendence/immanence of God.....	44
<b>Topic 3: God is All-Knowing and Eternal</b>	
Explain the meaning and significance of the omniscience of God.....	45
Explain the meaning and significance of the eternity of God.....	46
<b>Topic 4: God is Unchanging</b>	
Why is the unchanging nature of God critical to who He is? .....	47
Analyze and respond to the statement, “The Old Testament God is a God of hate while the New Testament God is a God of love.” .....	48
<b>Topic 5: God is Holy</b>	
Explain the meaning and significance of the holiness of God.....	49
Explain the meaning and significance of the righteousness of God.....	50
Analyze and respond to the statement, “If God understands my humanity and sin nature better than I do, why does He still hold me accountable for what I cannot help doing?” .....	51

# Introduction & Overview

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The following manual was put together to help students prepare to speak on any of the 105 doctrinal or apologetics questions from the NCFCA category.

What is the NCFCA? The National Christian Forensics and Communications Association ([www.ncfca.org](http://www.ncfca.org)) is an organization that facilitates speech and debate competitions for homeschooled students.

Apologetics is a limited preparation event in which the speaker chooses 3 questions (out of a possible 105), selects one of those three, prepares a speech for four minutes and then speaks about that topic for up to six minutes.

As stated by the NCFCA, *“The goal of apologetics is to motivate students to study the core issues of their faith and be prepared to articulate a defense of what they believe. Students may come into the event with as much preparation, research, and topic organization as they desire.”*

This manual is meant to be an aid to help the families prepare for the event. The 100 questions can be overwhelming! But this manual is meant to make the process more doable. It can be used by a student alone, in a classroom or club setting, or even by those not desiring to compete.

This manual has three chapters:

- 1. NCFCA and Overview.** In this chapter, you will find the questions, the rules, FAQ and the ballot the judges will be using. Read this chapter carefully! Students have been disqualified for not following the rules.
- 2. Preparing and Presenting.** This chapter contains tips on how to prepare and how to present the material.
- 3. NCFCA Questions Regrouped by Topic.** In this chapter, you will find the questions rearranged and grouped together in a way that allows the student to create more cards (or at least know more subjects) while studying less material. It groups duplicate questions together. This should allow a student to become conversant in a number of subjects more quickly and make the questions seem less overwhelming.

Beginning students can adequately prepare for competition by mastering about 30 cards. Since some questions are related and the student pulls 3 choices from which he or she is allowed to choose one, the odds are favorable that the student will have a familiar question.

You will find that the questions are keyed to readings in:

**Theology** - Wayne Grudem's - *Systematic Theology* (ST) and his smaller book *Bible Doctrine* (BD).

**Apologetics** - Josh McDowell's *A Ready Defense* and Paul Little's *Know Why You Believe*.

Suggested memory verses are marked with an bold **M**. Key verses are marked with a **K**. Many questions have suggested weblinks.

## **The Real Goal**

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However, let's step back a bit and remember the real goal. The NCFCA competitions are merely *the means* to help motivate the student to study. The real goal we have is to ground the student in the Scriptures and to equip them to speak to both believers and unbelievers *for the rest of their lives*. It will be good to remind our students of that fact. NCFCA judging can be very subjective. In addition, what counts as success with the Lord may be very different than what seems like success in tournaments.

My prayer is that the student who studies this material would be like Apollos of old (Acts 18:24ff). Scripture says Apollos was: **mighty** in the Scriptures, **fervent** in heart, **humble** and **teachable**, **eloquent** in speaking to believers, and **eloquent** in speaking to unbelievers.

Let's make each of these characteristics our prayer as we go through this material.

For more information visit [www.theapollosproject.com/apologetics/](http://www.theapollosproject.com/apologetics/) or contact me at [chap@chappettis.com](mailto:chap@chappettis.com).

# Understanding the Concepts

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An excellent speech consists of a clear and logical explanation of the topic along with supporting Scriptures and illustrations. The speaker will present the speech in a winsome, conversational manner with only minimal glancing at his or her notecards.

So how do you prepare to do this for any of the questions?

There are four distinct steps. You need to:

1. Understand the Concepts
2. Illustrate the Concepts
3. Record these ideas by creating cards
4. Present them in a winsome manner

## Help in Understanding the Concepts

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A quick glance through the Table of Contents will reveal that the questions are not covered in the same order as presented on the NCFCA website. Why is that? I have chosen to group similar questions into twenty-four topics. This regrouping is one of the unique features of the *Fearless Apologetics Workbook*. It equips you to cover all the questions more quickly and efficiently. Some Apologetics questions are identical and the same speech can be given for either. Others are so similar that they can be covered at the same time. Let the Table of Contents guide you through the study of the questions.

## Tips on Understanding the Concepts

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If you are part of a class or club, you will be spending time in class working on the concepts. It is important that you do the reading ahead of time and come ready for discussion. It is also important that you take notes in class and ask questions when you are not sure. We will also be noting the key Scriptures to focus on for each question.

In addition, you should be able to tie in many of the sermons you hear over the next weeks. Many sermons or small group lessons will touch on these topics directly or indirectly. If you become aware, you will hear much theology over the next months. Listen carefully and note the good points, illustrations, and quotations you hear over the next year. Write them down in your notebook even if our class has not covered the subject yet. These notes will “prime the pump” when you want to write a card on this topic.

## Textbooks to Understand the Concepts

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**Theology:** I recommend either of the following two textbooks for the theology part and have cross-referenced to pages in these. Certainly, other theology introductions are helpful. Every family ought to have a readable theology book.

- *Systematic Theology* - Wayne Grudem. This will serve as our textbook for the theology questions.

# Creating Your Cards

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It's one thing to understand the ideas and have great illustrations. It is quite another to have those for 30-60 questions. As my pastor used to say years ago, "A short pencil is better than a long memory." In other words, writing it down beats trying to remember it. The following are some steps to take in creating your cards.

## **Step 1 - Create a Rough Draft on Paper**

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In the next chapter of this handbook, there is a page for each question. On each page is a section for you to record:

1. Key Scriptures
2. Key ideas about this doctrine or question
3. Key illustrations that you think of, find in research or hear used that will help the listener.
4. Key applications for your life and the life of others, and why what you're talking about should matter to the listener.

As you begin covering this material you will see that some questions overlap with the others. These questions have been grouped together for you. By understanding the key concepts in each category, you will be able to discuss some of the other questions in the category. This will allow you to research less than the 105 questions but still be prepared. Preparing all the questions in a year can be an overwhelming task.

## **Step 2 - Discussing Your Research with Your Club**

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As you research different questions, you will bring this research to the class/club. You will share the material that you have learned and also learn from them. You do have the right not to share all the illustrations you find or think of if you do not desire. However, in the spirit of cooperation, you need to share most of what you find.

Likewise, in the spirit of integrity, you must do the work of the class/club. To do little or no outside research and yet benefit from the others is not fair. In my class, I reserve the right to dismiss anyone from class for lack of participation.

## **Step 3 - Create Your Cards with the Template**

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Once you have done your research and taken notes in this manual and discussed it with your classmates, you will want to create your note cards. Typing them on a word processor should save time.

Setting up your own template in Microsoft Word or another word processor is fairly simple. There is typically a "page setup" function that allows you to adjust margins, paper size, and layout view. You may further adjust headings and styles to make your cards look exactly the way you want. Another helpful suggestion is to create a table of contents using the word processor's tool (most processors have them). This will allow you to view all your topics in outline view and go directly to the card you want.

## Two Sample Cards

The following cards are taken from several students, laid out on 4x6 cards. This first example provides illustrations, concepts, verses and application as well as highlighting with bold, italics and spaces. Notice how it follows the outline we talked about previously.

### ***Explain the meaning and significance of the Grace of God***

- In a recent Dennis the Menace cartoon, there was a vivid picture of grace. Dennis was walking away from the Wilson's house with his friend Joey. Both boys had their hands full of cookies. Joey asked, "I wonder what we did to deserve this?" Dennis answered, "Look Joey, Mrs. Wilson gives us cookies, not because we're nice, but because *she's* nice."
- Like this comic strip, our names could easily be replaced for Dennis and God could be substituted for Mrs. Wilson. **The good that comes our way is not because we're good, but because God is so good.**

What is grace? Millard J. Erickson, author of the book *Christian Theology*, says, "Grace means that God supplies us with undeserved favors. He requires nothing from us."

**(Matt 5:45b)** "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

**Today, I'd like to look at three points in regards to God's grace.**

1. Grace is unmerited favor
2. Grace is the only way we can be saved
3. God's grace draws us to Himself

## **TOPIC 3: Explain the meaning and significance of the eternity of God.**

### **Suggested Readings:**

Grudem-ST, pp. 168-173

Grudem-BD, pp. 76-78

[www.theopedia.com/Eternality\\_of\\_God](http://www.theopedia.com/Eternality_of_God)

Tozer - [www.heavendwellers.com/hdt\\_chapter\\_7\\_koh.htm](http://www.heavendwellers.com/hdt_chapter_7_koh.htm)

### **Key Scriptures**

John 8:58 - **M**

Psalm 90:2, 4 - **K**

2 Peter 3:8 - **K**

Revelation 1:8 - **K**

Genesis 21:33

Exodus 3:13-14

Psalm 102:24-27

1 Timothy 1:17

Revelation 21:6

### **Key Points**

### **Illustrations**

### **Applications**

## **TOPIC 9: Explain the meaning and significance of original sin.**

### **Suggested Readings:**

Grudem-ST, pp. 494-497

Grudem-BD, pp. 213-214

[www.theopedia.com/Original\\_sin](http://www.theopedia.com/Original_sin)

### **Key Scriptures**

Romans 5:12 - **M**

Psalm 51:5

Romans 5:19

Ephesians 2:3

### **Key Points**

### **Illustrations**

### **Applications**

## **TOPIC 23: How does the reliability of Biblical manuscripts compare to other ancient texts?**

### **Suggested Readings:**

McDowell, pp. 42-55, NT 74-91, 109-121, OT 92-108  
[www.everystudent.com/features/bible.html#2](http://www.everystudent.com/features/bible.html#2)  
[www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-myth.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-myth.html)  
[www.gotquestions.org/Bible-myths-legends.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-myths-legends.html)

### **Key Scriptures**

### **Key Points**

### **Illustrations**

### **Applications**

## Appendix A - Suggested Memory Verses

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Memorizing Scripture provides numerous benefits for the life of a Christian. Memorized Scripture edifies our soul as we are working to memorize it. Memorized Scripture can be recalled at a moment's notice when we are speaking with an unbeliever and do not have a Bible around. In addition to those excellent reasons to memorize Scripture, the competitor who can quote Scripture from memory will impress the judges.

I have included the following Scripture to be memorized for one of two reasons. Many Scriptures I have included are "famous" Scriptures that every Christian should know. Other Scriptures I have included are useful for multiple categories.

Genesis 1:26 (Created in God's image) - Image of God, Trinity

Psalms 14:1 (Fool says "there is no God") - Existence of God

Psalms 19:1-4 (Heavens declare the glory) - Revelation of God, Existence of God

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (Set eternity in the hearts of men) - Knowledge of God

Isaiah 64:6 (Our righteous acts like filthy rags) - Man's sinfulness

Jeremiah 17:9 (Heart is deceitful) - Man's sinfulness

Jeremiah 23:24 ("Do not I fill heaven and earth?") - God's Omnipresence

Habakkuk 1:13 (Too pure to look on evil) - God's Holiness

Malachi 3:6 ("I the Lord do not change") - God's Immutability

Matthew 10:30 (Hairs are numbered) - God's Love and Omniscience

Matthew 22:37 (Love God with heart, soul and mind) - Purpose of Man

Matthew 25:46 (Righteous to eternal life, others to punishment) - Destiny of man

Matthew 28:19-20 (Great Commission) - Trinity, Omnipresence, Deity of Jesus

Luke 23:43 (Today you will be with me in Paradise) - Destiny of Man

John 1:1-2,14,18 (In beginning was Word, became flesh) - Deity of Jesus, Revelation

John 3:3 (Must be born again) - Salvation, Regeneration

John 3:16-18 (God so loved the world) - Salvation, God is Loving

## Appendix B - Suggested Devotional Schedule

### **Topic 1 God is Triune**

*Suggested readings: Genesis 1:26, Matthew 3:16-17, John 15:26, Matthew 28:19*

What difference does it make in your life to know that God did not create mankind because he was lonely?

What difference does it make in your life to know that your family display God in its unity and diversity? How will that help you strive for the unity of your family?

How does knowing that Jesus (God) was tortured for your sin, increase your love for him?

### **Topic 2 God is Transcendent and Immanent**

*Suggested readings: Jeremiah 23:24, Matthew 28:20, Psalm 139:7-10*

God is so great as to create millions of galaxies with millions of stars in each. Yet he love you and knows you. Is your heart filled with awe at this God?

Do you have times you are fearful? How does knowing that Christ is with you always give you comfort?

### **Topic 3 God is All Knowing and Eternal**

*Suggested readings: Matthew 10:30, Proverbs 15:3, Psalm 90:2,4*

What difference does it make that the Father knows you down to the number of hairs on your head?

How does realizing that God knows all things bring you comfort?

How does realizing that God knows all things bring you fear? Are there any secrets you need to confess to your parents because you realize that God already knows it?

What circumstances are you facing where you need to remember that God knows the end from the beginning?

### **Topic 4 God is Unchanging**

*Suggested readings: Hebrews 13:8, Malachi 3:6*

Do your feelings change day to day? Why is it encouraging to know that God does not change?

Does the God of the Bible seem miraculous but not so today? If God is unchanging, what does that say about his work today? Can you be encouraged by some of the people in the Bible?

### **Topic 5 God is Holy**

*Suggested readings: Isaiah 6:1-3, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 1:15-16, Hebrews 9:14*

How holy is God? How holy are you? What must holiness do with sin?

How do you become righteous?

What does God want from you? How does that honor God?

What has God done for you? Doing for you?

### **Topic 6 God is Sovereign**

*Suggested readings: Romans 8:28, Genesis 50:20, Colossians 1:16-17*

How does knowing that God is working everything that happens to you for good bring comfort?

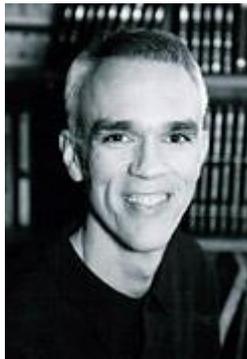
Even while Joseph's brothers were being mean, what was God doing?

Want to know the basics of the faith?  
Planning to compete in NCFCA Apologetics?  
Overwhelmed by the number of questions?

## **This Workbook can help!**

Written by a pastor and apologetics course teacher, this workbook provides:

- Introductory suggestions for new competitors
- Formatting suggestions for using word processors
- Organization suggestions for the card box
- Convenient grouping of the questions into 24 categories
- Suggested Scriptures for each question
- Suggested readings in theology *Systematic Theology* or *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem
- Suggested readings in apologetics from *A Ready Defense* by Josh McDowell or *Know Why You Believe* by Paul Little
- Web site recommendations for many questions
- Web site recommendations for illustrations
- Note-taking format helps student collect material during the year before working on a speech
- Note-taking format helps student think through the topic before composing the card.



Chap Bettis is the father of four homeschooled students, teaching elder of New Covenant Christian Fellowship, and author of *Evangelism for the Tongue-Tied* and numerous other booklets.

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