

Should we just leave the Bible out of it?

Here's a situation that might be fairly familiar to you regarding a discussion between a Christian and a skeptic. Part way into the conversation, a particular controversial social issue comes into focus (e.g. same-sex marriage, transgenderism, abortion, legalizing marijuana, etc.). At some point the Christian quotes a verse or makes a reference to Scripture in general leading the skeptic to say, "You can't bring the Bible into this!" Too often, the Christian readily complies with this demand, going along with the popular belief that the Bible is "just one of many religious documents" and we should not be pushing our views on others.



Is this an appropriate reaction? How should we respond in these types of situations?

Many years ago (prior to being in fulltime ministry) I was at work, casually talking to a co-worker. Somehow the conversation turned to the topic of abortion. It was very apparent that she had fairly liberal views about social issues and was definitely in support of abortion on demand for almost any reason whatsoever. She seemed willing to hear my opinion, but I also got the impression she didn't want to hear anything about the Bible. I politely asked if she was going to allow me to refer to Scripture in my response, to which she replied with a very emphatic, "No!" I replied by telling her, "Then I have very little to say, because realistically, it would just be my opinion against yours and that wouldn't really resolve anything." Looking back, I think my response was accurate, but not as helpful or thorough as it should have been. Learning how to respond to various situations is definitely a maturing process and God has helped me quite a bit over the past three decades, since I started my journey to more proactively defend the Christian faith. So don't be discouraged if you feel too often you lack the ability to respond effectively.

What happens if we "leave the Bible out of it"? Many things, none of which are good.

One very interesting point that many would not have even realized is the following. They are actually bringing their view of the Bible into the discussion, while asking you to leave yours out! But wait a minute, aren't they just asking not to bring the Bible into the discussion? Yes, and why? Because it is their belief the Bible is NOT the inspired Word of God and cannot be relied upon to comment authoritatively on the subject. (Conversely, it is your belief that the Bible is relevant, reliable and authoritative.) So in essence, you are beginning your discussion with the agreement to honor their beliefs about the Bible (leaving it out altogether) and disregard yours! How is that fair?

A second point to make is "leaving the Bible out of it" relegates us to debating the correctness of a viewpoint based upon related consequences. For example, some might want to argue that same-sex marriage is wrong because it adversely affects any children that may later be part of this union and in many cases can lead to life-threatening diseases, which could affect others as well. The danger with

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this is you are implying it's wrong simply because it causes problems, rather than it causes problems because it's wrong!

Here's another very important point. For Christians, our starting point for making any kind of judgement on any significant issue is the belief that God exists and the Bible is His inspired, inerrant Word to us. We use this belief to formulate our ideas about everything else... good and bad, right and wrong, ethics, morality, history, philosophy, etc. If we leave this starting point out, we lose the basis for claiming to have any authoritative answers or the existence of any absolute truths.

The skeptic we are speaking with also has a starting point they use in the same fashion we use ours. You could justifiably ask them, "Since you are asking me to give up my starting point for this particular discussion, it would only be fair for you to give up yours as well. Are you willing to do so?" Most likely, they won't even be aware of what their starting point is. And if they somehow were aware of their starting point, they most likely would not want to give it up.

In reality, you cannot give up your starting point, at least not without replacing with a different one. Everyone has to start somewhere with their beliefs, so you can see that it is actually impossible not to have a starting point, it's more a matter of which one you have chosen and why. See our DVD entitled "Faith is Not a Four Letter Word" for more help with this concept.

The main reason we should never "leave the Bible out of it" is that it is our most powerful defense and the actual words of God! Consider the following verses:

- For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12 ESV)
- So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11 ESV)
- The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. (Psalm 19:7-8 ESV)
- All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16 ESV)

But what if they don't believe the Bible? Since we're dealing with skeptics here, it's pretty safe to say this would be the case almost every time. So now what? That sounds like a good topic for another "Question of the Month", seeing that we are limited in how much we cover in these purposely brief articles.

Wrapping things up for now, we should never "leave the Bible out of it", because if we do, we've already "lost the battle". Proverbs 3:5-6 admonishes us to trust God's leading and not rely upon our

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opinions: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

If you have any questions related to this month’s question or any other issue, please don’t hesitate to contact us at info@TheStartingPointProject.com.