

1 Peter 3:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Analysis

The command "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts" (kyrion de ton Christon hagiasate en tais kardiais hymōn) means to set apart Christ as Lord, enthroning Him as supreme authority over every area of life, especially when facing opposition. This inward lordship produces outward readiness: "always ready" (hetoimatos aei) indicates constant preparedness, not occasional convenience. The Greek apologia (defense/answer) is the legal term for formal courtroom defense, suggesting reasoned explanation rather than mere testimony. Believers must give account (logon, rational explanation) for "the hope that is in you"—not just doctrinal beliefs but the living hope of resurrection and eternal inheritance (1:3-4) that sustains Christians through suffering. Critically, this apologetic witness must be delivered "with meekness and fear" (meta prautētos kai phobou)—gentleness toward opponents and reverence toward God—avoiding arrogant triumphalism. The balanced approach combines intellectual rigor, personal conviction, and Christlike humility, making the gospel attractive even when its content offends.

Historical Context

In the context of Roman persecution (AD 62-64), Christians faced hostile interrogation from authorities, skeptical questioning from neighbors, and accusations of atheism, disloyalty, and antisocial behavior. Peter's command prepares believers for both informal conversations and formal legal proceedings, where inadequate answers could mean death. The emphasis on "meekness and

fear" counters the temptation to respond defensively or disrespectfully to persecutors, maintaining Christian witness even under duress. Early Christian apologists like Justin Martyr and Tertullian exemplified this balance of reasoned defense and humble deportment.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What specific objections or questions about your faith do you encounter most frequently, and how prepared are you to give thoughtful, Scripture-based answers?
2. How can you maintain the balance between bold truth-telling and gentle humility when defending the faith, especially with hostile questioners?

Interlinear Text

κύριον	δὲ	τὸν	Θεὸν	ἀγιάσατε	ἐν	ταῖς	καρδίαις	ὑμῶν
the Lord	But	G3588	God	sanctify	in	G3588	hearts	your
G2962	G1161		G2316	G37	G1722		G2588	G5216

ἔτοιμοι	δὲ	ἀεὶ	πρὸς	ἀπολογίαν	παντὶ	τῷ	αἰτοῦντι
be ready	But	always	to	give an answer	to every man	G3588	that asketh
G2092	G1161	G104	G4314	G627	G3956		G154

ὑμᾶς	λόγον	περὶ	τῆς	ἐν	ὑμῖν	ἐλπίδος	μετά	πραΰτητος
you	a reason	of	G3588	in	you	the hope	with	meekness
G5209	G3056	G4012		G1722	G5213	G1680	G3326	G4240

καὶ φόβου
and fear
G2532 G5401

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 4:6 (Parallel theme): Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

1 Peter 3:2 (Parallel theme): While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

1 Samuel 12:7 (References Lord): Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

Colossians 1:27 (Hope): To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Titus 1:2 (Hope): In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Hebrews 6:1 (References God): Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

Psalms 119:46 (Parallel theme): I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.

Colossians 1:5 (Hope): For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

Colossians 1:23 (Hope): If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Hebrews 3:6 (Hope): But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.