

**General Topics :: Ever witness to an Agnostic?****Ever witness to an Agnostic? - posted by martymill (), on: 2007/4/16 13:00**

Hi,

Has anyone ever witnessed to an Agnostic? Are you a former Agnostic? I'd like to know how to witness to one. I've just met someone at work who claims to be Agnostic. It's my first encounter with Agnosticism and I know next to nothing about it.

I have started praying for his soul. I appreciate any help you can give me.

Martin :-)

Re: Ever witness to an Agnostic? - posted by JaySaved, on: 2007/4/16 13:22

I have not, in fact I am still trying to decide if they even exist. :-P

Re: Ever witness to an Agnostic? - posted by RobertW (), on: 2007/4/16 13:30

Hi Martin,

Generally agnostic is a person who believes there may be a God, but don't believe He is knowable. They are not willing to call themselves atheist because that would imply they 'knew' there is no God. So they sort of hang back in a place of uncertainty.

The more I read scripture and witness to folk the more I come to realize why the Lord places so much emphasis on believing in Him. He talked about doing miracles to increase the faith of the people. He raised Lazarus from the dead to this end also. These are supernatural manifestations of the glory of God. This is not a mental exercise. Paul said that his gospel was not with enticing words of men's wisdom but in demonstration of power. Why? So that our faith doesn't stand in the wisdom of man but in the power of God.

Systematic salvation generally does not work. Folk don't generally come to God in an a,b,c,d,e, type fashion. God has to bring the person along by revelation. There has to be 'light' manifest in our witnessing and preaching. The person has to meet God in the preaching. The approach of certain ministers in the Way of the Master vein is to show the people they are sinners and need to flee from the wrath to come. This has a certain effectiveness, but is still lacking. God has to reveal Himself to the person and they have to respond to Him. This is not an intellectual exercise where a person hears some words, agrees and then says a prayer. It is the response of the person to the Holy Spirit that is working to draw them to Himself.

So the thing you have to do is be sensitive to God and pray. God may open opportunities for you to speak into the person's life. They have to come to God by revelation. They have to 'see' as it were. Not agree with some facts- but respond to God who is calling them. They need a real experience with God. This can be a process getting to the point, but once God gets them there they have to make a decision. Again, not to be overly redundant, but this is not to get them assent to some facts about Jesus or God or any of that. They have to have an encounter with God that gives opportunity to respond to Him. God can use us in this process and will use us if we are sensitive. As opportunity arises God will give the words to speak. It may take time.

Often people know there is a God but they have a controversy with God and He with them. there is something standing between them and God that they refuse to give up. Like the rich young ruler. They may resist the Holy Spirit until they get as confused as a termite in a yo yo. As God is dealing they need to respond. The enemy will seek to steal all the seed that is sown. The key for us as ministers is to be available to God and sensitive to Him. Not to win arguments, but to be faithful ambassadors of God rightly representing Him. A good grasp of the gospel is essential; in this case, I think.

Re: - posted by martymill (), on: 2007/4/16 13:43

Dear Robert,

Thank you for your response.
I agree with you entirely.

Regards,

Martin

Re: Ever witness to an Agnostic? - posted by UniqueWebRev (), on: 2007/4/19 9:37

From what I have learned from my own family, my Dad, my brother, my nephews and niece, Agnosticism is simply a word to describe a resistance to change, and a great deal of pride.

I know, I've had to deal with it constantly. But since I am very like my Dad in many ways, I knew to watch him closely, pray, and wait. And it's been a long hard road.

After much intermittent questioning, I have learned three things from my Dad, who recently converted to Christ, (Praise God!) after my friends and I prayed for nearly five years for the Holy Spirit to touch him, open his ears, his eyes, his heart.

The Holy Spirit even gave me a song to sing - for nearly a year I sang it over and over each day, then the impulse seemed to be to lie back and wait. That song was replaced by others.

My Dad had a bad church experience as a child - total hypocrisy. He didn't know whether to believe that the Bible was true or not. Most of all, he didn't want to change, and flat out said so 6 years ago. He's 83 in August, healthy, and likely to make it to the Rapture if Jesus comes within 10 years. (Long lived family).

And then there is the family pride that he himself taught my brother and I. Control freaks and perfectionists all!

In the end, it was the Holy Spirit and a lot of prayers that slowly softened my Dad up, opened him up, and made him willing to believe if only he could be convinced. The Bible Codes (Equaldistance Letter Sequences) appealed enough to his logical mind to back up my claim that God wrote the Bible through men.

We changed prayer strategies. We asked the Holy Spirit to give him curiosity about Christianity. I smuggled a book or two of mixed revelation and Bible codes into his house. He knew I got them there, and teased me about it. He read them, or parts of them.

I ventured a word or two once or twice a month as he very slowly opened up, often snapping at me after one sentence "That's enough of that!"

But soon some questions came that I didn't even dare go beyond the simplest answer.

It was a long slow process, and a lot of prayers from my friends, a lot of begging God on my part to not let me face his death knowing he was unsaved.

After a year from his conversion he is being taught almost solely by the Holy Spirit, and a few leading remarks from me. He will not read the bible...not interested yet. He won't go to church...too many bad memories.

Yet I see him changing. He is willing to hear me speak a sentence here or there about prophecy related to the news. I've been able to tell him about heaven. And he took his first communion just this Easter Sunday, by agreeing that if I would say the words, he would amen them.

By praying, watching, waiting, dropping a few words, I have a small portion in my Dad's salvation, along with many others. Mostly I leave him to the Holy Spirit, and wait for the questions. Patience and prayer was the key, along with, I think, his increasing sense of mortality.

My brother is being difficult, and my sister-in-law too demanding. My brother's excuses for not believing - He read the Bible as literature in High School and could make nothing of it. (Who can, without the Holy Spirit, and a good grounding in the basic's of Christianity?)

And he believes that religion is a crutch. Alas, the family pride!

And my sister-in-law is a recent convert with extremely strong views who will not walk out Christ in front of him. In her own words, she has already tried that. In mine, she probably didn't manage it for more than an hour here or there, and her Bible-thumping put him off from the moment she converted, copying her parents limited, but fervently opinionated speech.

But she lives with my brother, and is his wife. I plead with her to be silent, yet I know, from experience with him, how difficult my brother can be.

I don't live with my father, although I speak with him daily, and he is but two miles away.

I am aware of the pride problem, and the change problem, and do not press him. The salvation and small changes I have seen are enough for me to let the Holy Spirit do his work. And, soon after he converted, I was ordained, and he actually will allow two or three sentences about God in the same conversation...but almost only on Sundays!

All this is summed up where I started. Pride, and a reluctance to change.

I will not say that I walked out Christ in front of my father. I would say that he slowly got to know me after my mother's death in 2000, and that between prayer, discretion, and a very slow, but steady persistence on my part, and my friends to quietly stand our ground was the right combination. But in all, it was prayer and the Holy Spirit, and not rushing him.

My brother? His children, also offended by their mother's style, and their grandparents? They hear much word, and see little evidence, I fear. I don't know. I have spoken to my nephews and niece, and they have agreed, for some reason, to not block out the possibility of God.

Yet I know my sister-in-law is a fervent Christian, if a clumsy one. And she would be the first to agree that she has no tact. Yet she does really well with strangers, and sows much seed, probably because she treads lightly with strangers. And yes, I do like and love my sister-in-law. But she would drive me nuts if she lived with me, and knows it!

Oh, if only my dad knew more, and would talk to my brother!

If only my brother's wife had my friends, that even my dad values, not because they are Christian, but because they are nice, interesting people!

For my brother disdains church in a way my father does not, never having experienced it, good, or bad. Evidently he dislikes all he's met who go to it. My hope is in his closest friend, my foster brother, who is a devoted Christian, and I hope a wise one, since they remain friends despite the religious difference.

Martin,

Pray a lot, and talk little. Be Christian, walk in the fruit of the spirit, and do not talk Christ unless your co-worker asks a question, and then, please, don't answer more than he asks. Non-Christians overdose on our devotion very quickly. And work situations are so touchy.

If you are nice enough, cool enough (I don't mean fashionable, but reserved) about your beliefs, holding them strongly, but speaking in mildness, and pray enough for a long enough time...there is hope.

Longsuffering is the word.

I hope my experiences help give you an idea of what you are up against, but give you hope.

May the Holy Spirit guide you in this, and all things,

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Blessings,

Forrest

Re: - posted by martymill (), on: 2007/4/19 11:06

Hi Forrest,

Thank you for your post. I'll follow your advice. Your story about your family was very inspiring.

Blessings,

Martin

Re: Ever witness to an Agnostic?, on: 2007/4/22 4:48

Hey Marty,

I was an "agnostic who read the Bible" for years.

When the conversation turns to "what ifs", silently pray to God for support in your argument. This is a spiritual battle. And Jesus will show you the chinks in the "agnostic's" armour.

People respond best to me when I am passionate, rational, and I ask them questions about what they believe. A.W. Tozer said, "Keep your heart warm, and your mind cool".

1. You need to *believe* in your God, or they won't. When you speak about Him, your face should reveal wonder, amazement, the "glory of God" like Stephen did - you can't fake this any more than I could fake my grade seven crush. If you love Christ, they'll know it. You're not perfect, but you ought to exhibit enough of the characteristics of Christ so he recognizes that "other" quality about you - like charity, zeal, love, faith, compassion.

2. You need to *think* before you respond to his ideas, good or bad. Think about scripture on the bus, at home, in the shower, wherever... meditate on the New and Old Testaments and THINK about the Word. Imagine questions people might ask you, then formulate answers. Do you have questions? Find the answers! If the Bible doesn't make total sense to you, how can you make someone else understand your point of view?

3. Lastly, since it's the Holy Ghost's job to convict people of their sins, not yours, don't accuse, berate, or judge - even if they don't agree with the Bible ("shake the dust off your feet and leave" and "don't cast pearls before swine"). Ask them what they think and believe, listen closely and remember details. If you respect their opinion, show interest in their view of things, and give them an honest chance to argue their point... then they (hopefully) will respect your opinion, show interest in how you view things, and they will let you argue your point (just don't get argumentative, stay friendly). As my mom used to say, "You'll catch more flies with honey than you will with vinegar."

The best witnessing approach I ever heard was my friend talking with an atheist.

Atheist: "I don't want your tract. I'm an atheist."

Friend (Raises eyebrow and points finger at man): "Evolution?"

Atheist: "Yes. I believe in evolution."

Friend: (Raises eyebrow again and points at man): "Animal?"

Even a so-called "atheistic evolutionist" has a hard time admitting he an unspiritual conglomeration of matter in the form of a hairless chimp. Praise be to the LORD!!!

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Hope this helps >:')

Re: - posted by martymill (), on: 2007/4/22 8:13

Hi Corey,

Great advice, thanks. It's great to get the opinion of a former Agnostic. I believe the coworker I'm referring to is genuine in his search for truth. As you say, I'll let God do the convicting.

Thanks again,
Martin