

## How to Make Your Personal Apologetic Testimony, or PAT

### Introduction

In this video, Dr. Cynthia teaches a workshop on *How to Make a Personal Apologetic Testimony*, a PAT. We think that after *The Path of the Prophets* gospel method for Muslims, this could be the most important thing that we share with you. It presents a very **simple and practical way to explain the reasons for what you believe**.

Apologetics defend a faith – they are the reasons for belief. A **PAT**, or Personal Apologetic Testimony, is just that, It is **your personal testimony of why you believe what you believe**. It provides a framework for the reasons that support your faith.

In our post-Christian culture, a testimony of how good the gospel makes us feel is not enough to convince others. Our feeling is only a part of the story. We need to give strong reasons for our beliefs – reasons that are “objective.” This means that they are outside our personal experience. These reasons can be more convincing to other people, because they are not based on our personal feelings..

Apologetics and polemics (criticizing other faiths) have become popular in Christian circles, especially those looking at Islam. This is good. Christians find an abundance of evidence that supports their belief that Christianity is true and Islam is false.

But **Dr. C is concerned that believers may become overwhelmed with information from many sources**. It won't automatically be organized in their heads. They may become confused. This confusion can keep them from effectively using what they have learned.

Making a **PAT is a way for Christians to turn what they have learned into a powerful tool**. They can practice using this tool (“get it down pat”) and become confident with it.

### Parts of a PAT, Personal Apologetic Testimony

**It is easy to make a PAT**. All it takes is a little thought and organization. Once you have done it, you will be more confident and powerful in sharing your faith.

A PAT has three parts: personal, apologetic, and testimony.

1. **1. Personal** – To open your PAT you share a little about yourself. This helps you connect with your listeners. It also provides a basis for why certain reasons appeal to you.
  
1. **2. Apologetic** – Here you list the 2 or 3 top reasons that you believe (1 or 4 are options too).
  
1. **3. Testimony** – You briefly conclude, with a phrase that says why you believe these.

### Personal

We explained above that a testimony based solely on your personal experience is not enough. But you can use who you are to make your reasons powerful.

For example, Dr. Cynthia has a science background. Knowing that helps people understand why certain reasons for the existence of God work well with her.

But you don't need to be a doctor. One of two sentences about you and your experience could be enough to give your reasons context. For example, for an average Christian interested in Islam you could say,

*"I've been studying Islam and Christianity for several years. Here are the reasons that I am still Christian."*

### **Apologetic: Reasons we Believe**

We all have reasons for what we believe. They may not be good reasons, but they are reasons. For example, you might believe something only because you were raised with it, without examining it or other ideas. For most of the Muslim world this is the case. But many in the West also simply believe what they were raised with, whether it be atheism or nominal Christianity. Or we may be confused about what to believe.

If we only believe something because our parents or culture told us to, when we are challenged by situations or other beliefs we may become confused. A deeper belief will be thought out and have reasons.

The reasons that we believe God exists are different from the reasons that we believe in Christianity and not Islam, or not Buddhism. This means that **we could have different PATs for different situations**. For example, Dr. C has different PATs for atheism and Islam.

We encourage everyone to look for truth. In other videos we talk about ways to find it. We also encourage you to think logically. Believe based on what, after consideration, honestly makes best sense to you.

### **Personalizing Reasons**

True facts are *objective*: that means that they are not based on personal opinion. However, the facts that appeal most to each of us are based on our opinions, which in turn are based who we are, our experiences and personalities.

For your PAT we encourage you to think about what reasons you find most convincing. Choose 3 of them. Then let's put them into a PAT!

### **The Testimony**

Usually we think of a "testimony" as the story of how a person came to believe in Christ. But in the context of a PAT, the testimony is simply the conclusion of why these reasons work for you.

In psychology we learn that people argue about whether something is true, but they can't argue with how it makes you feel. So, in the testimony part of the PAT, you are not claiming that the reasons you present are true. They could argue with that. **You are stating that the reasons convince you. They can't argue that.**

Preference: An optional part of your testimony is including your preference. This is where you can add your feeling (pathos). But this should not be the main part of your PAT. If you include this you

would say something like,

*“I do believe that the reasons supporting Christianity are stronger than Islam. But if they were just equal, I actually prefer that God is love and women are not sex slaves in heaven.”*

They can't fault you for having a preference. Everyone has preferences whether they admit it or not. For many people their preference is simply to do what is easy, to go along with their family or culture.

The key to stating a preference is to keep it in the right order and perspective. It is *subjective*, meaning related to you not them. Your objective reasons need to be foremost, because you don't want them to say that your belief is just about your feelings.

One more thing: consider who you are talking with. Some people have more head needs than heart needs. Others have greater heart needs. For example, if talking to Muslim women who have been abused you might emphasize the love of God more.

Conclusion: We like to conclude with a one sentence testimony that states something like,

*“And so, I believe that **the weight of the evidence** favors Christianity over Islam.”*

or

*“To me, these reasons are more convincing than the reasons to believe Islam.”*

Every faith can make good points. In a PAT we don't get sidetracked into an argument that says they have no good points, or no evidence.

**In the PAT you are claiming that the reasons you present are convincing to you. They can't argue with that.**

They might not agree with you, but they can not argue that you find the evidence convincing. That is the message that they will take away. If you have connected well through the *Personal* part of your PAT, they will take your PAT seriously.

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### **Work Page for Making Your Personal Apologetic Testimony**

#### **PERSONAL**

Here give one or two sentences, more if you want to, about why you are interested or experienced in the subject of your PAT:

#### **APOLOGETIC**

Here give several reasons for why you believe Christianity (vs. Islam or whatever belief your PAT is challenging)

1.

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

### TESTIMONY

Conclude that the weight of the evidence convinces you that Christianity is correct.

Optionally include your preference if you think it would help with your audience.

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**EXTRA:** In the video Dr. C explains that the three parts of the PAT fit into the classical Greek method called “rhetoric.” These three are components of an effective argument. It is not necessary for you to know this to make a powerful PAT; but it would help you to know how to communicate better in any situation.

Here they are:

- **Ethos** – the integrity or respectability of the source. Why we should believe it. In the PAT, your **personal** background.
- **Logos** – this is the message presented. In a PAT it is the **apologetic**, the reasons that convince you.
- **Pathos** – that is the feeling behind the argument you are making. The preference of your closing **testimony** uses this. You use this when you speak of a loving God or your distaste for aspects of Islam.

by Dr. C of Christian from Muslim 2022