

Life of an Apologist

On the Importance of Prayer

By

Mark McGee

A Christian who determines to spend their life as an 'apologist' is committing to a life-long 'defense' of the Christian worldview. That includes the existence of God, reliability of Scripture, and reality of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

The Supernatural

Christian apologetics (faith defense) is a “supernatural” endeavor. We are giving “reasons” for believing in a supernatural, miracle-working, Supreme Being who exists outside of time and space and created the heavens and the earth. That means we need to be sensitive to and depend on our supernatural connection to this supernatural God in our life and apologetics ministry. The idea that we can accomplish anything supernatural without entering into communication with the supernatural is a bit naive, if not foolish.

How do we know how to communicate with the supernatural? Human beings have been trying to do that for thousands of years, which is one of the reasons I wrote *A History of Man's Quest for Immortality* (Fifth Estate Publishing, 2007). How would a natural being (like humans) know if they had successfully communicated

with a supernatural being (like God)? Simple. The supernatural Being responds to the natural being in some way that the natural being would recognize as being communication from the supernatural Being.

That's how communication between *beings* works. You speak, I listen, then respond. You listen to my response, then speak, and I listen and respond. And so on. We know that God hears us because He responds to us. Like other relationships we have in the natural world, we communicate with God in the supernatural. It's really quite simple, though deeply profound.

Most of the communication I remember as a child was with adults and other children who were close enough to hear me. The day came when I spoke to someone on the phone for the first time and that was amazing. They were miles away from me, but I heard their voice clearly. They

spoke and I listened. I spoke and they listened. Very cool indeed!

If I wanted to communicate with someone who was too far away to hear my natural voice, I called them on the phone. I eventually got into the communications business (radio & TV) and learned about two-way radios and other ways to communicate with people who were miles away. The variety of communications devices we have today is astounding to those of us who grew up mid-20th century.

Supernatural Connection

How do we know if we're connected to the supernatural in a way that gives us access to God? Excellent question! Access is vital. I can pretend that I'm talking with someone who lives a thousand miles away, but if I don't have access to a communication device that connects me to that person I'm wasting my time and looking pretty foolish as well. I reach for my mobile phone, dial my friend's phone number, he answers and we're communicating.

How do I speak with someone in another country? I could use my mobile phone, but it's less expensive to use Skype or some other Internet connection. I call them, they answer, and we're communicating. The Internet, like phones, gives us "access" to communicate with other people.

So, about access. Just because I dial a phone number or call someone on Skype doesn't give me access to that person unless they want to talk with me. I get calls almost every day from phone numbers I don't recognize and I rarely answer those calls. Access comes with *relationship*. If my phone rings and it's the number of a friend or family member, I answer it immediately because we have a relationship. Relationship is the access.

The same is true with God. We know that God knows everyone and hears everyone, but does that mean He "answers" everyone? I don't think so and here's why. Access to God comes with relationship to God. That makes sense, but how do we have a relationship with God that gives us access to God?

What I'm going to write next may be the most contentious and misunderstood part of being a Christian apologist. Access to God is "exclusive." How do I know that? Because of something Jesus Christ said almost 2,000 years ago –

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know." Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know

Him and have seen Him.’ Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.” John 14:1-11

Jesus claims a unique and exclusive relationship with God the Father and that the only way to access God the Father is by way of God the Son. We have access to God the Father *through* God the Son, Jesus Christ. How does someone get access to God the Father through God the Son?

“Then Jesus said to them again, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” John 10:7-10

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Romans 5:1-2

“And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” Ephesians 2:17-18

“To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.” Ephesians 3:8-12

“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” Hebrews 10:19-22

The message of our **apologetic** is that Christianity teaches access to God is *both* exclusive and inclusive. Access to God is *only* possible through faith in Jesus Christ, but faith in Christ is offered to all who will hear and believe. Communication begins with access and access to God the Father comes only one way – through Jesus Christ His Son.

Supernatural Communication

So, if we have access to God through faith in His Son, how how can we know if God hears us? If I say something to God, how do I know He hears me? And how do I hear back from Him? Do I hear His voice audibly? Does He write His response on a wall or a tablet of stone? Does He speak through a bird or an animal?

We're asking two basic questions about supernatural communication:

1. How do I know that God hears me?
2. How do I recognize His response?

We know God hears us because He “knows” us –

“O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall fall on me,’ Even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide

from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.” Psalm 139:1-12

This is one of the most comforting and profound statements in the Bible. God “knows” us; He really knows us. One of our greatest needs as human beings is to be “known” by others. Many people struggle through life because they don’t sense that anyone really knows them or cares to know them. That’s a terrible feeling. It often begins in childhood and can haunt us our entire life. We want to know and be known. We want to be understood and valued. That may be the highest emotional desire human beings have. God created us with that need and it is in our relationship with Him that we know we are known, understood and valued by the One who made us.

One of my favorite verses about how God knows us is in Ephesians –

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” Ephesians 1:3-6

Our parents get the opportunity to *know* us personally after we're born. Our siblings and friends get the opportunity to *know* us after we meet. But God *knew* us before He created the heavens and the earth and He "chose" us! How amazing is that? God knew us, chose us before Creation, and predetermined that we would be His children "by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Wow!

Being *known* and *accepted* by someone as great as God opens up every imaginable door for us in life. We are not alone! In fact, the God who created the universe and everything in it thinks so much of us that He wants a relationship with us forever. It is that fact that makes communication with God so important and so beautiful. How could we not want to talk with the one Person who knows us perfectly and chose us to be with Him forever?

Here is another favorite Scripture that speaks powerfully to how God knows and love us –

“For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.” Psalm 139:13-16

We will continue looking at the importance of prayer in the life of an apologist in our next post. Thank you for your interest.

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