

## What if they don't believe the Bible?

We've all experienced situations where we begin a conversation with a skeptic, mentioning the Bible, only to have them abruptly interrupt, declaring, "I don't believe the Bible!" It is at this point that many Christians back down and agree to "leave God's Word out of it." Big mistake! But how can you continue to reference the Bible when they made it very clear they don't believe it?



Imagine sitting in a courtroom, observing a trial in which someone is accused of armed robbery. The prosecuting lawyer claims the defendant committed the crime, and the lawyer for the defendant actually says that his client admits to robbing the bank. The judge cites a specific statute in the law books, which states the punishment for such armed robbery is a minimum of 5 years and a maximum of 15 years in prison and sentences the defendant to 8 years. However, the defendant's lawyer says neither he nor his client believes in those law books and, therefore, they shouldn't be used to condemn his client. The judge agrees not to reference the law books and the trial results in a hung jury because the prosecution thinks he should be punished, but the defense attorney thinks what his client did was not wrong and should be set free.

That's kind of a crazy scenario, but the outcome is logical if there's no ultimate point of reference for what is right and what is wrong. I know what you might be thinking. We, as a society, have generally agreed to abide by the laws that are in the books used by our court systems. Good or bad, right or wrong, we have in essence given judges that authority to use those laws as guidelines in determining judgements in court cases. On the other hand, we have not officially done that as a society with the Bible, so it's not exactly the same situation. That's true, but here's my point.

When you enter into a discussion about any particular topic, each person will offer their opinion based on their personal "starting point" or worldview. In other words, what you already believe (i.e., your "starting point") will determine what you conclude about the topic at hand. That's seems pretty obvious. Here's the real problem. The skeptic wants you to leave your opinion of the Bible out of the discussion, meaning, you are not allowed to use its precepts to guide your views and conclusions. However, since the Bible is your "starting point" (and it should be if you are truly a Christian), how can you possibly arrive at the proper conclusion without it? But guess what? They are NOT leaving their "starting point" out of the discussion. How's that? Here's how. You, on one hand, DO believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God. They, on the other hand, DO NOT believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God and are using that "starting point" to conclude it should not play a role in determining moral judgements regarding whatever it is you are discussing. They keep their "starting point" (and use it), but you have to give up yours! How is that fair?

Once you have given up your "starting point" you've already lost because it's not possible to come to the proper conclusion about something and defend it soundly without involving your "starting point". It's also not realistic to expect someone to give up their "starting point". What makes much more

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sense is for both sides to clearly state and admit their “starting point” and go from there. Often, the real argument is not so much with the facts behind any particular matter, but with the “starting point” used to make judgements regarding the issue. That’s another strong reason why we as Christians need to be able to share reasons for having chosen the “starting point” we have (i.e., the belief God exists and the Bible is His inspired, inerrant Word).

Here’s a quick, practical example. You get into a discussion regarding homosexual marriage. You state that you think it is wrong because “the Bible says so”. The skeptic says, “You can’t bring the Bible into this!”, so you say, “OK. Well, I still think it’s wrong because it has been shown to cause or at least significantly spread extremely dangerous and even lethal diseases.” What if next month, scientists develop a drug that seems to remove any related disease issues? Logically, you would have to say, “Well, I guess it’s alright now.” Do you see the problem with arguing this way? Homosexual marriage is not wrong because it causes diseases, adversely affects children and breaks-up the traditional family. (The case purely from statistics in these areas is very strong.) However, those things in and of themselves aren’t what we use to determine they are wrong. They are just symptoms of the real issue... the rejection of God’s law. They occur BECAUSE they are wrong! There are consequences for violating God’s order for His created world. This is just one simple example, but the general principle applies to many areas.

Wrapping it up, make sure that whenever a subject arises, you always turn to your “starting point”, saying, “Hold on, let me see what God has to say about this.” It should not be a matter of our philosophy and feelings against theirs. We should simply be pointing them to God’s Word, independent of whether or not they believe the Bible. If they really struggle in that area (i.e. believing in the inspiration of God’s Word), then we should take the time to help them out. After all, it doesn’t make any sense to “twist their arms” in order to make them outwardly conform to God’s standards, obeying something they don’t even believe, when the real problem is a heart issue. It’s kind of like the little girl whose mom repeatedly told her to sit down. After a long battle, the young girl finally sat down, saying, “I may be sitting down on the outside, but I’m standing up on the inside!”

I hope sharing what God has taught me over the years has been helpful to you in thinking about how to respond to the skeptics in your own life.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don’t hesitate to [contact us!](#)