

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Top Ten Ways to Advance the Gospel at Holiday Dinners – 2024 Edition

(November 26, 2024)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, are you dreading the Thanksgiving and or Christmas dinners you have to have with people who may not share your faith? Well, I know it can be awkward, but it can also be an opportunity. I know it's kind of bittersweet when you get together with family and friends.

On one hand you love people, and you want to be around them. On the other hand, there may be some people that don't have a worldview that you have and you're not quite sure how to handle them. You don't know what they're going to say, what they're going to do. You don't know if tensions are going to rise. What do you do?

Well, today we're going to talk about the top 10 ways to advance the gospel at holiday dinners. Every few years or so we do a show like this just to try and give you some insights on how you can advance the gospel. And when I say that, I don't mean that you've got to get everybody to the foot of the cross over Thanksgiving dinner. I don't think that's realistic all the time.

It puts too much pressure on you. And it's not really the way evangelism tends to work in the real world. I mean, if you were not a Christian at some point, if you weren't brought up as a Christian and you became a Christian later in life, was it just one conversation that brought you to faith? It probably wasn't. It was probably a series of events, a series of interactions, a series of things that happened that brought you to the point where you said, Lord, I'm a sinner and I need grace, and I want to be saved.

And I also want to live a life honoring to you, and I want to bring others into the faith. It probably wasn't one conversation, although there are exceptions. It was a process. And our friend Greg Koukl, as you know at Stand to Reason, who is a part of our CIA teaching team, the CrossExamined Instructor Academy.

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By the way, we'll be announcing it's going to be happening again next year. It's going to be in late July. I believe it's going to be down at Grace Community Church in Sarasota, Florida. Keep an eye on our website after the first of the year. You'll see that all up there. We're also going to do an online version as well in March or April. Keep an eye out for that.

Anyway, Greg says, look, when you're doing evangelism, it's more gardening than it is harvesting. We always want a harvest, right? We always want, you know, people to come to faith when we talk to them. But sometimes, in fact, most of the time, you're probably not harvesting, you're just gardening. You're just trying to move people further away from their worldview and closer to the Christian worldview. And that's a process.

If you think you have to get someone all the way to accepting Christ in every conversation, you probably won't do anything. It's too much pressure. You just want to plant seeds. And as Paul said, some plant, some water, God gives the increase. In fact, J. Warner Wallace likes to think about evangelism as more like baseball.

We think we've got to hit a grand slam every time we get up to the plate. No, just get on base. Just hit a single. You know, there are people out there, many people out there that buy into the postmodern worldview that there is no truth.

Well, you don't have to say, get them to the point of accepting Jesus as the truth and that they're sinners and they're accepting what Christ has done and they're becoming Christians. I mean, it would be nice, but don't put all that pressure on yourself to get them all the way there. You're to be clear, the Holy Spirit is responsible for conviction. You're to be clear. Just get them to believe that truth exists.

In other words, get a single. Get them on first base. Somebody else may move them on to second. Maybe it'll be you, maybe it'll be somebody else. Second base might be, oh, not only does truth exist, God exists. Now I'm on second. Then somebody else can get them to third. Miracles are possible, and then finally somebody can get them to home. That, yes, Jesus rose from the dead and is the Savior, and I'm going to trust in Him.

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In fact, if you ever have that opportunity to bring somebody home, to get them to become a Christian or to be in the... I mean, you're not really getting them to become a Christian. You're just used by the Holy Spirit to move them from, say, third to home. If you ever have the opportunity to do that, it wasn't just you that got them there. There were a series of events and probably a series of people in their lives that got them to that point, and you were just there to bring them home.

So, what can you do with regard to improving your chances of moving people around the base paths so to speak, this Thanksgiving, this Christmas season? Number one, this should be no surprise. You ought to pray. You ought to start praying now for opportunities and for hearts to be open during that meal, during the time that you're together. Then if it's appropriate, if you know it's your house or it's somebody else's house you know, and you want to volunteer to pray before the meal, then do so.

Now, no one will ever interrupt or critique a prayer. So, if you're the one doing the prayer, keep the prayer short. And thank God for your family members and guests by name during the prayer. You know, thank that Julie's here, that Johnny's here. You know, go around the room and thank God for these people. Of course, you've got to thank God for the food. That's one.

A lot of times we pray over a meal, and we forget to thank God for the food. That's the occasion we're praying, and we often forget it. And then put the gospel in the prayer. Thank you, Lord, for coming to earth that first Christmas to save us, to pay for our sins, to offer us forgiveness and salvation for free to anyone who trusts in you.

Just say, we've all fallen. The world has fallen, and we're fallen, and we need a Savior. We can't save ourselves. That's the meaning of Christmas. You came into this world to add humanity to your deity and live the perfect life in our place, and then take our punishment upon yourself so that we can not only be forgiven but given your righteousness by simply accepting that free gift. You are the greatest gift of all, Lord.

I mean, just make a prayer like that. I mean, if there ever is a time when people expect you to talk about Jesus, it's during a prayer on Christmas. I mean, right? It can't be, wow, why did you

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bring that up? No. That's what Christmas is all about. So, pray. Pray now for opportunities. Pray hearts would be softened. And also, if you can pray over the meal. All right, that's number one.

Number two, maybe you ought to serve. Be an actual Christian. Get off the couch and serve people as if you are a real Christian. That would be nice. Don't be a couch potato while everyone else is whirling around trying to pull the meal together. Get out there, get in the kitchen, and interact with people, and help them. Even if you're a guest there, clean up afterwards, do the dishes, be a servant.

In fact, Christ himself was a servant. The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. By the way, that's a line you could put into any prayer, to be a ransom for many. Gee, what does that mean? Yeah, He's exchanging His life for yours. He is the one paying the punishment for our wrongdoing.

Look, there's only two things you can get in the afterlife. You can either get grace or you can get justice. I don't want justice. Do you want justice? No. Because if God is infinitely just, and He is, He's the standard of justice. By definition, none of us are going to make it because we've all been unjust in our lives.

I like to say this to audiences sometimes, particularly Christian audiences. I'll say, just to get them thinking, you can get to heaven by being good. Yeah, you can. You've just got to be perfect your whole life. Too late for me. How about you? Yeah, no, I'm not going to make it. I've been unjust.

And since God is just, He is the standard of justice. He's infinite justice. He can't allow us to go unpunished. So, serve people. That's why Jesus came, to give His life as a ransom for many. Thirdly, maybe most importantly, ask people questions. Ask them how they've been doing this year, and then if it's appropriate, if you discover that there's issues that they're struggling with, can I pray for you about that? Or is there something I can pray for you about?

And if something about Christianity comes up, you have three important questions. Well, more than three. I'll just give you three right now. If it comes up, you might say, do you consider yourself a Christian? And when you ask that question, a lot of people will, even if they're not

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Christians, they'll say, well, yeah. I am. Because they're thinking, well, I'm not a Muslim and I believe in God.

That's what they're thinking. Or I live in America, of course I'm a Christian. Right? Well, the question is, what does that mean to be a Christian? If they say they're not, you might say, well, why not? Why are you not a Christian? And then there's a whole ton of things that come up I'll get to in a minute. There's a whole ton of objections they may bring up. And of course, the key question I always ask people, particularly on college campuses, as you know.

Now, it's easier to ask this on a college campus because they're there to ask a question about Christianity. They're at a seminar about Christianity. So, it's much more natural. And I realize that this question might appear to be a little aggressive, but it depends on the situation and how well you know the person and how deep the conversation has gone.

But the question I always ask is, if Christianity were true, would you become a Christian? And as you know, if you think about it, most people are not on a truth quest. We're on a happiness quest. And we're just going to believe whatever we think is going to make us happy.

And the problem is, we can make ourselves happy over the short term, doing a lot of fun, but ultimately selfish and sinful things. Yet over the long term, it's a disaster. And anyone listening to me over 40 years old knows what I'm talking about, because many of us have tried it ourselves. We're going to live life our way, my way. No, you're not. Not very long.

Well, yeah, I mean, you can try, but you're not going to have very fruitful relationships if you're just a big me monster and you do whatever you want, whenever you want, with whomever you want, regardless of any consequences. No, you just can't live for yourself all the time and expect to have good relationships. Who's going to put up with that? And if anybody does put up with that, how fruitful is that relationship going to be?

If you follow every impulse, if you follow every desire, you're going to blow up every relationship you've ever had, and you're probably going to wind up divorced, addicted, broken, alone, and probably prematurely dead. If you want contentment, you've got to go straight through truth, and Jesus is the truth.

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So, you've got to keep that in mind. And the question, "If Christianity were true, would you become a Christian?", exposes all hidden objections to Christianity because it really gets to the bottom line. Is this an intellectual problem or a volitional problem? Is this the head or a heart problem, in other words? And 99 times out of 10, I found it's really a heart problem.

Sure, there are people out there wanting evidence, but they're open. But most of the time, people are not interested in the evidence. They're interested in how they can make themselves happy. And of course, I get that. But over the long term, it doesn't work out. If you try and pursue happiness directly, rarely will you find it.

It's a byproduct of living a life that you ought to be living. It's a byproduct. It's not a goal you hit directly. And how do you even define what happiness is? Good feelings all the time? A lot of people think that's the case.

Well, if that's the case, you could just take drugs all the time. Right? Good feelings. What is it? Happiness is being able to do what you know you should do despite the circumstances. Not having the power to do whatever you want to do, but having the power to do what you know you should do.

So, ask the question, if Christianity were true, would you become a Christian? Or you could say it a different way. If Jesus really rose from the dead to prove He was God, would you follow Him? Because that takes the word Christian out of it, which can be a negative word for some people because of objections I'll get to here in a couple of minutes.

So, just ask the question. If Jesus really rose from the dead to prove He was God, would you follow Him? If that really happened, would you follow Him? But the key point here is you need to be asking questions rather than making statements. Try and find out where people are. Try and see what's going on in their lives. Take a sincere interest in what's happening with them. So, ask is number three.

Number four, maybe this is the most important. They're all important. But after you ask, you've got to listen. I mean, if they ask you, you know, how you've been doing, then you can share

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something back, which may be encouraging. But if they don't ask you, keep listening and keep asking them what they're up to.

If people want to talk about themselves, let them. And I've noticed many people want to talk about themselves, that's fine. Learn more about them. I remember years ago when I was doing corporate training before, while I was going through seminary, I was doing a lot of corporate training to feed the family.

And there was a president of a company that I was interviewing because I was going to do some training for his company. And I kept asking him questions and he finally stopped. And he said, Frank, you're a good interviewer. And I said, well, thanks a lot, Bill. And he said, who has all the power in this conversation? I said, what do you mean? He said, you have all the power. I said, why? He said, because you know everything about me, and I know nothing about you.

Well, I wasn't trying to manipulate the guy. I was just trying to figure out what he wanted from his company and what he wanted me to do in his company. How could I best help him in the training? But I thought, that's a good point. If you're listening more than you're talking, then you're getting information about somebody, and hopefully that information will help you help them, if you're a Christian.

So, ask a lot of questions and then listen. That's what you need to do. You need to listen. If you listen 80% of the time and talk 20% of the time, that's probably a good ratio for you to have a good relationship with someone. So, listen. And that requires you asking questions. What kind of questions can you ask?

Well, that's number five and the fifth way to advance the gospel during holiday dinners. And this is where we rely a lot on Greg Koukl's book 'Tactics'. Use tactical questions, especially if they say something that you think is wrong or it's against Christianity. You need to remember that when someone says something, you don't have to leap into a rebuttal of what they've said.

It's not your job to refute what they say. It's their job to support what they say. So, before responding to their statements, you need to ask questions. And these are questions that Greg points out in his book 'Tactics'. They're also in the Cross Examined app.

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I don't talk about the app enough, but the Cross Examined app, two words in the App Store, has all these questions that I'm about to go through in it. And it also has a quick answer section. So, someone may ask you a question and you're not quite sure how to answer it. You can have it right on your phone, the answer to the question.

So, download the CrossExamined app, two words in the App Store, CrossExamined. And the first question you know when someone says something is, what do you mean by that? Somebody says, well, I can't trust the Bible because it's been changed throughout the centuries. Don't go into a dissertation as to why it hasn't been changed. Just ask the question, what do you mean by that? What do you mean it's been changed throughout the centuries? And see if they even know what they're talking about. Most of the time, people don't.

Most of the time, people have heard a slogan, and they don't have any evidence for the slogan, but they think the slogan's true. They just like it. You know, the telephone game is how we got the Bible they'll think. Someone told something to one person, he told it to another, and on, and on, and on. By the time it got to the end of the chain, it was completely garbled. That's not how we got the Bible. But just ask them if, when they say the Bible's been changed, what do you mean by that?

Second question, how did you come to that conclusion? Or what evidence do you have for that position? Why do you think that's true? Again, 99 times out of 10, I found most people don't have an answer to that question. They've just heard the slogan. They like the slogan, because they don't want Christianity to be true. They don't want the Bible to be true because they want to do their own thing in their life.

They don't want there to be God, they want to be God over their own lives. And so, when you ask that question, how'd you come to that conclusion? Or why do you think that's true? Or what evidence do you have for that position? They don't have any.

In fact, if you wanted to customize that question, how'd you come to that conclusion? Or what evidence do you have for that? You could, for this particular claim that the Bible's been

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changed throughout the centuries, you might want to say, well, what evidence do you have for that position?

Have you investigated the manuscript evidence for yourself? I guarantee you most people are not going to say, well, yeah, just last night I was up reading a book about the Byzantine line of manuscripts. Like, nobody's going to say that, okay? So, just ask the question and see what they say.

In fact, before somebody is going to begin to accept your worldview, before somebody's going to think about becoming a Christian, they have to begin to doubt their worldview. And that's why you should ask these questions, because they're going to realize pretty quickly, they're out of intellectual justification for their position when you start asking questions like this.

And by the way, friends, questions are easy. Answers are hard. You're in control when you're asking questions. You don't even have to know the answer. You just have to keep asking questions. So, what do you mean by that? How'd you come to that conclusion? The third question that you want to ask is your opportunity to provide some evidence back. And a nice way of doing that is to say, hey, have you ever considered that we didn't get the Bible like the telephone game?

We actually got the Bible, particularly the New Testament, when eyewitnesses or people who knew eyewitnesses wrote down what they saw or said they saw. And then these documents were copied, and they were copied over and over again over the centuries so that we can reconstruct what the original said to more than 99% accuracy.

In other words, that's your opportunity to then refute what they've said after they've already realized that their claim doesn't really work because they don't have evidence for it. So, what do you mean by that? How'd you come to that conclusion? Have you ever considered? Now, if you want to get a lot better at this, you're thinking about gifts for people during Christmas. Think about getting them a book.

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You can get them I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Or you can get them J. Warner Wallace's book 'Cold-Case Christianity', or if they're a Christian already, maybe the 'Tactics' book by Greg Koukl. Or you know what?

I've noticed a lot of people online are starting to like. It took a while to get to the point, is our book 'Hollywood Heroes', how your favorite movies reveal God? My son and I wrote that. It's a great book around Christmas time because the family gets together and watches movies and 'Hollywood Heroes', it's a couple years old now, is really starting to get a little traction because people are realizing anyway, they like the book. So, check it out.

'Hollywood Heroes: How Your Favorite Movies Reveal God.' Especially with young people, when they love movies. And they love many of these movie characters. If they like, say like 'Iron Man' or 'Lord of the Rings', or 'Star Wars', or 'Captain America', or 'Harry Potter'. Harry Potter? Yeah.

If they like any of those characters, they're going to love Jesus because Jesus is the ultimate hero. And all of those movies have been modeled after the ultimate hero, Jesus of Nazareth. All these stories that you see in these big blockbuster movies over the past 50 years, these big blockbuster franchises, 'Lord of the Rings', 'Star Wars', 'Harry Potter', all 'The Avengers', 'Batman', 'Wonder Woman', all of those. They're all modeled after the greatest story ever told, the story of Jesus.

So, check out 'Hollywood Heroes'. We also have 'The Four-Point Case for Mere Christianity'. You can only get that at Crossexamined.org. Click on Store. That's a comic book we've actually put together. It's a summary of I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. And it's...

Well, it's a little bit more than a comic book. It's what we call a graphic novel. You can read it in 15 minutes. But it goes through the four points. Does truth exist? Does God exist? Are miracles possible? And is the New Testament telling us the truth about the resurrection? Because if the answer is yes to all those questions, Christianity is true.

And that book is great for young people, great stocking stuff. We've also got some courses coming up. You can buy people tuition for a course. In January, we're going to do 'How to

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Interpret Your Bible.' I'll be your instructor for that. But there's a lot of other courses you can take anytime you want. Self-paced courses like 'Train Your Brain.'

That course is a course in logic. Although it's written for sixth to eighth graders, adults take it because they like the level at which it's written. If you've never had a course in logic, you should take 'Train Your Brain.' That's with Shanda Fulbright and myself.

Also, 'Jesus Vs. the Culture' is a course that many people have enjoyed. It goes through all of the major topics we're dealing with in our culture. We've updated 'Why I Still Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.' That's a brand-new version of 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist' in an online course. It's also a DVD set you can get.

Just go to crossexamined.org and you'll see there's about 30 different online courses up there, and there are all sorts of DVD sets at our store. So, think about meaningful gifts when you can not only just talk to people over a holiday dinner, but you can give them a gift that will bring them closer to Jesus. So, try that out if you're looking for some gifts right around the end of the year here.

All right, so far, the top 10 ways to advance the gospel over holiday dinners, Thanksgiving, Christmas, that kind of thing, New Year's. Number one, pray. Number two, serve. Number three, ask. Number four, listen. Number five, use questions, tactical questions. And then number six, cede the conversation here.

When you start talking about these things, there's going to be some objections to Christianity that they might bring up. And here are some possible responses you might make to cede the conversation after you've asked the tactical questions we just talked about.

Number one, if somebody is not a Christian, probably the biggest objection you're going to get is that Christians are hypocrites. And when someone says that, you need to agree with them? Yeah, I agree. I'm a hypocrite. We're all hypocrites. In fact, everyone's a hypocrite. Atheists don't even live up to their own standards.

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Do you know anybody that lives completely up to every standard they have? I don't. You don't? We're all hypocrites, in fact. Have ever heard this advice? When somebody charges you with something or claims you've done something wrong, if it's true, agree with it and watch the criticism go away. Agree with it.

Say, I'm sorry, you're right. What are they going to do after that? I mean, usually we dig in and try and spin stuff and try and avoid the conclusion, when if it's true, it's true. Just say, yeah, you're right, I'm sorry. What are they going to do after that? Everybody's a hypocrite. Atheists are hypocrites. Christians are hypocrites. Muslims are hypocrites. Buddhists are.

Nobody can live consistently with even the standards they have for themselves. So, we're all hypocrites. You could also say this. That's a good point. We are hypocrites. But, you know, it's actually evidence for God. What do you mean it's evidence for God? Well, if there is no God, why is hypocrisy wrong? Or why is anything wrong?

In other words, you can get into a conversation about the moral argument. If there is no God, nothing's ultimately right or wrong. Being a hypocrite or not being a hypocrite, there's nothing good or bad about either of those things. Everything's just a matter of opinion. So, agree with them. You also might want to say, I agree, we're hypocrites, but the church is a hospital for sinners. It's not a country club for saints. We're all fallen. We all need a savior.

In fact, that's why Jesus came. I said this in my debate, my second debate with Hitchens. I said, Christopher, I'm a hypocrite. I can't live up to what Jesus said and did. But if I could, I wouldn't need him. If I was perfect, I wouldn't need a savior. And when people say, I can't go to church because there's too many hypocrites down there, I always say, come on down, pal.

We've got room for one more. Yes, the church is a hospital for sinners. It's not a country club for saints. Yes, I realize we're saints theologically because when you become a Christian, you're given Christ's righteousness. I get all that. But practically, we're still struggling, just like Paul struggles in Romans chapter seven. What I do, I don't want to do. What I don't want to do, I do. Who's going to save me from this body of death?

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Jesus Christ, our Lord he says. By the way, it's really bad logic to say, I can't go to church because there's too many hypocrites down there. It would be like saying, I can't go to the gym because there's too many out of shape people down there. Yeah, well, that's why they're down there. That's one reason why they're there, to get into shape.

And one reason you go to church is to get into spiritual shape, to get into moral shape. It's one of many reasons, but it would make no sense. I can't go down there because there's other sinners down there. Yeah, we're all sinners. And by the way, I love what Dr. John Dixon says in his book 'Of Bullies and Saints' on this issue with regard to hypocrisy.

In fact, you can ask this question of somebody when they say, yeah, all Christians are hypocrites. You can say this to them. And here's what Dixon says. He says, hey, can I ask you a question? Yeah, sure, go ahead. When somebody plays Beethoven poorly, who do you blame? Yeah, you don't blame Beethoven.

So, when somebody plays Jesus poorly, who do you blame? You don't blame Jesus. Look, just because I'm not true and beautiful doesn't mean Jesus isn't true and beautiful. We're all fallen. We all need a savior. News flash. Christianity is not Christians. Christianity is Jesus. Keep your eyes on Jesus. Jesus is the standard, not Christians.

Now, obviously we expect Christians, if they're sealed with the Holy Spirit, to ultimately live a better life than they were prior to becoming a Christian. But you're going to find atheists and other people out there that live better moral lives than Christians because they had a better starting point than the Christian did.

We did a whole program on this, I don't know, two or three months, maybe four months ago now. Why aren't Christians better people? Look it up. I don't have time to get in all the details. All right, how about they say, well, Christianity is exclusive, you know, and you're leaving people out.

Well, first of all, you might want to say, well, that's a moral position. By what moral standard are you judging that you know, only Christians go to heaven, so that's bad? First of all. And I also might ask, do you think God should force people into heaven against their will? Because

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the assumption is everyone wants to go to heaven. That's not true. Who's in heaven? Jesus is in heaven.

Well, there have been people running from Jesus their entire lives. What's He going to do in the afterlife? Is He going to say, hey, where are you going? You're with me now. No. [Laughter]

Look, at the end of the day, there's only two possibilities. In fact, C.S. Lewis put it this way. There's only two kinds of people in the world. Those who say to God, thy will be done and those to whom God says, thy will be done. You're going to get what you want. You're either going to be with Jesus or you're going to be separated from Jesus based on your own choice.

And by the way, you don't go to Hell because you don't believe in Jesus. You go to Hell because you've sinned. To say you go to Hell because you don't believe in Jesus would be like saying I died because I didn't go to the doctor. No, you died because you had a disease. Maybe you could have prevented dying by going to the doctor, just like you can prevent eternal death by going to the Great Doctor, the Great Physician.

But the reason you die is because you have a disease. The reason you're going to be separated from God is because you have this disease known as sin. Now, Jesus is the solution. He's the cure. But if you don't want the cure, God's not going to force you into heaven against your will. By the way, all truth is exclusive, and all faiths are.

Islam is just as exclusive as Christianity. If you're not a Muslim, you're going to hellfire according to Surah 5. Even the Baha'i Faith which says everyone gets to heaven, they're saying the people who say that everyone doesn't get to heaven is wrong. That those people are wrong. All of these faiths are exclusive. That's what truth is. Truth is inclusive.

I mean, I should say it another way. Truth excludes its opposite. To say that 2+2 equals 4 means every other non 4 answers wrong. To say that Jesus is the only way is to say anybody that tries to get to God through any other means is wrong. To say Islam is the only way, any non-Islamic way is wrong. To say New Age is the only way, any non-New Age way is wrong. All truth is exclusive.

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Even if you were to say, well, everyone goes to heaven. Again, you're saying that the people who say that everyone doesn't go to heaven are wrong. All truth is exclusive. The question is what's the right truth? People bring up atheism, you might be able to seed the conversation by saying I don't have enough faith to be an atheist. And then be quiet. See what they say.

Usually when I say that, people will laugh and then they'll ask a question. They've never heard, I don't have enough faith to be an atheist. That's turning a concept on its head that only people who believe in God have faith. And of course, it depends on what faith means. Faith in this sense means the way that people think about faith in our culture, that faith is what you do when you don't have any evidence, that faith is blind.

Of course, that's not the faith of the Bible. Faith of the Bible means trusting in what you have good evidence to believe that is true. Trusting in what you have good evidence to believe that is true. So, apologetics is belief that getting evidence that God exists, that Jesus rose from the dead. But salvation is trusting in Christ as your Savior. You can know Christ as your Savior and not be saved, just like the demons do. Right?

James says even the demons believe that God exists, but they tremble. They know that God exists better than we do. They're in the spiritual realm, but they don't want Christianity to be true. So, they're not. They have belief that, but not belief in.

And God doesn't want you to just have intellectual acknowledgment that He exists. He wants to have a love relationship. And that's not just of the head, it's of the heart. Christianity is of the head and the heart. Not just the head, not just the heart, but both. Suppose they bring up science.

One question you might want to ask is, what do you mean by science, man? They might have trouble defining that. What do you mean by science? You know what science is? It's really a search for causes. It's a method we use to define, to discover cause and effect in the universe. Whenever you're doing science, you're trying to figure out what particular cause caused a particular effect.

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In fact, as Francis Bacon put it, the founder of modern science, science is a search for causes. When you're doing science, you're searching for causes. What particular cause caused this effect that we see? What is the cause of this effect? What's the cause of the entire universe by the way? If space, time, and matter had a beginning, it must be something outside of space, time, and matter that brought it into being.

And so, science is just a means of discovering cause and effect. It used to mean, just generally, it used to mean knowledge. That's what science meant. And the queen of all sciences was theology. Yes, because the theologian put every academic discipline under one rubric of truth, one umbrella of truth. When you went to university, you were trying to find unity in diversity.

Now we don't do that. Now people specialize so much that you might become an expert in the mating habits of the African fruit fly below the Sahara desert. But you won't have a broad view of reality if you're so specialized in a very minor slice of reality. And so, we need to get back to giving people a broad education so they can see how all the pieces fit together. And the physical sciences are just one piece.

Well, I get all the truth from science. You should ask them, do you get that truth from science? No, you can't get all your truth from science. In fact, that claim isn't from science. That's not a statement of science. That's a statement about science. And there are many things you need to know before you can do science. You need to know logic, you need to know mathematics, you need to know basic cause and effect.

You need to know that your mind is ascertaining truths through your senses about the real world outside your skull. These are all things you bring to the scientific endeavor. You can't prove logic, math, realism, reasoning. You can't prove cause and effect through science. You have to assume those things in order to do science.

Another thing you might say, and this is from a chapter in our book 'Stealing from God', a whole chapter on science if you want to delve into this. Science doesn't say anything. Scientists do. Why am I saying that? Because all data needs to be gathered, all data needs to be interpreted. And who does that? Scientists do that.

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And why do we think that scientists are immune to the same three temptations the rest of us are not immune to? Sex, money, and power. In fact, if you think science is some sort of discipline where objectivity reigns supreme all the time, I think you're a bit naive.

In fact, you can just look at Covid to see how this whole thing exploded. You ever wonder why you've gotten different advice on Covid, particularly during the pandemic? You say follow the science. Who's science? Who's doing the interpreting here? And what worldview do they have?

Science is something that is stated by scientists. It doesn't interpret itself. Science doesn't say anything. Scientists do. I mean, look, if you've got good data and you interpret it properly, you'll get good advice if we're talking, say, about COVID or some other disease. The scientists have good data, they don't interpret it properly, you'll get bad advice.

If they got bad data, it doesn't matter how they interpret it, you're going to get bad advice. If there's a political agenda. Oh, that'll never happen. Yeah. Wake up, friends. How many people got rich? And how many people got power, money and power by telling us what we needed to do during COVID including getting all these booster shots? I got another booster, right?

Fauci had Covid five times, he had eight boosters. I got another booster, I got COVID again. You know, I mean, science doesn't say anything. Scientists do. All right, enough said. We've done whole shows on that. How about they bring up miracles?

Well, I can't believe in miracles. Look, even atheists admit the universe began to exist out of nothing, that space, time, and matter had a beginning out of nothing. Well, if that's the case, then at least there must be something outside the universe that brought it into existence. If space, time, and matter had a beginning out of nothing, then whatever created space, time, and matter can't be made a space, time, and matter.

In other words, the cause must transcend space, time, and matter. The cause must be spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful to create the universe out of nothing. Personal in order to choose to create. Because to go from a state of nothingness to a state of creation, someone had to make a choice. And only persons can make choices.

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Immaterial laws of nature can't make choices. Or impersonal laws of nature can't make choices. Like gravity doesn't decide whether or not it's going to pull something to the ground. It just does it over and over again. And by the way, prior to the creation of the universe, ontologically prior, prior to any space, matter, or time, there were no natural laws. Nature had a beginning.

So, outside of nature, there must be something that created space, time, and matter. Because you've got to have at least those six attributes. Spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, personal, and intelligent. Those attributes are the attributes of what we would call God.

Now, we don't know if this is the God of the Bible unless we figure out Jesus rose from the dead. If we figure out that Jesus did rise from the dead, then the same being that created space, time, and matter out of nothing is the same being that rose from the dead 1,991 years ago. His human nature rose from the dead 1,991 years ago. But His divine nature created the universe out of nothing.

The only way we can figure out if the first cause was the God of the Bible is to see whether Jesus really rose from the dead. And if He did, then Christianity is true, and the creator of the universe is Yahweh. Really, Jesus is as Colossians 2 says, I believe. Maybe it's Colossians 1, that He created all things.

So, when people believe in miracles, you ought to say, the greatest miracle in the Bible has occurred. And even atheists are admitting the evidence for it. Genesis 1:1 is the greatest miracle in the Bible. Now, they don't think it's God, obviously. They're atheists, but what else could it be? It's got to be something spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, moral.

Well, not moral, but if you throw in the moral argument, you get also that this creator is a moral being, a spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, personal, intelligent creator. We get from the evidence from science and philosophy that the universe had a beginning. Suppose they claim, well, the universe or the New Testament story is a conspiracy.

I would ask this question, what motive did the Jewish New Testament writers have to make up a new religion? They already thought they were God's chosen people, and they were persecuted for saying the resurrection occurred.

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So, why would they make all this up? Why would they then go and die for this? Why would they put all the embarrassing stuff in the text if they're trying to pass off a lie as the truth? They wouldn't lie about things that make them look bad. They wouldn't say that, oh, we ran away while the women were the brave ones, that we were doubters, that the Lord called Peter Satan, that Peter said, Lord, I'll never deny you. And then he winds up denying Him three times.

Nobody would make this stuff up. This is not a made-up story. How about if they bring up errors in the Bible? You might ask them, well, where are these errors? You might say, well, let's suppose you're right that there are errors in the Bible. Does that mean Jesus didn't rise from the dead?

No, there could be minor errors in the Bible and the main story could still be true. Just like there were differences in the testimony of the Titanic survivors. Some said the Titanic went down whole. Others said that it broke in two before it went down. Does that mean we can't believe the Titanic sank because you had conflicting testimony about how it sank? No, we all agree that it sank. We may disagree on how it sank.

Same thing is true with the resurrection. They all agree there was a resurrection. Oh, they may disagree or at least allegedly disagree. Maybe it appears they disagree on who got to the tomb first and all this kind of thing. That's irrelevant to whether or not it really happened. I mean, why would Jews write the New Testament documents if Jesus didn't rise from the dead? What's the point of this?

In fact, I like to say this, that Christianity would be true even if the Bible never existed. People go, what? Think about this, ladies and gentlemen. Do you realize there were thousands of Christians before a line of the New Testament was ever written? Why? Because they did not read about the resurrection in a book.

They witnessed the resurrected Jesus. They saw Jesus. They touched Jesus. They ate with Jesus. They verified with their own senses that Jesus had risen from the dead. This is not an invented story. They didn't make it up.

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Now, thankfully, they did write it down so we could know about it and orient our lives according to it. But Christianity did not begin with a book. Christianity began with an event, the resurrection of Jesus. There would be no series of books written by Jews in the first century claiming a man claimed to be God and rose from the dead unless a man really did claim to be God and really did rise from the dead.

They didn't get sex. They didn't get money. They didn't get power. They didn't get any of the motivators you normally get if you lie about something. There's no motive to make this up. Every motive to say it didn't happen. And so, you might want to bring that up.

In fact, you might want to say, the New Testament writers did not create the resurrection. The resurrection created the New Testament writers. There would be no documents written by Jews in the first century claiming a man claimed to be God and rose from the dead unless a man really did claim to be God and really did rise from the dead. Because there's no motive to make it up.

There's every motive to say it didn't happen. Not every motive to say it did. So, to think that they made it up just doesn't make any sense. They bring up evil. You can say, what do you mean by evil? We've talked about that a lot on this program. Evil only exists if God exists. Not because God is doing evil, but because he's the standard of good by which we'd even know what evil was.

In fact, an analogy I use, and this is, this would probably be good during the football game on Thanksgiving. You might say, how do you know that your favorite team's quarterback...? How do you know that your quarterback throwing a touchdown is better than your quarterback throwing a pick six? That's when he throws the ball to the other team, and they take it back for a touchdown. How do you know? They may struggle with that. But the answer is because you know the purpose of the game.

If there was no purpose of the game to score more points than the other team, then you couldn't say the touchdown for your team was better than the pick six when the other team took the ball back for a touchdown. You couldn't say that the touchdown was better than the interception, in other words, unless you knew the purpose of the game.

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And you can't say that, say, loving people is objectively better than murdering them unless you know the overall purpose to life. And there can only be an overall purpose to life, an objective purpose to life if God exists. I mean, if there is no God, Hitler can have his purpose, and Mother Teresa can have her purpose, and they're just different.

They're not better or worse than anybody else. They're just different. Just like the plays are different in a football game. Yeah, your quarterback throwing a touchdown is a different play than him throwing a pick six, but they're not better or worse than one another unless you know the purpose of the game. How about if politics comes up?

Suppose someone says, well, Trump is evil. Or someone says the Democrats are evil, or whatever. Whatever they say, I agree. He's evil. They are evil, and I am evil. We're all evil. That's why we need a Savior. We're all fallen. Character counts. Yeah, I agree. Character does count. I agree.

But you know what? There's another aspect of character as well. When you're supporting abortion to the ninth month and you want to castrate children, and you want to leave a border open so young people can be trafficked across the border, and drugs can come in, and terrorists can come in, that's a character issue as well, when you're supporting evil policies.

You know, we talked a lot on this program about where the candidates stand on the previous election. And we said you've got to vote policy over personality. But we still pointed out that character is important, that personality is important. But remember, policies last a lot longer than personalities.

And also, the character of someone is at least partially demonstrated by the policies they support. You're really going to support abortion up to the moment of birth, and you're going to have taxpayers pay for it? That's what Kamala Harris wanted to do. You really want to support the castration of children?

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That's what Kamala Harris wanted to do. You really want to support people just streaming across the border? Sex-trafficking people, drugs, terrorism, you name it. You think that's compassionate? You think that's good? No, that's character issue as well.

Now, I think the country's pretty exhausted over politics. That may be something you want to avoid since the next election is so far off. But if it comes up, you can agree with them. And remember, agree with people and watch the criticism go away. Sure, yeah. Trump has bad character. Yeah.

So does Kamala Harris. Yeah, yeah. We all have bad character to a certain extent. You know that? But they're not always equal. Some people have worse character than others, and some people support far worse policies than others. You ought to point that out. All right, there may be other objections. I'm sure there are, but we got to move on because we have limited time here to deal with all of these different objections that people bring up.

All right, so you've got all of these different objections that may come up. You can cede the conversation by asking questions, by making a point here or there. Also, you may want to agree with people when they get something right. Right? Agree and affirm them. That's number seven.

When they get something right, whatever they get right, say, yeah, you're absolutely right about that. It'll make points of disagreement more acceptable. So, that's way number seven to advance the gospel during these dinners. How about number 8? Use the Quick Answer section of the Cross Examined app. I mentioned it earlier.

Get the Cross Examined app, two words in the App Store. Many of the objections they bring up. There'll be a question or two you can ask them in the app if you go to the Quick Answer section. And there's also some points you can make back. You know, after you say, what do you mean by that? How'd you come to that conclusion?

Have you ever considered? There'll be some points in the Cross Examined app that you can respond back to them, and it may be awkward for you to pull out your phone and say, I have an answer to this.

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Well, excuse yourself, go to the bathroom, find the answer, and come back out. All right? Or you can say, hey, I'm getting a text here and you are getting a text. And then you can go to the Cross Examined app and figure out what answer you might get. By the way, there are also some great places. Well, I'll get to it in a minute. Let me go to number nine.

Number nine is show them what makes your walk with Jesus easier. Maybe the Cross Examined App, maybe the Bible Project has some good videos as you know, the You Version of the Bible. Recommend a book, recommend a podcast that you like. Hopefully you like this one. You can recommend this one or several others.

There are other podcasts you can avail yourselves of that can help people, depending upon where they are. So, show them what makes your walk easier. Show them a great preacher that you like online, or if it's local, that is even better. Invite them to church. Bring them along.

So, show them what makes your walk easier. And then finally, write them afterwards. Following up on a conversation later via email can be very effective. That's because you can present your ideas more clearly and completely while the other person can actually consider what you are saying without feeling the pressure of having to respond immediately.

You can also include links to articles or websites if you want to go a lot deeper. In fact, the Got Questions people have some great articles up at Got Questions. If you go to gotquestions.org and type in, you know, in the search bar, you'll probably find an article that addresses the question that's being asked. We have that on our website as well, Crossexamined.org.

We've done so many blogs and podcasts in the past, that you can do that as well. And for those of you that don't know this, all of our podcasts are eventually put into transcripts. So, sometimes you go, I don't want to listen to the whole thing again, but there was a point that I heard that I want to hear again or see again.

Download the transcript. Go to crossexamined.org and wherever you find the podcast, if you go up there on the website, you'll see audio, I think. You'll go up there and wherever you see the podcast itself attached, there will be a transcript. You can download the PDF of the transcript,

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and they can search the transcript using the search function. I'm just trying to make your life easier, ladies and gentlemen. By the way, we're also putting these podcasts on YouTube now.

So, if you want to see a particular podcast, because maybe we have some visuals involved, you can watch it on YouTube. In fact, the next show we're going to do this coming Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, has to do with the evidence for the Exodus from Egypt. And we're going to show you some of this evidence visually.

So, you may want to watch the YouTube version of it. By the way, I'm going to be in Egypt for the next couple of weeks. Starting next week, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and we're going to send some film back of some of these archaeological discoveries. So, you need to keep an eye on all of our social media for these short clips that hopefully we're going to get when we're in Egypt.

And also, we're going to get when we go to Saudi Arabia right after that, because we think the real Mount Sinai is Jabal al-Lawz in Saudi Arabia. So, keep an eye on our YouTube channel and our Instagram, and TikTok, and other places, Twitter. We put all this stuff up on X as well on certain videos anyway, so you can check all that out. So, here are the top 10 ways that you can advance the gospel this year and any year during dinners.

Number one, pray. Number two, serve. Number three, ask. Number four, listen. Number five, ask tactical questions. Number six, cede the conversation when some objection or something comes up that they get wrong. Then we went through several topics you can give a response on. Number seven, agree and affirm whenever they get something right.

Number eight, use the Quick Answer section of the Cross Examined app. Number nine, show them what makes your walk easier. Little podcast that you listen to a book, a video site, our website, whatever. And then number 10, write them afterwards because then you can be very specific and send them links and that kind of thing. And don't forget the key question.

If they're not a Christian, if Christianity were true, would you become a Christian? Or you could say it this way. If Jesus really rose from the dead, predicted and accomplished his own resurrection from the dead, if he really did that to prove He was God, would you follow Him? And see what they say. Again, a lot of times this is not intellectual, it's volitional, it's moral.

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Now, if they say no to any of those things, no extra charge for this, let me mention a few other things you can do. Number one, you can pray, as we've said, always pray. Number two, you can plant seeds every now and then. We've talked about that a lot here. Not too much, because if you plant too many seeds, they're going to get annoyed with you.

But every once in a while, you can plant a seed that shows them why their worldview is false, and Christianity is true. Number three, you can love them, which doesn't mean that you approve of everything they do. Love does not mean approval. Love means seeking what's best for the other person, according to God.

You need to love people by telling them the truth. They're getting a lot of mistruths, a lot of misinformation from the culture. You've got to be the one to tell them the truth. So, love doesn't mean approval. Love means seeking what's best for them according to what God wants. So, you can do that.

And then you can ask a lot of questions to see how they're doing, stay in touch with them, and then finally, you can wait. Now, why do I say wait? Because a lot of people only come to God when some event occurs normally, some difficulty, some tragedy. And if you think about your own life, I'd say when I survey audiences on this, 30 to 40% of people have come to faith through pain and suffering. And a hundred percent of people grow in their faith toward Jesus through pain and suffering.

So, if someone initially says, no, I wouldn't become a Christian even if it were true. If you pray for them, if you plant seeds, if you love them, if you ask questions, and then you wait, if they ever become a Christian, it'll probably be when tragedy strikes. And that'll be when your phone will ring, and the person will be on the other end. Because when the student is ready, the student will summon the teacher and not before.

So, keep doing those things in order to be ready when they are ready. Remember, friends, it's not always getting people to the foot of the cross with every conversation. I'm not saying don't do that if you have the opportunity. I'm saying don't feel like you have to do it with every conversation. It's a process.

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Get them around the base pass, get them on first, second, third. Someone else will bring them home. Do a lot of gardening before you do harvesting. But if you are faithful and you stay in people's lives, chances are there'll be a time when they will call you and then you can bring them home.

All right, friends, thank you so much. Lord willing, we will see you here next week. Be thankful. By the way, I got to say one other thing. You can never be happy if you're not thankful. Be thankful. Despite any circumstances you're in, be thankful for what you have, what God has given you, what God has promised you, for the future in terms of eternity.

Be thankful for what he came to do for all of us. Be thankful. And your countenance, your feelings, your attitude will change when you're thankful. You can't be happy unless you have an attitude of gratitude. So, let's be thankful for what God has done for us and who He is. All right, we'll see you here next week. God bless.

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