

SESSION SIX

*EVERYDAY
APOLOGETICS*

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BRINGING THE BIBLE INTO MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS

I. REVIEW AND INTEGRATION OF ARGUMENTS FOR THE BIBLE

A. Review the main points from Sessions 1–5:

1. Revelation, Inspiration, Inerrancy, and Authority
2. Reliability of the Bible
3. The Development of the Biblical Canon
4. Textual Criticism
5. Bible Versions

II. FRAMING THE CONVERSATION

A. Conversation starters: How to initiate a discussion about the Bible

1. Ask thoughtful questions.
2. Listen sincerely to objections, questions, and doubts.
3. Identify those in the conversation with other worldviews, religious positions, and sacred texts.
4. Find common ground in the conversation.

III. PRESENTATION OF THE PRIMARY ARGUMENT

A. Articulate a clear and concise defense of the Bible:

1. Write out your own reason that you believe the Bible is authoritative and can be stated in under five minutes.
2. Explain the importance of the Bible theologically.
3. Explain the importance of the Bible historically.
4. How would your answer change between a skeptic, seeker, or believer?

IV. ROLE-PLAY AND CASE STUDIES

- A. **Divide into pairs or groups:**
 - 1. One plays a skeptic or curious friend.
 - 2. The other gives a defense using one or more approaches (i.e. Reliability of the Bible, proof of Inspiration of the Bible, etc.).

- B. **Rotate roles to practice different responses**

- C. **Provide sample case studies** (i.e., “Your friend says the Bible is full of errors,” or “A teacher says the Bible is no longer applicable in today’s modern world.”)

- D. **Build your own five-minute defense of the Bible argument and share with the class.**

V. NAVIGATING COMMON CHALLENGES AND OBJECTIONS

- A. **Biblical Principles**
 - 1. With truth and love as Christ demonstrates (John 6-7) ¹⁹³
 - 2. Listening with the intent to understand (not just reply) ^{194 195}
 - 3. “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone” (Colossians 4:6).
 - 4. “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).
 - 5. “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1).

- B. **Dealing with emotional objections** (e.g., hurt by religion)

- C. **When not to argue: Discerning spiritual readiness**

¹⁹³ David Keehn, “Responding to Objections with Truth and Love,” The Good Book Blog, August 31, 2015, accessed on 6/16/2024, <https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2015/responding-to-objections-with-truth-and-love>.

¹⁹⁴ The Humanitas Forum on Christianity and Culture, “The Virtue of Listening – because there are no little people”. Feb. 3, 2015, accessed on 6/16/24, <https://humanitas.org/?p=3229>.

¹⁹⁵ Francis Schaeffer’s response is a good model, as quoted from The Humanitas Forum on Christianity and Culture, “The Virtue of Listening – because there are no little people”. Feb. 3, 2015, accessed on 6/16/24, <https://humanitas.org/?p=3229>. “If I have only an hour with someone, I will spend the first 55 minutes asking questions and finding out what is troubling their heart and mind, and then the last 5 minutes I will share something of the truth.”

D. Redirecting to the Gospel

VI. CASE STUDIES

A. A Conversation with William

You're attending a dinner party at a friend's house two weeks before Christmas. The discussion turns to the meaning of Christmas. Someone mentions the meaning of Christmas is the birth of Jesus as told in the Bible. Your friend, William, a thoughtful and studious agnostic, says,

"I have read the Bible and it is full of discrepancies and is hard to understand. It is just an ancient book that has limited historical value. I just don't think there is good historical evidence to believe that Jesus was anything more than a good teacher. In fact, over time the stories have just become legend. I'm not trying to be hostile to Christians, but it just seems like anyone who believes in the Bible is just old-fashioned."

William turns to you and says, "Do you believe the Bible is actually true? If so, how can you believe in such an ancient book?"

Questions:

Write 2-3 sentences on how you would initially respond to William and set the tone of your answer?

Write a brief outline on how you would explain the reliability of the Bible to William in 4-5 minutes

How would you conclude the discussion with William?

B. A Conversation with Omar

You are at your place of employment and a Muslim co-worker, Omar, wants to discuss the books in the Bible. He is intelligent, kind, and a devout Muslim, but suggests that the books in the Bible were randomly selected by early church leaders and are simply corrupt.

You confidently respond with an explanation of the canon. Omar respectfully disagrees with your position and states the Bible cannot be trusted.

Questions

How would you define the canon and its role in our Old and New Testaments?

Explain to Omar the three principles of how the New Testament books made it into the canon of Scripture?

How would you conclude your discussion with Omar?

C. Conversation with a High School Friend

You are at your high school reunion weekend celebration and having lunch with six old friends. It comes out during the conversation that Sharon, a former children's worker at her evangelical church, has deconstructed her faith. She states she had questions about the Bible that no one could answer, stating, "No one could explain the errors in the Bible or tell me how we can trust that the Bible we have today is accurate. It's like the telephone game—it all changes over time and you don't know what to believe." Sharon knows you are a Christian and turns to you and asks with a sarcastic tone, "How do you explain all the mistakes in the Bible?"

Questions

How do you maintain your composure with Sharon? How do you think through the concept of textual criticism clearly? Write 2-3 sentences on how you would immediately respond with respect, but confidence?

Write 4-5 sentences describing at least three reasons to believe that the Bible is inerrant or without errors.

What personal encouragement could you give to those interested at the lunch table in learning more about this topic? List two resources that would be helpful to them.

D. Front door conversation with a Jehovah's Witness.

Your doorbell rings and two young adult women introduce themselves as witnesses for the local Jehovah's Witness church. They are both friendly and persuasive. The conversation quickly turns to reading Scripture. The conversation turns to the deity of Christ.

Questions

The two young women quote John 1:1 (New World Translation) which states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god." How do you respond?

What Bible translation do you use and why? List the name of your favorite translation and list three reasons why you use this one.

Write out John 1:1 from your translation. How does it differ from the one stated above from the New World Translation?

E. A Difficult Conversation with Cynthia

Cynthia has been a long-time childhood friend, but her insistence on using only the King James Bible has strained your friendship. She is insistent that the KJV is the only true and reliable version of the Bible.

Questions

Write 2-3 sentences on how you would initially respond to Cynthia and set the tone of your answer?

How would you explain to Cynthia the textual basis of the King James Version?

How does that differ from today's modern English versions?

What aspect of your Bible study would the King James Version be helpful? What version(s) might be preferred for exegetical Bible study and why?

VII. RESOURCES AND NEXT STEPS

- A. Recommended books, websites, or podcasts for further growth

- B. Write your own "Bible defense" as a personal apologetic tool.

- C. Engage in one meaningful conversation about the Bible this week.

