

Tips For Witnessing to a Cultist

- I. This study should help you to engage someone involved in a cult.
 - A. The label “cult” can be misleading. Sometimes what are considered the earmarks of a cult can also apply to mainstream religion.
 - B. Keep in mind that, to an ignorant and unbelieving world, the way of righteousness is a heretical cult. **ACT 24:5, 14.**
 - C. For this study's purposes, “cult” refers to pseudo-Christian groups which use Christian terminology but twist the definitions and which commonly have one or more of the following attributes:
 - 1. Denial of the deity of Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Denial of the Biblical Trinity.
 - 3. Denial of a completed, preserved revelation from God.
 - 4. Affirm extra-biblical revelation.
 - 5. Denial of a preserved true church.
 - 6. A charismatic founder whose doctrine is superior to Scripture.
 - 7. Members are psychologically isolated from outside information.

- II. In what are commonly called “cults,” there is a common assumption that any opposition to their belief system could not be from God.
 - A. You as the opposer are to that person the agent of darkness.
 - B. Generally speaking, he is preconditioned to reject any opposition regardless of how sound that opposition might be.
 - C. As such, there are some important psychological factors to consider.
 - 1. Remember that the cultist is not the enemy. Satan and his lies are the enemy.
 - 2. He is prepared for you to attack him, which you should resist doing.
 - a. Avoid the “ad hominem” (*attack the man*) approach, as this only confirms to him that your opposition is born of satanic hatred. Such friction always produces more heat than light.
 - b. Remember that this warfare is spiritual, not carnal or personal.
EPH 6:12; 2CO 10:4.
 - c. You need to de-personalize your opposition as much as possible, proving to him that it is ideas, not persons, that you are addressing.
 - (1) Jehovah's Witnesses are conditioned to think that Christians will always attack them on a personal level.
 - (2) As such, they readily assume a martyr or persecution complex which only solidifies in their mind that they are the righteous.
 - d. There may be a time for your attack to become more personalized, but let that be only after the person has proven himself to be a hardened gainsayer.
ACT 18:5-6.

 - D. Remember that man is by nature a traditionalist who is uncomfortable with ideas that challenge his old ways. **LUK 5:39.**
 - 1. Don't assume that immediate rejection of your sound reasoning and Scripture indicates a complete futility. He may need time to savor the *new wine*.
 - 2. Immediate change does not necessarily mean sincere, lasting change.
MAR 4:14-16.
 - 3. A conversion wrought by investigation and meditation is more likely to be genuine.
ACT 17:11-12.

4. Remember your own conversion. You heard something that was new, convicting and it took time for you to sort the matter out.

E. Remember that the real victory lies in justifying God and His wisdom.

JUDE 1:3; LUK 7:35.

1. Whether a person becomes converted through your witness or not, as long as the gospel of Christ has been declared with a clear conscience, there is victory. **2CO 2:14-16.**
2. A converted sinner is cause for rejoicing (**LUK 15:10**), but don't let the lack of conversion wound your spirit if you have lovingly stood for the truth.

III. Consider some pointers about persuasion.

- A. You must be persuaded of what you believe. **ROM 1:16; 2CO 4:13; 2TI 1:12.**
- B. Know your material. **2TI 2:14-15; TIT 1:9.**
 1. It is helpful to have at least a cursory knowledge of the belief system and practice of the cult under consideration.
 2. However, the best preparation is familiarity with the truth of Scripture. Know the real thing forwards and backwards and all the counterfeits will be obvious.
- C. Maintain a godly, consistent deportment. **1TH 2:1, 10 c/w 1PE 2:12.**
 1. Sometimes the best witness is the consistency of one's life with principle. **MAR 6:20; 1PE 3:1-2.**
 2. "Preach the gospel at all times. When necessary, use words." (unknown)
- D. Be enthusiastic and bold. **ACT 4:13-14.**
- E. Be a good listener. **JAM 1:19.**
 1. Allow your opponent to state his position. Don't jump in quickly with your objections. Hear him out reasonably. **PRO 18:13.**
 - a. This will acquaint you with his position and give you a better chance to analyze it for a response that fits the situation. **PRO 25:11.**
 - b. You can thereby discern the weaknesses of his arguments so as to better refute them. Also, his position may expose itself for its own error. **TIT 3:10-11.**
 - c. There will virtually always be a logical contradiction within every false belief system. Examples:
 - (1) Mormonism advocates that the writings of Joseph Smith et. al. are divinely inspired, infallible and immutable. However, later leaders of Mormonism have amended those writings as necessary for various reasons.
 - (2) Jehovah's Witnesses recognize the Scriptural mark of a false prophet in **DEU 18:22**. Yet their history is rife with missed prophecies about the reappearance of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob, the return of Christ, etc.
 - (3) Christian Scientists have known for many years that Mary Baker Eddy (who considered herself divinely guided) vigorously opposed doctors and drugs while affirming the unreality of sickness and pain. However, in her infirmed later years, she was well attended by doctors and took morphine for pain.
 - (4) Dr. Rokeach had this to say about such Orwellian *double-think*: "Such expressions of clearly contradictory beliefs will be taken as one indication of isolation in the belief system....a final indicator of

isolation is the outright denial of contradiction. Contradictory facts can be denied several ways: on grounds of face absurdity ('it is absurd on the face of it'), 'chance,' 'the exception that proves the rule,' 'the true facts are not accessible, and the only available sources of information are biased.'"

(The Open and Closed Mind, pp. 36 & 37)

- (5) For some, it may be a matter of simply not knowing the self-condemning traits of their own belief system.
- (6) A knowledgeable adherent to a cult system has accepted as reasonable the illogical and the self-contradictory. Reasoning with such a person may indeed be futile. **PRO 18:2; 14:7.**
- d. By listening to your opponent, you can use his own words against him. **LUK 19:22-23.**
- e. You can appeal to the fact that you listened to him as a reason that he should listen to you. **JOB 32:4, 10-17.**
- f. Being a good and patient listener does not mean that you should allow him to dominate or monopolize the dialogue.

- 2. When your opportunity to speak comes,
 - a. Don't speak out of ignorance. **PRO 15:7; JOH 3:11.**
 - b. Think before you speak. **PSA 39:3; PRO 29:20.**
 - c. Don't dump the whole truckload on him. **PRO 17:27; 29:11.**
 - d. Take the simplest, straightest shot. **MAT 22:29-32.**
 - (1) See how he handles something plain and obvious.
 - (2) If he recognizes that his system is flawed, there is a chance of making more headway.
 - (3) If he strays away from the topic at hand, direct him back gently (if possible) to it.
 - (4) If he cannot or will not see the obvious, then overwhelming him with other arguments is likely futile. Kindly suggest that further discussion should be deferred until he has thought upon the obvious and come to terms with that.

- F. If you don't know how to handle his arguments,
 - 1. defer to **PRO 15:28.**
 - 2. see if he would be willing to sit down with your pastor or a faithful brother who is more acquainted with the matter.
- G. Have and show a genuine interest in the welfare of the individual you seek to persuade. **ROM 10:1; 1TH 2:5-8; 2TI 2:24-25.**
- H. Here are some basic appeals to be used in persuading:
 - 1. Appeal to a person's sense of reason. **ACT 17:24-25; MAT 16:6-12.**
 - 2. Appeal to a person's knowledge. **ACT 17:28-29; 26:26.**
 - 3. Appeal to a person's faith. **ACT 26:27.**
 - 4. Appeal to a person's sense of loyalty. **GAL 4:13-16.**
 - 5. Appeal to a person's sense of gratitude. **PHM 1:19; ROM 2:4.**
 - 6. Appeal to a person's sense of justice. **LUK 10:36-37.**
 - 7. Appeal to a person's sense of well-being. **ACT 13:40-41.**
- I. Do all for the glory of God, not for vainglory. **1CO 8:1; 10:31; PHIL 2:3.**
- J. Don't be shaken by information that challenges you. **2TH 2:2.**