

Text: John 18:37-38a

Focus Point: How do you engage someone who does not believe the Bible is relevant for today, who does not believe it has authority over people's lives?

I. Investigate with questions

A. The value of questions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

B. Dealing with our statement: *I don't believe the Bible is relevant for today and has no authority over the lives of people.*

1. Question to ask:

"You may profess many things, but you will always live what you believe." Charles Worthington

2. The problem with subjective morality:

II. Interact with intelligence and grace

A. This step has three components:

1. To interact you must be will to_____
2. Intelligence requires two things:
 - a.
 - b.

3. Grace requires humility and respect. Remember you may win the argument, but lose their _____.

B. Dealing with our statement:

1. Interact - willing to dialogue

2. Intelligence
 - i. Other Holy Books

 - ii. Science

 - iii. Philosophy

 - iv. History
3. Grace

III. Invite them to consider Christ

- A. Don't stop short of asking them to consider Christ
- B. Considering Christ does not mean they must repent at that moment
- C. Rely on the Holy Spirit to save
- D. Dealing with our statement:
 1. The Bible places value on human life
 2. Why God sent His Son
 3. No other worldview works as well practically as Christianity

Application:

1. Are you afraid to engage people when difficult statements/questions are asked? If so, why?
2. Are you prepared to engage people when difficult or challenging questions are asked?
3. What can you do to better prepare yourself for such situations?
4. Do you respond with grace when certain statements/questions tempt you to anger?
5. Do you live your life as if the Bible truly is relevant and has authority over you? If not, what are those areas and why?

Glad You Asked: Now you try it!

An Example: *If the Bible is really God's truth, then why are there so many different interpretations of this truth and why are there some many different sects of Christianity?*

I. Investigate with questions:

- A. Do you believe that because there are different interpretations and different sects, groups or denominations that this invalidates the faith? If so, on what grounds would that be based?
- B. Are you aware that this is not unique to Christianity? Every belief system has many sects or groups, even those who don't believe in God.
- C. Should truth be rejected simply because there are different groups who lay claim to it? There are many branches of science yet we do not disregard them because of the differences.
- D. How would you determine what standard of variance is allowable before you denied its validity?

II. Interact with intelligence and grace:

- A. Human nature has always been to have their own influence and expression of what they believe.
 1. Most of what is necessary to be identified as a Christian, is agreed upon by all groups:
 - i. The Bible is God's word and has ultimate authority over us
 - ii. Jesus was born of a virgin
 - iii. Jesus lived a sinless life
 - iv. Jesus died and physically rose again
 - v. People are by nature sinful and can only be accepted by God by believing in the sacrifice of Jesus on a cross
 2. Difference of interpretation is mainly on minor issues and the emphasis on those issues and are not central to the faith
 - i. *Unity of belief does not always mean uniformity of expression.* Ravi Zacharias
 - ii. *The problem is not with the Scriptures, the problem is the way people sometime interpret it, we should not fault the source because of the way it is used or abused.*
Ravi Zacharias
- B. The reason the Bible was put together so quickly in the life history of the church was due to the fact so many people were bringing in serious beliefs that were actually contrary to what Jesus taught
 1. As it was then, it continues today, there will always be groups (even those that are heretical and yet call themselves Christian that are not), that differ on minor issues
 2. The uniqueness of the Bible, even in its many translations, agree upon 99% of the content and again do not disagree on any of the core issues

III. Invite them to consider Christ:

- A. Considering the fact most Christian groups agree on the core issues, what impact do you see those core issues having on your life?
- B. Are there core issues of Christianity you simply don't agree with and if so, why? Is that based on your concern about the different interpretations and groups or is there another reason?
- C. Do you think it's possible for God to allow the differences that do exist and for Him to still be able to communicate what's necessary for you to live in the way that honors Him and cares for others?

You Try It Questions/Statements:

- The Bible is full of contradictions.
- Why should I believe the Bible or is the Bible true?
- Christianity states that Jesus is the only way to God/heaven. Why is there only one way?
- Why would God create people if He knew some of them would go to hell?
- What type of God would sanction the killing of children (i.e. the firstborn of Egypt)?
- Christianity is just a copy of other religions.
- I asked God to heal my father/mother/brother/spouse of cancer and they died anyway. Why should I believe in a God who would allow that to happen?
- Christianity was invented by people as a form of control; to scare people into doing or not doing certain things.
- As long as you live a good life and aren't mean to other people, you will go to heaven.
- Christianity has too many rules, I just try to be kind to other people and forget the rest.
- The Bible we have today has been rewritten so many times over the years, it's very unlikely any of it even closely resembles what the original authors wrote.
- Science has proven that miracles are impossible, so you can't really believe what the Bible says since it records hundreds of miracles.
- What about people who have never heard of Jesus? You mean to tell me they'll just die and go to hell because they were born in the wrong country and don't the wrong religion?
- How can you believe in something you can't prove?
- What if God doesn't exist? How does that change anything?
- If there is a God, why doesn't He give us an undeniable sign that He's really there?
- Where did evil come from?
- Why does the Bible condone slavery?
- Why does the Bible say that:
 - Homosexuality is sinful
 - Sex before marriage is sinful
 - Gluttony is sinful
 - Drunkenness is sinful
 - Not giving money is sinful