

## HANDLING OBJECTIONS

When you present the gospel, the “enemy” will have his workmen doing their best to block your presentation. Fears and doubts will arise in your own heart and the person will raise objections. We can learn what to do when an objection is raised.

**DON'T BE AFRAID** of objections. The non-Christian world has been seeking to find logical answers against Christianity for 2000 years and there are NONE. Frequently, the issue is not a legitimate question regarding Christianity, but an excuse being raised because a person may not want to make a decision.

**DON'T ARGUE.** It has been said that the only way to win an argument is to avoid it, and the best way to avoid it is to preclude it. That is, anticipate it and lead the person to agree with the scriptures before he can raise the objection. Any skillful debater can easily win a point in an argument. By doing so you may arouse hostilities that will cause you to lose their decision. On the positive side you may meet every objection with:

**I'M GLAD YOU SAID THAT!** Be glad that the person has enough freedom to express inner feelings to you. As you deal with objections, you clear away the props which have deluded him into a presumptuous sense of security. You are glad when he shows he is assimilating what you are presenting. Every objection can be met with, "I'm glad you said that!"

You must deal in some manner with the substance of the objection. If a question is raised which you will answer later in your presentation simply say, "I'm glad you asked that. It's encouraging to see your interest and I'm coming to that in just a minute. I think you will see it more clearly in a moment.

**THE PRESENTATION IS A SERVANT - NOT THE MASTER.** You need not be a slave to the outline. There may be wisdom in taking up the matter "out of place"... Often what is out of place in your planned presentation can be "in place" in the living situation.

The person may introduce matters you have not planned to include in your presentation.

**DON'T PANIC.** Many objections are merely excuses. Discussing Church history or denominational origins, is usually not of value at this point. Let them know are willing to discuss that, but you would like to finish the presentation first. Get back on track so that the person may pick up your train of thought which he had lost. The presentation will answer the question of what they need to do to receive Christ. Other issues can be discussed later.

*In this manner you turn the conversation away from the extraneous matter and refresh his/her memory to what you were talking about before their mind wandered from your conversation.*

**HANDLE QUICKLY.** Another approach would be to deal quickly with the matter and return to the presentation at the point where you left it. Dealing briefly with the above question about Church history or denominations: "I suppose just because we're human we will always have differences of opinion. It's interesting though that the mainstream of the Christian Church has been united for 2000 years on the matters such as man's sinfulness, God's holiness and Christ's deity. Let's continue with what the Bible says..." and continue the presentation.

**THE HEATHEN.** Another extraneous matter commonly introduced is the "heathen." If the person becomes uncomfortable as you talk about 'the heathen' in his own living room (himself ☺), he may try to divert attention to the heathen in India or New Guinea. Never allow that tactic to divert you from your objective. The woman at the well in John chapter 4, tried to change the subject when Jesus got close to

her personal needs. He brought her back quickly by saying in effect, "What we are doing here now is of much greater urgency than settling a theological debate." If you get side-tracked, you will never get back to the Gospel.

In handling this matter focus your concern on the individual you are witnessing to. You might say, "Bob, that's a good question and I'm certain you have some thoughts on it. However, my real concern right now is not some pagan who has never heard of Christ. I want you to know for certain that you can have eternal life, and you have told me that you aren't sure what would happen if you died tonight. Let's confine our discussion to what God has said about you and your eternal welfare. Perhaps on another evening we can see all He has said about those who never hear the Gospel."

### **Here are some common objections that arise, and some ways in which to handle them.**

**PRECLUDE THE MOST COMMON OBJECTION.** Quite often we will get to the point of explaining what saving faith truly is and the prospect will say, "That's what I've always believed." Or, "That's what I said I was trusting in when you asked me." Take special care to get an answer to the question: "If you died right now, where would you go?" and "why would God let you in?" Not only must we get an answer, we must also understand what he is saying. There is no harm, after getting the answer to the question, in saying, "Now let me see if I understand you. You're saying....." Then rephrase what he has just said. He will either acknowledge or deny that your understanding is correct.

If you have sufficiently clarified the answer to "the question", he/she is unlikely to reverse himself at the end and say, "Oh, I've always trusted in Christ for salvation!" Should he say this, one way to handle the situation is:

"Oh, I'm glad you said that... apparently I misunderstood you when you said that you would tell God that He should let you into heaven because you keep the Commandments and live according to the Golden Rule." (or use his exact answer).

**STRESS THE DIFFERENCE.** You may have to pursue the matter so that he becomes aware that he said he was trusting his good works and this is not compatible with trusting only in Christ. By God's grace he must arrive at the point of trusting Christ ALONE.

**AUTHORITY OF GOD.** Another frequent objection is raised at the point of God's holiness and justice. "God would never punish anyone." We need to realize that the Biblical teaching of the just God "who will by no means clear the guilty" (Numbers 14.18) is unpopular even in some so-called Christian circles today. To deal effectively with this or any other open denial of Biblical truth, you must appeal to authority. No help comes from saying, "I think you're wrong!" The matters under discussion are beyond what you think or what the person thinks. Assuming that he is a rational being of average intelligence, what he thinks could be as valid as what you think. An external authority must be called to settle the matter.

**RATIONALISM.** You could proceed by saying, "How can we come to know about God? Well, there are two ways. One has come out several times in what you said. By thinking about God, we can come to some conclusions about Him. We can say, 'I think God is all love and will send no one to hell', or, 'I think God is a demon and will send everyone to hell.' Someone else may sit and think about God and conclude, 'I believe God is the sum total of human experience.' All this would be reasoning with no data, in an effort to learn about God. This is the approach to knowledge which is known as rationalism."

"We could in a similar way reason about the eye-color of people of Mars. You think they are all red eyed. I might conclude they have polka dot eyes. Your opinion is as good as mine because we have no data on which to base our conclusions. However, if somebody returns from Mars and tells us they have red, white and blue striped eyes, then we have good reason for placing our confidence in this person who has been there. His conclusion is based upon the data."

REVELATION. "This is the other way in which we can come to the knowledge of God. God has come from where He is to where we are, and He has provided us knowledge of Himself, His purposes, and His will for us. This method is known as 'revelation'. God did reveal Himself through the scriptures and preeminently in His Son. So now the question is not what either of us thinks; rather, the question is, 'What has God said in the Bible and through His Son Jesus Christ?'"

"I DON'T BELIEVE THE BIBLE". Often, as you begin presenting the Gospel you may hear, "I don't believe the Bible. You'll have to convince me some other way than referring to the Scriptures." Many are devastated by this objection, and their attempt at presenting the Gospel fizzles. This need not be the case. Such an objection can be the springboard into the Gospel itself. The Apostle Paul, as he preached in the Greek cities, appealed to the Scriptures even though the people listening to him did not believe in the Scriptures. He did not try to convince his audience of the accuracy and authority of the Scriptures. Rather, he proclaimed them and the Holy Spirit worked and used the proclamation to save some who then believed the Bible to be true. In witnessing, our primary function is proclamation - not apologetics.

You may deal with this objection by saying, "That's very interesting. I can see you are an intelligent man. And I am interested that you have rejected what the Bible says. The main message of the scriptures explains how we might have eternal life. Now I realize you don't believe in eternal life, but what, in your opinion, is the way that one gets eternal life according to the Bible?" Of course, the person won't know. Then you can pick up the matter by saying, "You know, that's interesting. I find some people who say they don't believe the Bible. Yet they don't know what its central message is.

Then you can say, "Now I know you don't accept this book as the Word of God. I used to be of the same opinion. However, when I learned what it said I was in a position to accept it or reject it on the basis of the facts. May I share with you what the Bible says about how you might have eternal life?"

"HELL ISN'T REAL". If a person does not believe in God's justice and hell, you may proceed to show that the prophets Isaiah (57:21) and Ezekiel (33:11), the apostles Peter (II Peter 2:4,6,9) and Paul (Romans 2:4,5), and the Lord Jesus, Himself (Mark 16:16, Luke 13:3, John 3:18,36) taught that God will assuredly punish sin.

In dealing with the denial of the reality of hell, sometimes we find it helpful to say, "You know, it is a fact of psychology that we deny most passionately those things we fear most desperately. I wonder if the reason you don't believe in hell is that deep in your soul you fear that if there is such a place you may go there?" Most often the reply is, "I guess you're right!"

You must go on then and assure the person, "I don't want you to believe in hell so that you can live your life in mortal terror of going there. You can know that you're not going to hell. That's what the Gospel is all about. I believe in hell, but I know that I'm not going there because of God's promise. This is much better than saying, "I know I'm not going to hell because I don't think there is such a place."

UNIVERSALISM. Occasionally you will meet a Universalist who will object, "Everyone will be saved." This is the same objection as what we have been dealing with only with a little different dress.

Some scripture that is useful in putting the lie to universalism is:

"Then He will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels... these will go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.'" (Matthew 25:41,46)

Useful also, is:

“an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment. (John 5:28,29)

**STRESS THE URGENCY.** Often, one will hear the Gospel and agree to its truthfulness but will not want to receive Christ at the moment. Of course, such an attitude is presumptive. The person assumes that he will have another opportunity to respond to God's gracious invitation. Maybe he will; possibly he won't. The evangelist has a responsibility to press the urgency of the matter and persuade the person. Jesus warned of the fool who said, "I have plenty of goods laid up for many years; take life easy, eat, drink and be merry," only to hear the frightful words, "You fool, this very night your soul is required of you." Paul echoed the same thought: "As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, ... In the day of salvation, I helped you. I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." (2 Corinthians 6:1,2)

Regardless of the form of the objection, recognize it as a device of Satan to prevent you proclaiming the Gospel and the person not responding to the Gospel. Recognize, that you are not sharing the gospel in order to defeat him in a debate. By precluding objections and dealing with those that arise in a matter-of-fact, no-sweat matter, you can succeed in presenting the gospel with enough information for the person to make a decision for Christ.

## EXCUSES

If the person feels on the defensive, s/he may reach for an excuse to put off making a decision. Each excuse will crumble and fade before the Presence of Jesus Christ if you are equipped to answer. Don't argue. Let the person win the argument, YOU WIN THE PERSON!!!

1. EXCUSE: "I WANT TO THINK IT OVER"

ANSWERS: 1. How long have you thought about this decision?  
2. Do you have some questions right now?  
3. We do not have the assurance another opportunity will come. (James 4:14)  
4. Can I meet with you in 2 days (or next week)?

2. EXCUSE: "I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO BE A CHRISTIAN. GOD WOULDN'T HAVE ME."

ANSWERS: 1. I'm glad you see that. No person living is good enough.  
Romans 8.5 2. That's why Christ died for us. We weren't good enough to save ourselves.  
1Timothy 1.15 3. We go to the hospital to get well. We don't get well then go to the hospital.  
4. Jesus said, "The well, have no need of a physician, but only the sick."

3. EXCUSE: "I CAN BE AS GOOD OUTSIDE THE CHURCH AS I CAN IN IT."

ANSWERS: 1. Moral goodness isn't the goal. The goal is a right relationship with God.  
2. Can one be as good as a soldier outside the army as in it?  
3. Can a pupil be as good a pupil outside the school as in it?  
4. Jesus created the church as His possession.

4. EXCUSE: "I HAVE SINNED AND CAN'T BREAK WITH THE PAST."

ANSWERS: 1. Very true, you can't in and of your own strength, but God will help you.  
2. One never knows what he can do until he gives God a chance, but God is unable to help you break with the past until you surrender your life to Him.  
3. He gives us His Holy Spirit for that very reason.

5. EXCUSE: "I'M AFRAID I MIGHT BACKSLIDE. I WANT TO MEAN IT WHEN I DECIDE."

ANSWERS: 1. I'm glad you mean it. In and of yourself you would backslide, but Jesus not only saves, He keeps.  
2. Paul once said, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."  
3. How often have we said that about other important things?  
4. The Holy Spirit helps those who belong to Him.

6. EXCUSE: "I DON'T KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT THE CHURCH, THE BIBLE, ETC."

ANSWERS: 1. We will never know all, but in order to become a Christian what you need to know is that Christ loves you and died for you.  
2. Even our minister doesn't know enough, that's why he studies every day. Our Sunday School teachers don't know enough, that's why they read and study their Bible.

3. We enroll our children in school, so they may learn more.
4. I don't understand electricity, but I use it, accept it and benefit from it. If we waited until we knew everything, no one would become a Christian.
5. The "unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit." (1 Cor. 2:14)
6. The message of the bible is how we might have eternal life. From the scripture we have just read, what does the Bible say about receiving eternal life?

7. EXCUSE: "I'M WAITING FOR THAT SPECIAL FEELING TO COME."

- ANSWERS:
1. What do you mean "special feeling"? What will it be like?
  - Romans 10.17 2. No where does the Bible speak of us receiving a "special feeling."
  - 2Thess1.8 3. God has already spoken to you through His Word and His witness.
  - 2Peter 1.3,4 4. You are waiting for something that will never come.
  5. 2 Cor. 6:2 - "Behold, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of Salvation."
  6. Do you think you should have a special feeling of being overwhelmingly grateful that Jesus died and rose again for you?

8. EXCUSE: "MY FOLKS MADE ME ATTEND TOO MUCH AS A CHILD - IT KILLED MY INTEREST."

- ANSWERS:
1. I'm not sure I understand; do you mean you got your "fill" of religion as a child?
  2. Can you blame your parents for not making your own decision for Christ now?
  3. Now that you are old enough to make your own decision, what do you think?

9. EXCUSE: "TOO MANY HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH."

- ANSWERS:
1. Who did you have in mind? (Get them to be specific.)
  2. Perhaps spiritually ill people, but can you think of a better place for sick people to be?
  3. There are hypocrites in the grocery store, hair salon and repair shops as well. Yet we don't stop eating, having our hair cut or leave our broken cars at home.
  4. The church may need more "non-hypocrites" and faithful Christians. You could be one if you would.
  5. You don't want anyone to keep you from Heaven, do you?
  6. "Each of us has to give an account of himself." (Romans 14:12)

10. EXCUSE: "THERE ARE SOME THINGS I CAN'T GIVE UP."

- ANSWERS:
1. Is anything in your life so important to keep you from God for now and all eternity?
  - James 4.4 2. We must make a commitment first and God will change our heart about the things that need to go.
  - 1 John 5.3 3. "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" (Mark 8:36)
  4. God will not ask you to give up anything more valuable than your soul.

11. EXCUSE: "I AM WAITING FOR SOMEONE ELSE." (Husband, wife, child, Parents, friend)

- ANSWERS:
1. How long have you waited already?
  2. Will more waiting do any good?
  3. Wouldn't a new method be better?
  4. Have you ever stopped to think they may be waiting for you? Your making the decision might lead them to do the same.

5. Each of us gives an account of his own life to God, not his wife's, child's or neighbors. Salvation is an individual matter between you and God.

12. EXCUSE: "MY WORK PREVENTS ME FROM COMING."

ANSWERS: 1. If you can't attend on Sunday morning, how about Wednesday night? There are other times of worship and fellowship.  
2. Have you talked with your employer and asked to rearrange your schedule because you desire to attend?

13. EXCUSE: "I FEEL I CAN BE A CHRISTIAN WITHOUT JOINING A CHURCH."

ANSWERS: 1. The Scriptures teach us that as we become a Christian, Christ adds us to the Church. Every Christian is a member of Christ's church. This happens at baptism.  
2. Can I be a Rotarian outside the Rotary Club?

14. EXCUSE: "SUNDAY IS THE ONLY DAY I HAVE OFF. I LIKE TO REST."

ANSWERS: 1. The reason you have Sunday off is because of the Church.  
2. When you understand what Jesus has done for you, your desire for worship changes.  
3. A Worship service can give you more energy than any amount of rest.  
4. Which is more important, another hour's sleep or refreshing your life at morning worship?

15. EXCUSE: "I WASN'T RAISED IN A CHRISTIAN HOME."

ANSWERS: 1. Don't you wish you had been?  
2. You want your children to be, don't you?  
3. You feel the need of a Christian home, don't you?

16. EXCUSE: "WE SEND OUR CHILDREN TO SUNDAY SCHOOL."

ANSWERS: 1. Children are more influenced by their parent's example than by their contacts with the church.  
2. Children value what their parent's value. They will question the value of the church if you don't show them its value.  
3. Parents set the example for their children.

17. EXCUSE: "I DON'T WANT TO BE BAPTIZED." Or, "BAPTISM ISN'T NECESSARY FOR SALVATION".

ANSWERS:

1. Baptism pleases God. You do want to please God, don't you?
2. Jesus' baptism pleased God ... "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased." Read Mark 16:16, Matthew 28:16-18, Acts 2:38.
3. Baptism isn't something we require, but something God requires.
4. Every convert mentioned in Acts was baptized.
5. Explain to the person what baptism symbolizes: the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus; our death to sin and rebirth through Christ. Read Romans 6:3-11
6. The Bible says baptism is part of our faith. Colossians 2:12

Here's a way to understand baptism: the acronym P-IOU

P – PLEDGE - a pledge of allegiance toward God. 1 Peter 3:21.

I – INITIATION or INDUCTION - into Christ. Matthew 28:19-20.

O – OBEDIENCE to Christ. Acts 2:38

U – UNITED with Christ's work on the cross. Romans 6:5-10.

Scripture explains the role of Baptism:

1. Acts 2:38 - repentance and baptism combined.
2. Mark 16:16 - belief and baptism combined.
3. Colossians 2:12 - act of faith; faith and baptism combined.
4. Acts 8:37 - An Ethiopian man who immediately asked to be baptized when he understood and believed.
5. Acts 22:16 - Why tarry, get up, be baptized, wash your sins away - the testimony of Paul.
6. Romans 6:3-11 - baptism compared to the death-burial-resurrection of Christ.
7. Galatians 3:27 – how we are clothed with Christ; "put-on" Christ.
8. 1 Peter 3:21 - baptism saves you - due to pledging your faith and allegiance.

Scripture describes how we receive salvation: (affecting the will, the heart, the mind and the body)

1. Faith and Baptism - Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:26,27
2. Pledging loyalty and allegiance with Baptism - 1 Peter 3:21
3. Repentance and Baptism - Acts 2:38
4. Uniting with Christ's atonement and Baptism - Romans 6:1-6
5. Confession and Belief - Romans 10:9-10
6. Confession and Obedience - 2 Corinthians 9:13
7. Faith and Action - James 2:14-26
8. Faith and Repentance - Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21; 3:16,19

The Bible says:

1. Faith saves you: Ephesians 2:8; Acts 16:31,32,33
2. Repentance saves you: Luke 24:47; Acts 11:18
3. Confession saves you: Romans 10:10
4. Baptism saves you: 1 Peter 3:21
5. Faithfulness saves you: Revelation 2:10, 14:12; Matthew 10:22

**Conclusion: these all, play a part in our salvation.**

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