

GOOD ANSWER!

“Do you want arguments for soul winning? Look up to Heaven, and ask yourself how sinners can ever reach those harps of gold and learn that everlasting song, unless they have someone to tell them of Jesus, who is mighty to save. But the best argument of all is to be found in the wounds of Jesus. You want to honor Him, you desire to put many crowns upon His head, and this you can best do by winning souls for Him. These are the spoils that He covets, these are the trophies for which He fights, these are the jewels that shall be His best adornment.”

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

My former students used to call Colossians 4:2–6 the witnessing passage. It says: “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

In this chapter we will look at “how to answer everyone”—how to gently and lovingly explain to the lost what we believe and why.

A man I was witnessing commented as I answered his questions, “You’ve really thought about this, haven’t you?”

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

Luke 23:44

"Of course, I have," I replied. "My eternal destination rests upon my belief and trust in God."

What he was implying was that he had met a lot of people who say they believe in God, but who had no information to back up their belief. We should be educated believers. First Peter 3:15 tells us to "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." When witnessing, though, even if you answer every question, that does not mean the person will be saved that day. So don't feel pressured to have all the answers. The Spirit of God has to draw the lost to Himself; we just plant the seeds. The more we know, however, the stronger our faith becomes, and the more we can help the lost as they search for truth. So let's take a look at some of the basic questions and arguments you may encounter in witnessing.

"There is no absolute truth."

Always remember that all truth, by definition, is very narrow. It has one right answer and many wrong answers. For example, $2 + 2 = 4$, not 5, not 11, not 67 (one right answer and many wrong answers). There is only one person who is the president of the United States right now (one right answer and many wrong answers). I would expect when it comes to eternity that there would be one right answer and many wrong answers. And that is exactly the case. There is only one truth, and it's found in the Bible. We must continue to steer people toward the eternal truth of God's Word.

A great statement to use with both saved and lost people is: It doesn't matter what you believe, it matters what is true. People need to think about *truth* rather than just *belief*. I might believe that the earth is flat, but it isn't. I might believe the sky is green, but it isn't. I might believe you will send me

a thousand dollars, but you probably won't! We must help people distinguish between their beliefs and what is true.

At one of my high-school reunions, we had a group photo taken. I am 6'6", so as you might guess, I am always in the back row of photos.

This time, not only was I in the back row, but I was placed on a chair in the back row! One thing to look for in witnessing is a captive audience. The

We must help people begin to distinguish the difference between what they believe and what is true.

He'd been a popular football player in high school. His Rolex watch and large gold ring said he was fairly successful. I asked Jim what was happening spiritually in his life.

In explaining his spiritual beliefs, he said that, as long as he believed in his heart that something was true, then it was true. One issue you'll encounter frequently when witnessing is the concept of absolute truth versus relative truth. The belief that truth is relative to a given situation.

Here is one of the arguments that I use: "Adolph Hitler killed six million of God's chosen people. So as long as he believed in his heart that it was an okay thing to do, then it was definitely okay to do, wasn't it, Jim?"

At this point Jim is in a bind. I have had only three people answer yes to that question. Some people get caught in their argument and don't want to admit that they are wrong. Jim answered, "There must be some absolute truth." Then he turned and looked away.

Never end a conversation about Jesus on a negative note; He is way too important for that.

ONE THING YOU CAN'T DO IN HEAVEN

So I added, "Jim, if you ever want to find absolute truth, you can find it in the Bible." I could see in his eyes that a good seed had been planted.

One night after witnessing, I watched "Politically Incorrect." The purpose of the show is simply to have guests share their opinions for thirty minutes. This night there was a very conservative woman on the show who did an excellent job of stumping the others. One question she asked was, "In what situation is rape okay?" The other guests just sat there.

Think about it. Can you think of one situation in which it would be okay? Since it is wrong for all people, in all places, at all times, then the statement "rape is wrong" would be an absolute truth. And if there is one absolute truth, there can be two, three, or more. That is a great argument to help people reason it out and conclude that there must be absolute truth. You are then well on your way to being able to prove your position on the truth of God and the Scriptures.

"Can you prove that there is a God?"

People frequently ask this question, implying that our faith is blind while reason is on their side. In other words, we have blind faith, but they have calculated faith. I completely disagree with their assessment. God has never asked us to have blind faith, and He never will. Blind faith is what leads people into cults. We use calculated faith for most decisions in life, and we should do the same for eternal decisions.

Proving to the lost that there is a God is not difficult, especially since Romans 1:19 tells us that "that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them." One of the basic proofs for God has four points:

- 1) Creation
- 2) Design

GOOD ANSWER!

3) Art

4) Order

I was at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge one day and chatted with a theater professor as he was walking to class. He asked, "Can you prove there is a God?" I said, "Sure, I can."

By the way, a good question to ask an atheist or agnostic is, "What evidence have you found that proves to you that there isn't a God?" Atheists never have an answer to that, and many have admitted that they have no evidence to prove their belief. Therefore, what they have is blind faith. What they mistakenly accuse us of having is actually what they are using as the basis for their eternal destiny.

I explained to the professor as we walked, "Every time you see a shirt [name an item around you], you know it has a creator. Every time you see a watch, you know it has a designer. Every time you see art [point out something artistic around you], you know there is an artist. Every time you see order, like twenty Coke cups in a row, you know there is an orderer."

"When you look around the universe, what do you see? You see creation, design, art, and order. If every other thing has a creator, a designer, an artist, and an orderer behind it, why would you not think that there is a Creator, a Designer, an Artist, and an Orderer behind this universe?"

He was silent for a minute as we walked along; he could not refute the obvious. We kept talking. Ten minutes later as we approached his classroom, he said, "I am still thinking about that creation, design, art, order thing." It was so simple and logical, yet it touched his heart.

Romans 1:20 says, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and

Godhead; so that they are without excuse....” People will have no excuse before God if they claim there wasn’t enough evidence for Him, because the creation speaks of a Creator. How do we know a building had a builder? Just by looking! The building itself is the proof that there is a builder. This universe itself is the proof that there is a God. Period.

How do you know the Bible is true?

This is probably the most frequent question you will encounter. People want to know, as Pilate did, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). In John 17:17, Jesus says of God’s Word, “thy word is truth.” Definitely, all of the Bible’s internal information points to it being the true Word of God.

However, many people would accuse you of circular reasoning if you argued your case this way. Most Christians just say that they believe it to be true. But remember that it doesn’t matter what you believe—it matters what is true. So is there any external evidence that proves the Bible is true? You’d better believe it!

I usually discuss five points to show that the Bible is true. After I shared this information at a retreat, people told me that it was one of the most valuable things they learned.

1. *The Bible is the best-selling book in the world.*

That alone doesn’t mean that the Bible is true, but because it is the best-selling book in history, we should take a look at it. Approximately 150 million Bibles are printed per year! No other book even comes close.

If people spend time reading Shakespeare or John Grisham, why don’t they read the most popular book in the world? Challenge people with the thought that there is a good chance the Bible contains at least some truth; reading it is a great way to find out.

2. *The Bible claims to be written by God.*

This is a crucial point. Lost people believe that man wrote the Bible, but the Bible claims that God is the author:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God... (2 Timothy 3:16).

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21).

However, just because the Bible claims God as its author, does that mean He is? Actually, no it doesn’t. I could write you a letter telling you what to do, and sign it “Love, God.” But that doesn’t mean God wrote it.

We need more proof than that. One preacher stated that the Bible uses “thus saith the Lord” and similar phrases over 3,000 times. The Bible certainly claims its authorship is divine, not human.

These first two points may pique people’s interest. The next three are the hard evidence for which they are looking.

3. *Historical evidence supports the Bible.*

No one has yet been able to identify a single historical mistake anywhere in the Bible. That in itself is amazing. If man wrote it, we would certainly find historical errors after all these years—but there are none. So that you can study more on this point, as well as on the next two, I recommend that you read any of the following books:

- *New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson)
- *The Case for Christ*, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan Corp.)
- *The Signature of God*, by Grant Jeffrey (Word)

All three books provide powerful evidence that the Bible is not from the hands of man, but from the hand of Almighty God. I often buy one of these books for people who are truly searching.

4. Archaeological evidence supports the Bible.

To date, archaeologists have not discovered a single thing in the Middle East that has proved the Bible wrong. As a matter of fact, each additional discovery continues to prove it true. There have been more than 25,000 archaeological finds relating to people, places, and events in the Bible, and not one has contradicted anything in the Scriptures. That's incredible proof of the Bible's trustworthiness.

The three books mentioned above contain numerous quotes and great information about this archaeological evidence, so I won't try to repeat it here.

After citing some of the archaeological evidence for the Bible, I often tell people, "If you can believe the historical and archaeological evidence for the Bible, why don't you think you can believe the spiritual part of the book?" That often gives people food for thought.

5. Fulfilled prophecies validate the Bible.

If you do not have much time in a conversation, skip the first four points and begin with this one. Fulfilled prophecies not only prove the Bible true, they also are a proof for God.

I often ask people, "What is the only book in the world that contains hundreds of very detailed prophecies?" The correct answer is the Bible. The Book of Mormon doesn't;

the Koran for Muslims doesn't; the Bhagavad Gita for Hindus doesn't.

I ask, "If the text contains prophecies that do not come true, what does that say about that book?" People will answer that the book is false. And that's absolutely right. A guy I was talking with pointed to a trash can and said, "It belongs in that trash can right there!" He knew that if a book predicted something that didn't come true, the book could not be trusted.

I point out to people that when the Bible was written, 25 percent of the content predicted future events. And every single one of those prophecies has come true in the minutest detail, except for the few remaining prophecies about the return of Jesus Christ to earth. Statistically, there is no way that man can predict the future with 100-percent accuracy. I then ask people, "Who is the only one who can do this?"

One time I asked this question of an atheist, and he answered "God"—and he doesn't even believe that there is one! But he recognized that only God could know the future.

When people admit that, you have them. You can then explain that—according to the Bible, which is true—there is a Heaven and a Hell, and ask which place they want to go to. Then discuss the Ten Commandments, repentance, and the cross to show them their need for the Savior.

Sometimes the person I'm witnessing to will ask what some of the prophecies are. I usually use the following three:

- The Book of Micah (5:2) tells us that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem—not in Jerusalem, Atlanta, or New York. And Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-7).
- The Book of Zechariah (11:12,13) says that this Messiah will be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver. Jesus was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15).

■ The Book of Psalms (chapter 22) says that this Messiah will be pierced in His hands and His feet. This prophecy is amazing because it was written 800 years before crucifixion was ever used as a means of punishment, yet Jesus was pierced in His hands and feet (Matthew 27:35).

At that point many people say, "That's enough. You really know your stuff." Do you know what, Christians? We *should* know our stuff. And when we do, the lost appreciate it. They are looking for people who have taken a calculated step of faith in Jesus, not a blind leap of faith. The Bible is true. You can prove it, so don't ever be afraid of that question.

Remember that it is not circular reasoning to cite fulfilled prophecies, or prophecies that are coming true today (such as Matthew 24 and 2 Timothy 3). The Bible is not just a single book, but a compilation of sixty-six books written by some forty authors over 1,500 years. Its internal consistency and fulfilled prophecies prove its divine origin.

"Doesn't evolution prove the Bible false?"

The good news is that a wealth of information from the scientific community disproves evolution. This is a crucial topic for many people, and is the reason many do not believe in God. The more you know on this topic, the better. I use a four-step process to show that evolution cannot be true:

1. *Probability.* Let's say you had a cup with twenty dice, each labeled with a letter of the alphabet (a, b, c, etc.), and you wanted to roll the dice and have them come out in alphabetical order. The chance of this occurring is 1 in 2.4×10^{18} . And that is for only twenty things to occur in order. We have 206 bones in our body; how long would they take to appear in order? For 200 things to occur in order, the probability is 1 in 10^{375} . Mathematicians say that anything over 10^{50} is absolutely impossible.

2. *Fossil record.* Even Darwin stated that the fossil record should contain millions of transitional forms to show that evolution is true. Interestingly, the fossil record doesn't contain a single transitional form! It contains only complete kinds, but no transitional forms.
3. *Missing links.* Every "missing link" between ape and man has now been scientifically disproved. This includes Lucy, Piltdown Man, Peking Man, Neanderthal Man, Nebraska Man, etc. Derived more from fertile imagination than from fossil evidence, all have been shown to be either fully ape or fully human.
4. *Why are there no missing links today?* We see only whole dogs, cats, horses, birds, etc. We do not see creatures that are half cow and half whale, or half dog and half cat. They just aren't there.

I discuss these in more detail when I am witnessing. I chatted with one college student who claimed that, since evolution is true, there is no God. As I went through these four points with her, she could not argue them from a scientific perspective—and her major was anthropology. She was studying evolution, but she couldn't disprove these points!

The book that had the greatest impact on me in this area is *The Collapse of Evolution*, by Dr. Scott Huse (Baker Book House). It is the source for all the preceding arguments. Remember, science is on our side. And once you've proved the Bible true, it supports your position against evolution:

All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds (1 Corinthians 15:39).

And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that

creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good (Genesis 1:25).

“How can Jesus be the only way to God? Aren't there many paths to Heaven?”

As our society becomes more pluralistic, increasing numbers of people think all faiths are equal and that people should simply believe whatever they want to believe. Oprah Winfrey shared her beliefs one day on her show. She pictures God at the top of a mountain, and believes there are many paths to get there. We can take the Christian path, the Jewish path, the Muslim path, the Hindu path, the good-works path, etc.

When someone makes a similar claim, here is my response. If there are many paths to God, did the Son of God have to die on the cross for the sins of the world? Of course, the answer is “no.” If people could have remained on the Jewish path or the good-works path and still gotten to God, then Jesus did not have to endure an excruciating death on a cross as payment for our sins. Why would He die for us if He didn't have to?

The Bible says that He did this voluntarily. If He chose to lay down His life for our sins when He didn't have to, that would make it the most senseless, idiotic act in the history of the world. But study His actions and you will see that Jesus never did anything stupid in His entire life. He was sinless and always did everything perfectly.

Why would He lead the only perfect life in the history of mankind, and then pull the bonehead move of the millennium—unless it is just as He said, that He is the only way to get to Heaven? When someone asks you why you are so sure Jesus is the only way to Heaven, you might first want to respond, “What makes you so sure that He is not?” Try to let others prove their positions. You will find out very quickly that a lot of lost people are banking on blind faith.

You can then explain that, once we repent of our sins and place our trust in Jesus, we are “born again.” He comes to live inside us through His Holy Spirit, giving us absolute assurance that we now have eternal life.

Talk about the Ten Commandments, repentance, the cross, and what the shed blood of Jesus can do for them. The following verses may help you:

Hell is a very real place, according to the Bible... We need to convince people of its reality and warn them not to go there.

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22).

Jesus saith unto him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 2:5).

Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

“I don't believe in Hell, so there can't be one.”

Remember, it doesn't matter what we believe, it matters what is true. Unbelief doesn't change reality. We may believe that poison doesn't kill, but it does. We may believe that the earth is flat, but it is not. Continue to remind people to search for truth, and not just something to believe in.

Hell is a very real place, according to the Bible. Jesus spoke of it 33 times, describing its horrors in graphic detail. It is a place of eternal, conscious torment. We need to convince people of its reality and warn them not to go there.

“The Bible says we are reincarnated when we die.”

Many people today believe in reincarnation because it seems cool. Who wouldn't want a chance to start over and do it all again? However, in Hinduism, where the concept of reincarnation originates, reincarnation is not a good thing but a curse. Individuals must keep returning to life on earth until they get it right. The Bible certainly does not support reincarnation. When Jesus said we must be born again, He was referring to a spiritual, not a physical, birth.

Those who place their trust in Christ are born spiritually into God's family. Each of us, when we die, will go to one of two destinations—Heaven or Hell. We will not return to earth in another form. The Bible tells us:

When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return (Job 16:22).

...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

“Can God create a rock so big that He can't lift it?”

Can God create the biggest rock in the universe? Yes, He created everything. Can God lift the biggest rock in the universe? Yes, He is all-powerful. So what is the point of the question? There really is no point. It is just one of the stump-the-Christian questions that non-believers sometimes ask.

The answer to the question is “no.” It may bother some people when you say that God cannot do something, but there are actually numerous things that God can't do. He can't make a square circle. He can't create a round square. He can't lie. He can't sin. He can't not love someone. But the fact that there are things God can't do doesn't mean that He isn't all-powerful. It just means that certain things are outside of His character.

“When I am old, I will get right with God.”

When people make this comment, I always ask them, “Can you guarantee that you will wake up tomorrow morning?” Of course, the answer is “no.” So I just say, “You shouldn't put your head on your pillow tonight unless you know for sure where you are going to spend eternity.”

A youth pastor once said, “Whether you are old or young isn't determined by your age, it is determined by when you die.” It is an interesting statement. If a seventeen-year-old is going to die at age seventy, he has a lot of life left; relatively speaking, he is a very young man. If a seventeen-year-old is going to die a week from now, relative to his lifespan, he is a very old man.

If Satan causes all

We think “old” people have walkers *sin, and therefore* and wheelchairs, but that is not necessarily the case. You could be hanging out with “old” people right now who look quite young. It depends on when those people are going to die. Since you don't know how “old” they really are in a spiritual sense, make sure you take the time to share with everyone what they will need to know before they take their last breath.

The Bible says:

Go to now, ye that say, “Today or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain”: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away (James 4:13-14).

...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision:
for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision
(Joel 3:14).

“How can there be a God when there is so much evil and suffering in the world?”

Evil doesn't prove that there is no God; it only proves that there is evil. Some argue that a loving God wouldn't allow evil, so either there is no God, or He is not loving or powerful enough to prevent it.

Love by definition demands a choice. We can choose to love our parents. We can choose to love our spouse. We can choose to love our kids. We can also choose to love God, or choose not to love God. The evil that we see around the world is because people choose not to love God and obey Him. If we truly believed that people were made in the image of God, we would not do the things that we do to other people.

Be aware that when a person mentions evil like this, it might be due to a bad experience he has had. That is also true when a person is angry toward God or church. Very often, he has been hurt somehow. Try to find out what that event was, if he is willing to share it, and then minister to him. He is questioning the love of God at this point, so show it to him.

One young lady I talked with asked me, “What kind of God would take my dad away from me when I was nineteen years old?” She had been without her father for two years.

“Let me give you something to think about,” I replied. “The Bible says that all death is caused by sin, and that all sin is caused by Satan. So if Satan causes all sin, and therefore all death, who should we point a finger at when someone dies?”

We should be blaming Satan and not God. There was no death in the Garden of Eden until sin entered the picture.

There is no death in Heaven because there is no sin in Heaven.

After pondering this a few minutes, this college student said, “Maybe it is time that I give God another chance in my life.” Keep sharing God's truth in love, and people will listen.

“What about someone in Africa who has never heard the Gospel? Is he condemned to Hell?”

When people ask me this question, I challenge them: “If you are so concerned about the person in Africa, why don't you repent of your sin and commit your life to Jesus, then go and reach that person in Africa?”

You quickly find that the individual really doesn't care about anyone in Africa. He is just trying to stump you.

Explain to the individual that people don't go to Hell because they haven't heard of Jesus. They go to Hell because they have transgressed the Law of Almighty God, which is sin (1 John 3:4).

Titus 2:11, a very interesting verse, says, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men....” God wants to reach each person, and is making Himself available to all.

Romans 1:20 also tells us that God's invisible attributes are clearly seen in nature, so that men are without excuse. Since His grace appears to all men, but there are some who go to Hell, the bottom line is that people are rejecting God and wanting to selfishly choose their own way in life. This question is intended to be a rabbit trail. The person asking this is trying to distract you from the truth you were discussing.

So, after addressing this question, say something like, “When that person stands in front of Jesus, he may be able to say that he has never heard about Him. But when you stand in front of God, will you be able to say that you have

never heard about Jesus?" One night I asked this question of a man outside of a bar and he answered, "No, because you told me about Him tonight." Always remember to turn the question right back toward the individual.

"The church is filled with hypocrites."

I was talking with a yuppie in a mall one day who had no faith in God, but said his parents were committed believers in Jesus. He blamed all of the hypocrites for keeping him away from church. I asked him, "If I walked up to you drinking a beer and smoking a joint, and shared Jesus with you, what would you think?"

"You would be just another freak in the world."

"You are exactly right," I said. "That makes me 100-percent wrong, but that doesn't make God wrong at all."

I was trying to help him make the distinction between the actions of followers (or supposed followers) and God's character. I continued, "There are hypocrites in the mall today, and it didn't stop you from coming to the mall. There will be hypocrites in the restaurant tonight when you and your girlfriend go out to eat, and it won't stop you from going there. So why in the world would you let hypocrites stop you from finding out about the one true God who loves you unconditionally and wants to forgive all of your sins?"

He liked the answer so much that when his girlfriend walked up, he had me repeat the entire answer for her!

"There are so many religions; how do I know which is the right one?"

When you take the time to prove the Bible is true, people have evidence for the truth of the Christian faith. Use the Law, the Ten Commandments, to show people their sin, because it will carry them to the cross to show them how

only Jesus can get rid of their sin. At that point, they realize that Mohammed, Buddha, Krishna, etc., cannot help them.

Also, always talk about the resurrection of Jesus—the historical event that sets Him apart from any other human being. When witnessing to two twenty-five-year-old women at an arts festival, I told them that Jesus stated He is the only way to get to Heaven (John 14:6). One of the ladies replied, "That is an awfully arrogant statement to make!"

When taken at face value, it is an arrogant statement—unless of course it can be backed up. So I took the time to explain about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. When I finished, she agreed, "If that Man rose from the dead, He can make the statement that He is the only way to Heaven!"

The resurrection substantiates the words of Jesus. The eyewitness testimony of the resurrection is very convincing evidence that must be shared with the lost.

These are just a few of the questions you will deal with when witnessing. What I have suggested are not the perfect answers, but keep studying your Bible, and ask the Lord to lead you to those answers. You will only discover what lost people are asking by talking with them. So be bold, and get out there and talk with them!