

Proving God!

Question: “How can an individual read the Bible and still not believe that Jesus lived here on earth and what the Bible says He provided for us is true?” Why people cannot see the truth of what Jesus came to do and the life He offers to all who believe, is important to us as Christians when we seek to witness about Jesus.

As Christians reading the gospels we cannot begin to imagine how one can read of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and not be convinced He is not someone unique in all of history. We read the gospel accounts of the miracles that Jesus performed and declare, **“No one can do the things He does and not be of God”** The reality is, people read the gospels and never see the truth declared in them. That teaches us a great deal about our faith and how we are to share it with others.

The first truth is that, as logical as Christianity is to us, merely presenting it even in the most convincing way will not change lives. Americans suffer from a mistaken understanding of how effective education can be. We believe that if you properly educate an individual you will get the desired results. It has never worked that way. Any quick look at the results of this in education will clearly show it has not. That concept has crept into too much church thinking so we often believe that if we can somehow argue properly for our faith sinners will accept the obvious truth. It will not work in the church either.

Over the past 100 years various individuals ranging from Frank Morrison who wrote *“Who Moved the Stone”* and Josh MacDowell’s who wrote *“Evidence that Demands a Verdict”* and *“More Evidence that Demands a Verdict”* and Lee Strobel who wrote *“The Case for Christianity”* have effectively presented an intelligent case for Christianity. These books are a great encouragement to believers and have made an impact on those seriously searching but, as surefire tools of evangelism, they do not work even though when you and I read them we wonder how anyone can seriously look at the evidence and not believe.

There are at least two reasons why simply reading the Gospels or one of many books that present unbelievable evidence isn’t enough. The first is that ultimately Christianity is not about irrefutable evidence but about faith and faith is a commitment to that which ultimately cannot be proven. If we think we can prove Christianity, we really do not understand what faith is all about. It is not a blind faith, so those books are helpful in showing someone honestly searching or someone with a legitimate open mind the probability of truth. In the end, it is faith, it is a commitment to the fact that there is a God, that He has spoken and what He has said in His Word is true. There is no definitive proof for our faith and at no time does the Bible seek to present one. The Bible begins simply by declaring “In the beginning God” and makes no effort to prove that fact. Philosophy offers lots of proofs for the existence of God, but the Bible does not.

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Not only is our commitment grounded in an intelligent response of faith, making it difficult for some to accept when we try to prove it, but the Bible says Satan blinds the eyes of sinful man. Read John 12:37-41 and II Corinthians 4:4.

Jesus expressed an implication of this when he told the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. As the parable develops the rich man is in hell and he asked God to just send Lazarus back to warn his family. The response is that even if one were raised from the dead they would not believe. A miracle by itself will not convince anyone.

What does all of this mean to us as we seek to share Jesus?

First, we must never forget that when we seek to witness for Jesus we are involved in a spiritual ministry and Satan is our adversary who is not going to make it easy. In Ephesians 6:10-20 we read that it is not flesh and blood that is our enemy but the evil one, that is Satan. Because of that Paul noted we need to be careful regarding two things. First, he wrote that we are to guard our Christian walk, preparing ourselves for spiritual battle by putting on the armor of God. If we are seeking to live for Jesus as He wants us to and if we are going to be witnesses for Him as He has commanded, we need to equip ourselves with spiritual armor. That includes faith, an understanding of what we believe, a commitment to truth and a readiness to move as God directs etc.

Second, we should remember the importance of prayer. Paul challenged the Christians to be prayerful regarding themselves and specifically asked them to pray for him so that whenever he sought to make known the mystery of the gospel it would be effective. Evangelism will never be more effective than the prayer we put into it. To engage in a spiritual battle, and that is what evangelism is, we must rely upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit. That ministry is unleashed as we spend time in prayer for those we will witness to and for us as we seek to present Jesus. Witnessing to the truth of our faith is a spiritual ministry and it must be bathed in prayer if it is to be effective.

Another reality is that since we cannot argue for our faith, and ultimately we cannot, then our only viable option for demonstrating the legitimacy of our faith is the witness of our life. The world can argue with our theology, but they cannot miss a life that is committed to Jesus and is seeking to live consistently what it claims to believe and acknowledges when it fails.

There are two aspects of our testimony. One is the consistency of our faith. The world will not buy into a faith that is eloquently expressed on Sunday and ignored Monday through Saturday or loudly praised on Sunday but poorly whispered on Friday night or in the restaurant after church etc. That does not imply perfection but implies an attempt to be consistent and being willing to confess failure and commit to growth so as to minimize it.

The second aspect of that testimony is our honest demonstration of God's love to those around us. We cannot expect to impact others if we are not willing to make friends with them. We must

be willing to live out God's love in practical ways among those around us who are hurting, not simply because we want to reach them but because we want to display the glory of God in a practical way that defies denial. Find someone, not to argue into the kingdom but to love into it, remembering to wear the armor God has given and to bathe it in prayer.