



Introduction

How to Answer Objections

Just as you can expect external AND internal factors to affect your ability to ride a bicycle well, you can expect people will often _____ with us.

1 Corinthians 1:18, 2:14

1 Peter 3:15

“with gentleness and respect.” That leads us to our first point on how we are to answer objections.

1. With Gentleness and Respect

2. With Understanding That God’s Saving Power is in the Gospel, Not Our Apologetics

3. With Wisdom and Preparation

Remember the Columbo techniques from lesson 4? (Koukl 2009)

Just a quick review: There are three basic ways to use Columbo. Each is launched by a different model question based on the purpose we’re trying to achieve.

1. *Gather information*- “What do you mean by that?”
2. *Reverse the burden of proof*- “How did you come to that conclusion?”
3. *Lead the conversation*- Ask leading questions to steer the conversation the direction you want to go

4. With Humility

it is OK to say “I don’t know.”

At this point, let’s review where we left off in the Come Home gospel presentation in Class 6. You’ve presented the final questions: Will you turn (repent) from your sinful lifestyle and efforts at self-justification, and surrender to God’s ownership of your life? Will you trust (put your faith) in Jesus Christ as your forgiver



(erases sin) who perfectly obeyed (giver of moral purity) enabling you to follow God’s road plan for life? At which point they say, “no.”

It’s okay, and necessary, to ask, “why?” perhaps even a few times to get to the root issue. Listen to your friend's objections. This is one of the best ways you can demonstrate your love for him as well as for God. (Fay 1999)

Common Objections

“How can you believe the Bible is true? Wasn’t the Bible just a book written by men?”

One way to lead off is to answer the question with a question: “Isn’t it possible the Bible could be true?” I’d do this to get them to acknowledge the possibility I could be right. I’d do this try to get them to “Maybe.” I’d want them to entertain the idea before trying to convince them. To get them to go in their minds from, “that’s ridiculous” to “that’s possible.”

Next, you could outline these points: (Begg n.d.)

1. The Bible makes claims for itself.

Yes, the Bible was written by men, but men who were used by God and inspired by the Spirit. Just like we use pens to write, God carefully used those men to write his Word. And the Bible says just that – that God spoke to us through people.

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16 ESV)

“knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:20-21 ESV)

2. The unity of the Scriptures.

The Bible isn’t a book that a person could write if he wanted to! It is 66 books written by 40 different human authors over 1,500 years crossing 10 periods of civilization spanning 3 continents – all written in perfect harmony!

3. Fulfilled prophecy.

Bill Fay tells a great story in *Share Jesus Without Fear*:

I spend a lot of time evangelizing the staff in a certain restaurant chain in my area. I remember one day a nonbelieving waiter named Danny saw me as



I was seated at my table. Danny dropped by and said, “Bill, we have a new guy I'd like you to meet. His name is Art, and he likes statistics.”

I chuckled. “Go get him.”

So there was Danny, a nonbeliever, bringing another nonbeliever to my table as if he's delivering a pizza, just so I could share the gospel. What a sense of humor God has!

Soon Art, a six-foot-six-inch guy with Coke-bottle glasses, walked over. I decided to put a question into a conversation to see if God was at work. I said, “Art, I understand you like statistics.”

“Yes.”

“What is a penny doubled every day, for thirty days?”

Art spouted off, “It starts at 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, until you get \$10,737,418.24.”

I was impressed! I said, “That seemed easy for you. Let me ask you another question. How many people would it take flipping a quarter before one person hits heads thirty times in a row?”

Art ran into the kitchen. When he came back, he said it would take billions of people flipping quarters before one person hit heads thirty times in a row. Art's right. According to Ripley's Believe It or Not! Strange Coincidences, for a tossed coin to fall to heads fifty times in a row would require one million men tossing ten coins a minute for forty hours a week—and then it would occur only once in every nine centuries.

With this probability established, I was ready to make the switch. I said, “That is why I believe the Bible is true. If you take the thirty prophecies about the birth, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus that have come true, that's like flipping heads thirty times in a row.”

Art froze. I said, “I don't want to take time away from your work, but as you go back to your station today, think about this: how many people would it take flipping a quarter before one person hits heads 245 times? I picked that number because it is a conservative estimate of the number of biblical prophecies that were supposed to come true that have come true.”

Stunned, Art asked, “Can we make an appointment?” (Fay 1999)

4. Jesus verified the Scriptures in the Old Testament by quoting them.

5. The Bible has been circulated more than any other book in history.

There are over 5,000 New Testament Greek manuscripts existing today (that is more than the writings of Aristotle, Caesar and Homer combined) and the internal consistency is over 99% - most scholars agree that they were written within the first century AD, which is important because that means many folks were alive during Jesus' life and could have refuted the writings.



6. The historicity of the names and places in the Bible – archaeological excavations continue to prove the historical accounts of Biblical things.
7. No other book has transcended the social, racial, and economic barriers like the Bible.
8. The life-changing power of the Bible and the personal testimony of millions to what God has done in their lives, and yours.

Return to the original questions about whether they are ready to repent and believe.

“How could a good God allow evil and suffering? Why does God let bad things happen? I can’t believe in a God like that”

First, humbly acknowledge that there is a ton of pain, suffering and evil in this world. It may also be helpful to ask them to explain a bit more about the evil they have in mind. Many times this is not theoretical with those to whom we speak. We need the sensitivity and wisdom of the Spirit of God. As we look to express concern for those we share the Gospel with, it may be helpful here to ask, “Is there something in your own life that makes you ask this question?” Listen carefully to them in order to determine what exactly it is that is bothering them so much. Is there a specific experience they have personally endured? Maybe they have dealt with abuse, addiction or violence with family members; or maybe they’ve been to too many funerals of loved ones who died younger than expected from terminal illness. In those situations, we should remind them that God – our God, the God of the Bible – is in complete control, completely sovereign and omnipotent at all times, even in tragic situations.

You may point to examples of suffering in the Bible. I think that Genesis 50:20 is a great example. Joseph, whose elder brothers sold him into slavery, encounters them years later. Joseph has endured all kinds of hardships in Egypt, but by God’s providence, he ended up as one of the members of Pharaoh’s cabinet.

So he meets his brothers and after some initial awkwardness between them, everything is hunky dory, so they take Joseph to see their father, Jacob (Israel), who is very old and on his deathbed. After Jacob dies, the brothers panic and think that Joseph may be vengeful toward them. Listen to this passage from Genesis:

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.” So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this command before he died: ‘Say to Joseph, “Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.”’ And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. (Genesis 50:15-21 ESV)



Can you believe that? God not only allowed the evil to happen to Joseph, but He used it for the good of many people!

Ask them if they've ever done anything evil. All sin, in thought, word, or deed, is evil and if we just take a quick walk through the 10 commandments, we will see that we are all evil – we are liars, thieves, covetous, adulterers, idolaters and murderers. Ask them, “who taught you to tell your first lie?” They may not have been as bad as Hitler or Stalin, but in the end we won't be compared to them. We'll be judged according to God's perfect standard – Jesus. I would also explain to them that God does care about evil, He hates evil.

The first way we see this is at the Cross on Calvary 2,000 years ago. God poured out His punishment and wrath for our evil sins on His Son Jesus – He hates evil so much that He sent His one and only Son to die as a substitute for all the sinners like me who have repented of their evil deeds and trusted in Christ's atoning sacrifice.

But, there is another way that we will see how much God hates evil. We read about it in the Bible and it's the final day of judgment. Sadly, for those who have not repented of their sin, they will experience firsthand how much God hates sin.

Jesus speaks of it in John 12:47-48, “If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.” And we read the awesome account of it in Revelation 20. It is awesome for us, those who are His, but terrible for those who are not.

Return to the original questions about whether they are ready to repent and believe.

“How do you know God exists? Can you prove to me that God exists?”

Again, the better response may be with a question: “Can you prove God does NOT exist?” Believing in God is an act of faith. In 2 Cor. 5:7, Paul writes “for we walk by faith, not by sight.” But this is not a blind faith, friends – the evidence of a creator God is overwhelming! Three evidences that are blatant and obvious to every human are...

1. Creation (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:18-32)

Creation itself points to a creator! Other than an eternal, omnipotent, creator God, who could have created the sun and the moon and the earth and the oceans and the stars? Attributing creation to a “big bang” still doesn't address how that started.

Basic Philosophy 101 – “Something cannot come from nothing. Nothing cannot create something.”

2. Conscience (Romans 2)



Our conscience shows that a good creator God made us to know right from wrong and good from evil. How many of you get angry when you hear the news of terrorist attacks? How many of you get angry when you hear the news of child molesters? How many of you got angry over the shooting in the Charleston church by an evil murderer?

3. Jesus Christ

Jesus was a real historical person who walked the earth – there is no question about that.

Jesus really died on a cross at the hands of Pontius Pilate 2,000 years ago – again, there is no question about that.

What about the fact that over 500 eyewitnesses saw Jesus in his resurrected state?

What about the Christian religion that immediately followed and continues today?

Return to the original questions about whether they are ready to repent and believe.

“Science has disproved creation and miracles. Christianity is now obsolete.”

Again, the better response may be with some questions using the Columbo technique: “How did you come to that conclusion?” and the follow-up “How can science, employing the empirical method solely based in the material world, evaluate miracles that are caused from outside of the material world?”

You could also ask for scientific proof of the evolution of more complex structures from simpler forms of life as entities. There is none.

Evolutionary hypothesis is made into reality, and the hypothesis is essentially this: all forms of life have descended in a blind determinism from some original form of matter whose origin remains a mystery.

The real problem is their lack of belief in the existence of God and in the miracles that He can perform. The data which is given to us in the Bible is sufficient for belief. If we refuse this evidence, no additional evidence will convince somebody.

for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”
(Luke 16:28–31 ESV)

Return to the original questions about whether they are ready to repent and believe.



“You can’t possibly know what truth is.”

Again, the better response may be with some questions using the Columbo technique: “How did you come to that conclusion?” Bill Fay uses an approach that demonstrates everyone has an understanding of truth:

I ask to borrow her watch. When she hands it to me, I put it into my pocket. Next, I talk about anything, except the fact that I have her watch in my pocket. In a while, she gets a little nervous and asks, “May I have my watch back?”

I say, “No, my truth is taking watches from people who don't believe in truth.”

Finally, I reach in my pocket and pull out the watch and hand it back. I say, “You just told me there are no rights or wrongs. How can it be wrong if I steal your watch?” (Fay 1999)

Return to the original questions about whether they are ready to repent and believe.

“My friends / family will think I'm crazy if I accept Jesus.”

They might. Read Matt. 10:37–38 and Luke 12:51–53 and ask them what those scriptures say to them about this objection.

Return to the original questions about whether they are ready to repent and believe.

“What about those who have never heard the Gospel?”

Scripture declares that God, who is judge of all the earth is just and fair (Gen. 18:25)

We do not know everything. We have not been told everything. God has not intended for us to know everything. (Deut. 29:29 ESV).

The Scriptures do not teach the salvation of everyone in the end nor the possibility of a second chance. Consider Luke 16:28-31 presented earlier. Also (Hebrews 9:27 ESV)

The Bible teaches us that every person has a God-given standard or moral compass within them. Each person knowingly violates those standards with which they have been born. (Rom. 2:12–16 ESV)

No indication is given in Scripture that anyone may ever be saved apart from Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12)

The real question is not “What about the heathen who has never heard?” but “What about this heathen (you) in particular?” The burden now rests with the person who has just been confronted with the Gospel.



Return to the original questions about whether they are ready to repent and believe.

“You’re not suggesting that Jesus is the only way to heaven, are you? There are many paths to God”

They may even say “Sincerity in belief is what matters, right?” The answer is, “no.” Faith is no more valid than the object in which it is placed. We must stress the exclusivity of Jesus Christ with humility.

(John 14:6 ESV)

(John 10:9 ESV)

You could also say, “You are correct, all roads lead to God. But here's the problem, what are you going to say when you get there? For God is either going to meet you as your Savior or as your judge.” (Phil. 2:10–11 ESV)

“I’m not ready”

If your friend tells you she is not ready, ask, “Why?”

More than likely, her reason will sound silly and illogical, even to her. In this case say, “Are you really willing to let that stand between you and God?”

This may be all you need to say to take care of her objection. Then you can return to the original questions about whether she is ready to repent and believe.

Then again, her objection may not be so easy to get rid of. For example, in response to your “Why not?” your friend may say something like, “I am not ready because this information is so new to me. This is a whole new way of thinking, and I want to count the cost.”

If you get this response, stop the presentation. Be prepared to release your friend to God's sovereignty and control. Say something like, “I enjoyed our time, and I will be praying for you. May I talk to you again in a few days or weeks?”

In this way, you've not put undue pressure on her, and you may gain permission to speak with her in the future. You do not want to press a false conversion.

Concluding Thoughts

A smart answer given without love and humility will do more harm than good. Please keep this thought ever present as you are answering their objections and presenting questions to help lead them to Christ.



We don't have to answer all peoples' questions before they can become Christians. As you know, Holy Spirit does the convicting and regeneration of the unbeliever's heart.

Practice

Pair up and practice responding to objections by taking turns as yourself and one of the people on your prayer card.

Homework

Pray

- 1) That God would give you a heart for the lost;
- 2) That God would grant opportunities to speak to people and share the gospel, particularly for the three people you've identified in which to share the gospel before this class concludes

Go and Present the Gospel to the Three People You've Identified on Your Card

Conclusion

Does anyone have any final questions?

[Allow time for discussion. Close in prayer.]

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