

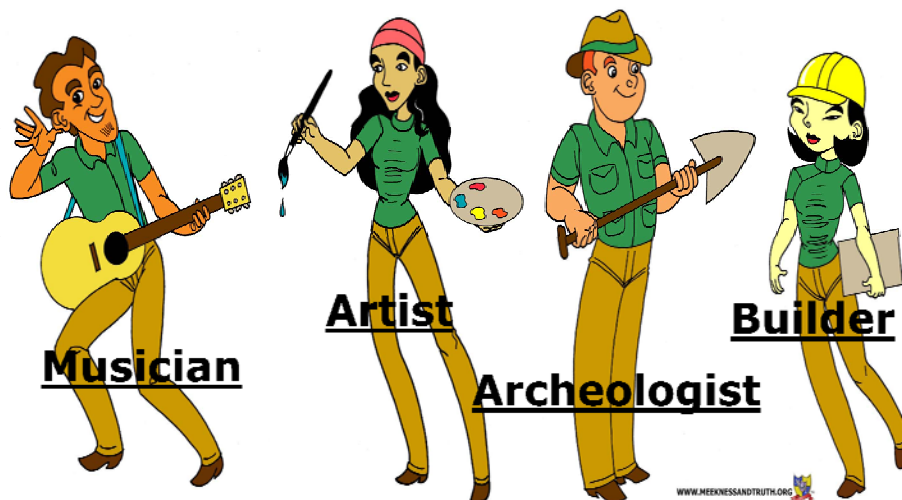
Class Meeting 4 Chapter 5 – Learning the Role of the Archaeologist

Redefining What We Mean by Evangelism (Expanded Definition of Evangelism)

“Every day and in every way helping our pre-believing friends to take one step closer to Jesus Christ.”
(Dave Geisler)

Four Types of Conversational Engagements

There are four types of conversations we want to have with our nonbelieving friends: (1) Hearing Conversations (2) Illuminating Conversations (3) **Uncovering Conversations (The Role of the Archaeologist)** and (4) **Building Conversations (The Role of the Builder)**.



The Role of the Archaeologist – Uncovering Hidden Barriers

“Effective pre-evangelism requires people with the foresight and wisdom necessary, not only to deal with people’s stated questions or objections, but also to go below the surface and address their real barriers to faith.” (Dave Geisler)



Steps to Uncover Hidden Barriers

1. **Determine Whether Their Issue Is a LEGITIMATE Concern, or Whether It Is a Smokescreen**
 - Questions can be a diversion to avoid the truth
 - Ask questions that reveal the true nature their objections

2. **Determine Whether the Barrier is Mostly an INTELLECTUAL or EMOTIONAL Question or Concern, Or a Combination of Both**
 - Intellectual Barriers – Reverse the burden of proof
 - Emotional Barriers
 - Combination of Both
 - Discern Which Barrier You're Facing – Don't speak to a perceived intellectual barrier if the real problem is emotional baggage

3. **Uncover the SPECIFIC Emotional Baggage That They Are Carrying**
 - Uncover the Real Issue

4. **Determine Whether an UNDERLYING ISSUE is Behind the Questions or Concerns People Raise**
 - Worldview
 - Painful Experience
 - Religious Experience
 - Wrong Perception, Pride or Prejudice



5. **Find Out What Their Biggest BARRIER to Christianity Is**
 - The One Thing – “People raise all kinds of objections to Christianity. Yet they may not even verbalize to themselves the one thing that keeps them from putting their faith and trust in Christ.” (Dave Geisler)
 - What is your biggest barrier out of all your barriers to Christianity?
 - What is keeping you from making a decision to accept Christ right now?

6. Find Out What Would MOTIVATE Them to Get Answers to Their Questions about Christ

- Understand Their Motivation – Very helpful to fan their spiritual interest and keep the conversation going

7. Uncover VOLITIONAL Factors

- Volition = The act of making a choice or decision; the power of choosing
- “If we deal with all the barriers mentioned in points one through six and there remains an obstacle to faith, most likely the problem is of a volitional nature.” (Dave Geisler)

Discussion

1. Remember that it's not easy to draw out someone's real objections to Christ. This may be true for most of us, and it is good to humbly admit this. We need to ask God for wisdom to know how to talk to people (James 1:5) about the things that bother them the most about Christianity.
2. Sometimes the real objections someone has to the Christian faith may be below the surface and may have nothing to do with their stated concerns. Therefore, we should pray that God would give us spiritual eyes to see what is really going on.
3. Sometimes people ask us questions about our Christian beliefs not because they are seekers of truth (they may not think that is even possible in our postmodern world), but because they either want to make us look foolish or they desire to make it harder for us to talk to them about Jesus. We need to always make sure their questions are legitimate before we attempt to answer them.
4. Our goal is not to pry into another person's deep personal issues. We want to invite the person to think about and to share his reasons for resisting Christ. If we do this carefully and respectfully, he may be willing to reveal more about what troubles him about the Christian faith. We shouldn't try prying it out of him if he's not comfortable telling us.
5. No matter how clear you are in explaining the Gospel to your non-Christian friends, they may not understand if they are carrying around emotional baggage that keeps them from wanting to see clearly the truth about Christ.
6. Have you ever tried to share the Gospel with your friends and it seemed as though someone or something was blocking them from hearing what you were saying (see 2 Corinthians 4:4)? Think back on what kind of baggage they may have been struggling with that may have made it difficult for them to hear what you had to say about Jesus. Think about how you would handle the situation differently next time based on what you learned in this chapter.
7. The next time a person hits you with rapid-fire questions that challenge your faith in Christ, rather than trying to answer all of his questions, ask him which question is most troubling to him and why. If there are questions you don't have an answer for, admit this and commit to return with an answer. If you don't give the impression that you have all the answers, this may cause the person to be more open to what you have to say.

8. Remember that it's the Lord's responsibility to speak to the heart of the person we're attempting to reach. We are just His messenger, and He has given us the privilege to speak on His behalf.

Application Points

1. Ask your spouse or another good friend to play the role of the skeptic with you. Practice listening intently and responding with a patient, sincere heart as you encounter barriers.
2. Ask yourself which questions you could ask your "top three" non-Christian friends that could help uncover their real barriers. Record your ideas in the space provided under step 3 in appendix 1.
3. List the different obstacles to the cross you have uncovered in your conversations with your "top three." Record your ideas in the space provided under step 3 in appendix 1.
4. Ask yourself what seems to be their major obstacle. Ask God for wisdom to help you discern what this could be. Record your answers in the space provided under step 3 in appendix 1.

Chapter 6 – Learning the Role of the Builder

Build a Bridge to the Truth (John 8:32)

1. Find the Right Balance in Your Approach
2. Find Common Ground with those you are trying to reach
"To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some." (1 Corinthians 9:22)

Build a Bridge to the Truth

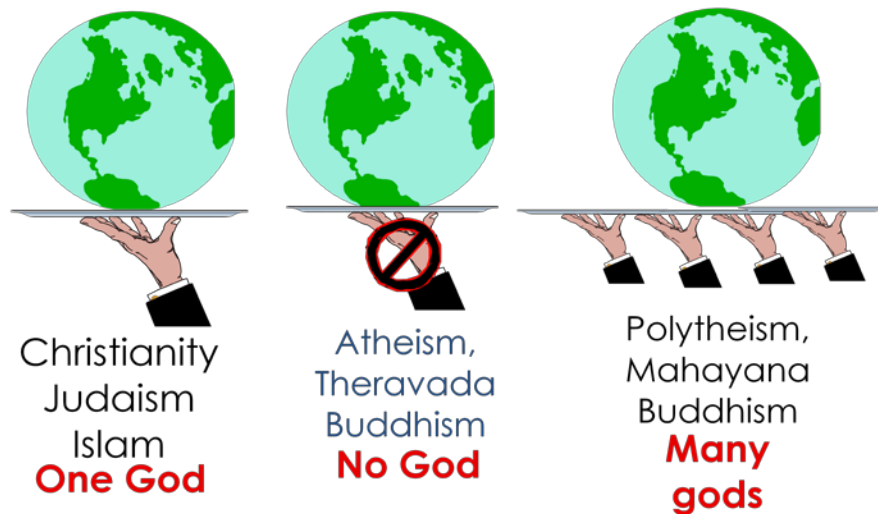
Hear
Illuminate
Uncover
Build



Common Ground

- Start with ideas that you and the other person agree on.
- Search for common ground with low-key spiritual questions.
 1. Does it matter what you believe?
 2. Can everyone be right?
 3. Is just faith enough?
 4. Is there any difference between Jesus and other religious leaders?
- Biblical Example: Acts 28; Acts 17
- Notice that Paul's approach in was different in these two passages. Why?

Can They All Be Right?



An Apologetics Outline

1. Truth about reality is knowable.
2. The opposite of true is false.
3. It is true that a theistic God exists.
4. If God exists, then miracles are possible.
5. Miracles can be used to confirm a message from God.
6. The New Testament is historically reliable.
7. The New Testament says Jesus claimed to be God.
8. Jesus' claim to be God was miraculously confirmed by:
 - He fulfilled numerous prophecies about Himself
 - He lived a sinless and miraculous life
 - He predicted and accomplished His resurrection
9. Therefore Jesus is God.
10. Whatever Jesus, who is God, teaches is true.
11. Jesus taught that the Bible is the Word of God.
12. Therefore, it is true that the Bible is the Word of God and anything opposed to it is false.

Reflection

1. Remember to look for common interests (likes, dislikes, perspectives) as you attempt to create greater openness for spiritual dialogue.
2. To find that point of intersection between your beliefs and your non-Christian friend's beliefs requires you to understand who they are and what they believe deep in their heart. This will involve a commitment on your part to take the time to really get to know them.
3. Despite your numerous disagreements with your non-Christian friends and acquaintances, always remember to work hard on bringing to the surface those things that you do agree on. Build your case for Christ one step at a time over a period of time.
4. In an age of pluralism, it's so important to communicate to our friends how much Jesus stands apart from everyone else. Help them to see by the things you say that He truly is one of a kind. Help them also to see by the way you live that same resurrection power can help those who follow Him to live different lives as well.
5. Resist the temptation to argue your point to your non-Christian friends, especially in front of other people. Don't take your eyes from the ultimate goal, which is to remove barriers so as to help others take a step closer to Christ each day. Don't win the individual battle but lose the war in your struggle for the souls of men.
6. In building your bridge with others, you may want to ask questions that help your nonbelieving friends acknowledge the truth of each plank. That way they surface the truth for themselves rather than have you tell them what they should believe.
7. Our biggest problem in witnessing effectively today is not a problem of methodology but of maturity. If we truly care about God and want to extend His purposes in the world, we will develop a kingdom mentality that makes the most of every conversation, every day, with those who come across our path.

Application Points

1. Write down the apologetic outline (mentioned in this chapter) and record your understanding of each point. Ask the Lord to help you more fully grasp these basic truths as you earnestly study Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and read other apologetic resources to better equip you to answer the questions people ask.
2. Ask your spouse or a friend to listen to your logical presentation of the case for Christianity. Ask for constructive feedback on what you said and what they think you should have said.
3. Think back to the conversations you've had with those on your "top three list." Ask yourself what is the most effective way to build common ground with each one (remember this may vary from individual to individual). Once you've determined where your friends' beliefs and your beliefs intersect, record your observations under step 4 in appendix 1.

4. Determine what planks to use to construct your bridge to the Gospel with your “top three.” Ask yourself what planks they will more easily accept that could lead to other planks that may help them take a step closer to Christ. Record your ideas under step 4 in appendix 1.
5. Also determine what kind of bridges (*heart* or *head*) will be most effective in witnessing to your “top three.” Record your ideas under step 4 in the appropriate spaces.
6. Now that you’ve recorded all your observations in appendix 1, read again what you recorded as well as review the points listed in appendix 2. Now think and pray about what might be the most effective strategy for witness to your “top three.” Don’t rush this reflection. Take your time. When you think you have some good ideas, record your insights under step 4 in the appendix 1.
7. Examine the depth of your relationship with Christ and seek Him fervently. Not only is this what the Christian is called to do, but your deep relationship with Christ will profoundly affect your witness to others.
8. Ask the Lord to guide you to initiate a dialogue with other nonbelievers (not necessarily your “top three”). Use the same process you used with those on your top three list. Then be willing to go wherever the Lord directs you and to say what He wants you to say!