

Sharing your Faith with People of Other Faiths

A Study on World Religions

Developed January 2015 for a Sunday School

By

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Preface

Sharing your Christian Faith is important. One *must* depend on the Holy Spirit and be led by the Lord when sharing the Faith. Yet, one must also study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed but rightly divides the Word of Truth. Study is important, but not mere intellectual study. Understanding of another religion should further solidify one's Biblical worldview. The arena of this world and our War against the world, the flesh, and the devil is largely a battle of ideas, worldviews, and beliefs. Those *beliefs, ideas, and worldviews shape economies, political institutions, education, and even nations*. Jesus Christ told His followers to go forth and disciple the nations. Are we preparing to go forth and do so? **Are we preparing to teach others all that Christ has commanded us as He laid out in the Great Commission or are we only evangelism focused saying repent of your sin and receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord but not willing to walk alongside others for the long haul, teaching them the Word of God, bringing them up to maturity in Christ so that they will be fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ themselves who are able and ready to go forth and disciple others?**

May we evangelize as well as do our part to disciple the nations for Jesus Christ!

Grace, Truth and Peace in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Ryan Marks

This curriculum is designed to be taught in 4-6 weeks with a class time of about 45 minutes. The curriculum can easily be adapted to go longer; however, to allow for more discussion and questions. Follow the Spirit as you lead and/or participate in a class! May the Lord's presence fill your times of fellowship and study and serve as a time to equip everyone there with tools to go out and do the work of the ministry.

Week 1-2 Introduce the class and look at Christianity from a religion perspective (yes Christianity is about a relationship and not a religion, but the majority of non-Christians are going to look at Christianity as a religion and honestly so do a lot of professed followers of Christ). Branches of Christianity—Church History Big Picture—Denominations

Week 2-3 Common Cults: What they Believe and Core Scriptures that disprove them: Mormons—7th Day Adventists—Jehovah's Witnesses—"Christian Science." In a Cult, you can't have a brain

Week 3-5 Major Religions: Hinduism—Buddhism—Islam

Week 6 Religions of Today: New Age—Secular Humanism

Note: in this study we have not included a plethora of lesser known religions including Judaism or Satanism/the occult. The Reason: Judaism is basically the Old Testament; minor religions often differ little from major religions except in their specific false teachings; and Satanism/the occult must be cautiously studied for it is very, very dark—caution should especially be exercised on this topic around new/immature Christians and young children.

Introduction to Sharing you Christian Faith with people of other Faiths

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Matt 28:19-20 (KJV)

Sing to the LORD, bless His name;

Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.

Declare His glory among the nations,

His wonders among all peoples. Psalms 96:2-3 (NKJV)

Jesus is your model. The Bible is your ultimate textbook. Look through the Gospels at how Jesus always seemed to respond with such understanding and tact. He often answered with questions rather than straight out answers that forced people to come to the right conclusion for themselves. Yes, Jesus was the Son of God and divinely led, BUT the Bible says that Jesus is our example. We can learn to respond with tact as well, not to the extent of our Lord, but nonetheless with skill.

As you study other religions, seek reach a level of understanding to be able to understand their train of thought. If you can look at an issue or certain scriptural passage that a cult uses from the perspective of a Muslim, Jew, Biblical-Christian and or whatever then you can respond more wisely to those who are deceived.

Remember that ultimately, your battle is not with flesh and blood but with rulers, powers and authorities in high places, with the world, the flesh and the devil. The devil and his demons are behind all the “religions of the world.” There are only two religions in the world: *Satan is the author of all that teach DO something to be Saved (all the religions of the world).* **Jesus is the author of the one Way that says salvation is DONE, PAID FOR, COMPLETE when you trust Him as your Savior and Lord.**

All other religions than Christianity are of demonic origin:

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They stirred him [God] to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger. **They sacrificed to demons** that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded. Deut 32:16-17 (ESV)

What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that **what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God.** I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. 1 Cor 10:19-21 (ESV)

Can I Share my Faith too much?

I've had professed Christians tell me I talk about the Bible too much. You may have had or will have this happen as well. The main reason that this is said is that people are convicted by God's Word and don't like it. The Word of God exposes the heart.

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. Heb 4:12 (ESV)

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit Eph 5:6-18 (ESV)

In Isaiah 55 **the Lord tells us that His Word WILL accomplish that purposes for which he has sent it forth** and in the book of Romans we learn that it is by the foolishness of preaching that men are saved.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:14-17 (KJV)

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Romans 10:9-13 (KJV)

Yes, we need to be led by the Spirit and not by our own intellect, but don't stop sharing your Faith just because some "Christians" don't like it. Even Billy Graham has had many professed Christians angry with Him for talking about salvation and Jesus so much rather than other parts of the Bible. There are people who call themselves followers of Christ who are not; sadly, they believe another Gospel often one of legalism, cheap grace, seeker friendliness, or another false doctrine. **The true Gospel is that all mankind are sinners and Christ died for all that if they would but receive His gift of Eternal life and surrender to Him as Savior and Lord then they would be saved from the Fires of Hell. That is the Gospel. Christ crucified for me a sinner and you for sinner and for everybody for everybody is a sinner. May you turn to Messiah Jesus, dear Friend, and surrender to Him as your Savior and Lord and graciously receive the free Gift of Eternal Life in Jesus Christ alone!**

If you serve Jesus Christ, you are guaranteed persecution. The only way to escape persecution is to compromise.

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 2 Tim 3:12-14 (ESV)

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. John 15:18-20 (ESV)

Everyone who acknowledges me [Jesus] before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. Matt 10:32-33 (ESV)

For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Mark 8:38 (ESV)

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. James 4:4 (ESV)

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. James 4:7-10 (ESV)

In response the often misquoted passage of "don't judge others or you'll be judged" as a means to silence Christians speaking about Jesus being the one Way, I responded on social media once:

If it is judgmental to say that Jesus is the only Way, then, yes, all true Christians are judgmental. But in context the "do not judge" passage you mentioned teaches that we should not arrogantly judge someone else. Other passages clearly say test (put to the test, discern, try, judge rightly) all spirits and all things to see whether they be of God (1 Jn 4:1, 1 Cor 1:10, Rom 16:17-18, 2 Tim 3:5-6, Jer 5:1, Rom 12:1-2, Prov 24:23). The Bible is Jesus (John

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1) and **His Church (all who have received Jesus as Savior and Lord) are meant to be salt and light, the pillar and ground of Truth in society (1 Tim 3:15)**. Knowing the coming judgment, the terrible judgment that awaits all without Jesus we persuade men (2 Cor 5:11).

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6 (ESV)

“This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:11-12 (ESV)

“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” Matt 7:13-14 (ESV)

As members of Jesus Christ’s Body, His Church we are mean to be salt and light in this world. **We are meant to be the pillar of truth in our nations.**

the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Tim 3:15 (KJV)

Should people be afraid of Hell or overwhelmed with God’s love when saved?

Either one of those reactions can occur. One is not better than another. What must be present is that the person understands and admits (confesses) that they are a sinner and need Jesus Christ to save them. There is a lot of theological terms that could be listed here such as the fact that Christ’s substitutionary death must be understood. But the main point is this: there will one day be a Judgment Day. Every single person will stand before Jesus Christ and give an account for every word, deed, and thought. Hell is a real place and Heaven is a real place. Jesus Christ is the only Way to Heaven and a personal relationship with God. As the Apostle Paul said,

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or

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evil. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. 2 Cor 5:10-11 (ESV)

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Matt 10:28 (ESV)

But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! Luke 12:5 (ESV)

And **of some have compassion, making a difference**: And **others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire**; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Jude 1:22-23 (KJV)

Dear Friend, these are the questions that are eternally significant to you and those you study with and those you shall reach the Holy Spirit uses you to share the Gospel with others:

- Do you really own your Faith? Is your Faith who you are or just something on the side of your life? Be honest
- Jesus is Savior....but is Jesus really the Lord of your Life?
- How do you really know that you KNOW Jesus?
- How do you live a lifestyle of repentance? Obedience, humility
- What does exhort one another daily mean and why is it important?
- Dedication to always standing for and looking for the Truth of God's Word
- Stay in the Word and relationship with Christ (or you can be open to deception and cunning)
- Contend for the Faith—the book of Jude
- History repeats itself (Ecc 1:9)if you understand history of people's beliefs you'll be more equipped to share your Faith and identify the root error
- The Dark Ages ended when the Bible was printed and got into the hands of the common people

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Prayer as we Begin

Give us a pure heart that we may see Thee,
A humble heart that we may hear Thee,
A heart of love that we may serve Thee,
A heart of faith that we may live Thee.

Dag Hammarskjold

Week 1-2 Introduce the class and look at Christianity from a religion perspective (yes Christianity is about a relationship and not a religion, but **the majority of non-Christians are going to look at Christianity as a religion** and honestly so do a lot of professed followers of Christ). Branches of Christianity—Church History Big Picture—Denominations

We're giving a big picture of denominational distinctives, Church History, and how to focus on Christ despite our differences. 98-99% of doctrine Christians agree on. The 1-3% is what most fight over. We must emphasize that no denomination has it all right when studying this topic. May we never think (no matter what denomination we most closely adhere to) that we have it all right and are better than another Christian. The standard of Truth is the Bible and everything listed below in terms of denominational distinctives must be compared to the Bible for whether it should be considered "Christian" or not.

We have not covered every "nook and cranny" of denominations, but give a general overview in the order of the historical development of denominations and have included beliefs of those that are very common.

Catholicism

The word catholic means *universal* and it was first used of Christians in reference to the fact that we are all one in Christ. Thus, the Early Christian writers refer to the most holy catholic faith—meaning the most Christian faith and universal Body of Christ. Most unbelievers that study Christianity study Catholicism. In addition,

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Catholicism was the first mainline institutionalization and denomination of Christianity. Therefore, we start here.

Constantine

When Constantine came on the scene in the early 300s AD, he was a Roman General fighting a key battle that could destroy him and his army. He claimed to receive a vision of a cross and was told “by this sign conquer.” Well, Constantine won the battle and then “converted” to Christianity. But Constantine’s life does not seem to bear the fruit of true surrender to Jesus Christ but rather a political use of the Christian religion. Let’s look at the evidence.

Constantine forced some 10,000 of his troops to be baptized and convert to Christianity at the point to the sword following his victory. Constantine became emperor of Rome and prior to this time the Christians were mercilessly persecuted and martyred by the Roman Emperors. Christianity was largely made of underground churches and met in homes and in the catacombs (tombs and sewers under Rome) to worship. When Constantine became “a Christian” it was now popular to be a Christian because the emperor was. Soon magnificent cathedrals sprung up and Christianity became somewhat controlled by Constantine and soon the Catholic church was born.

Idolatry

Constantine led the way for the Catholic church to embrace idolatry. After all many flocking the churches now were not flocking because they truly believed on the Lord Jesus for salvation but because it was popular and became the state religion. The “Holy Roman Empire” was born.

Some key ways that Constantine led the way for idolatry in the Catholic church was by

- Prayer to the Saints—there was a Saint for everything (fertility, prosperity, health) just like the Greco-Roman gods that had been around for years.
- The dates of holidays were changed, notably Resurrection day which was renamed Easter and occurs with the Spring Equinox—a pagan festival time marked by fertility rituals such as bunnies, eggs, and more—items that were identified with pagan ritual for centuries. Christmas was established as a holiday—early Christians never celebrated it. The date of Christmas is not

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anywhere near the right month in which the census was taken when Christ was born, rather the date is based on winter pagan rituals and signs. One Christmas custom, Christmas trees, originated from the tree-worshipping druids in years to come.

- Mary became the goddess of the church. Jesus was a cruel judge (so the Catholic church taught) and the only way to get on His good side was to pray through Mary or a Saint that had lived an extra holy life and could get you a favor.
- The Pope was established. The name coming from the Latin word *papa* meaning father (regardless of the fact that Jesus clearly said because of the Pharisees not to call any man on this earth “teacher” or “father”, Matthew 23). Supposedly the first Pope was Peter because Jesus said in the Gospels “on this rock I build my church.” Jesus was referring to Himself as the Rock, not Peter. So to continue, the line of Popes is supposed to be unbroken; although, historically, it has been broken several times as European nations at odds each declared their own Pope to maintain political power. **The idolatrous factor of the Pope is that his words are to be the very words of God, God’s representative on earth or as evangelicals would say, his words are scripture.** As a side note, many theologians today believe that the Pope will be the false prophet that aids the antichrist in the end times.

So the Catholic church was born. Christianity supposedly went from an underground movement to mainline institution overnight. As history continues, the Catholic church in the “name of Christendom and Jesus Christ” definitely was a political tool.

- The Crusades were launched. They were wars supposedly Holy wars (sounds like Muslim Jihad or the Conquest of Canaan by Joshua). Many unbelievers mock Christianity to scorn because of this supposed Christian act.
- Mass (church services) were conducted for hours in Latin every Sunday. The common person could not understand that. Only the intellectually elite who were mostly priests. Education was taken away and the Catholic church caused the dark ages.
- Excommunication—was a coercive tool. Excommunication is a biblical teaching in certain instances, but the Catholic church changed it. The sacraments (communion) saved you, the Priest could take your salvation

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away if you angered Him by withholding communion. You did not have to confess your sin to the Lord but go to the confessional booth and say, do, or pay whatever the “man behind the box” told you in order to be saved.

- Creeds were created and recited as truth. Creeds had the authority many times more than the Scriptures.
- Indulgences were created. For a fee, you could by a pardon for your sin or even get uncle Harry’s purgatory time shortened. There is one funny story in regards to this. One catholic leader was traveling around selling indulgences a man came up to him and asked if he could purchase an indulgence for a sin he wanted to commit. The catholic leader replied sure and sold him one. Later on as that leader was walking back to his base of operations with a chest of gold a band of robbers jumped out and took the gold. They ended up getting caught and put on trial and when asked what they had to say for themselves the leader of the robber band stepped forward and showed the indulgence that he had bought to commit his robbery. He and his robber band were let go!
- Purgatory teaching developed—there was a place between Heaven and Hell where you suffered pain and torment by fire until you could be made holy and pure enough for heaven. You could be hear upwards of 7 years. That simply is not biblical and likely originated from paganism.
- Tradition became exalted as important much as it was by the Pharisees.

What Changed it all? The Reformation

Reformation simply means back to the Bible movement. When Martin Luther stepped forward in 1517 with his 95 theses he began a movement of getting back to the Scriptures. Soon many left the church and new denominations sprang up like wildfire—the Lutherans, the Baptists, the Pietists, the Puritans, the Quakers, and so on.

When the Bible was printed (the first book off of Gutenberg’s press) the Dark Ages ended and the common person could now read the Scriptures (though they had to be smuggled for some time). In response to so many getting the Bible and beginning to raise questions the Catholic church put together the Apocrypha and declared it part of their “scripture” to try to justify their teachings (**the Apocrypha**

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was not considered to be scripture by the Catholic church prior to the reformation).

Catholicism's political power gradually began to wane and the reformation brought some key changes to the Church:

- Preaching became based on the Bible and in the common language of the people
- It was understood that Scripturally all Believers had priesthood (could enter into God's presence)
- Jesus was the only high priest, no earthly man
- Scripture was the sole Authority of Faith and practice

Lutheranism

Martin Luther began to lead the Body of Christ back to the Bible and the denomination ended up bearing his name (though it is believed he didn't want this). The Lutheran church was formed.

The Lutheran church is very formal and appears to most to be like Catholicism. In many ways it is in the sense that it is liturgical, that is that God is worshipped solemnly, creeds and catechisms are repeated and worship is a serious and solemn matter. In addition, Lutheranism's teachings on communion are more closely aligned to catholic teaching than the Biblical teaching that the Lord's Supper is a symbolic act (not one that saves you or is literally Christ's blood and Body. **Early Christians attested that communion was symbolic when they were accused of cannibalism because of Christ's statements of His blood and Body prior to the Catholic church's formation.**)

The Lutheran church Baptizes infants as the Catholic church does, claiming that the Apostles did so based on the testimony of the Early Church Fathers. The problem is that practice does not occur in Scripture. The only Scripture that perhaps could validate the practice is when Acts says that whole households were baptized. Yet, no scriptural mention of children being baptized exists much less sprinkling. The word for baptism means immersion in water and every instance in Scripture an adult is baptized by immersion.

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The Lutheran church has the distinction of having the practice of Confirmation of youths into the Body of Christ. After going through certain classes and assignments, the young person becomes confirmed into the Body of Christ. The problem is that this appears to supposedly save them in some instances—not faith in Christ alone.

A key Lutheran leader was Dietrich Bonhoeffer a brilliant German theologian who wrote *The Cost of Discipleship* (a classic) and lost his life a few days before the end of World War II.

Reformed Traditions—Presbyterian, Calvinist, Calvinist Baptists, etc

Reformed tradition holds firmly to Scriptural teachings of election and predestination, but seems to carry them beyond biblical parameters claiming that man has no free will to choose God and the Lord has predestined some to Heaven and some to Hell. In addition, evangelism does not appear to be very common in these circles since God will save those who He has predestined.

Some core Reformed/Calvinist teachings:

- Can't lose salvation
- Election
- Predestination
- Baptism of infants
- Creedal
- A almost messianic view of John Calvin who published *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* and codified the Calvinist teachings which bear his name. In his lifetime, Calvin had at least one man put to death for differing with him on doctrine and practically declared himself king of Geneva, the city which he molded with many legalistic “Christian laws” such as that of no dancing.
- Sometimes, it comes across that the Early Church Fathers and their writings bear the same weight and authority as Scripture in matters of Faith and practice. The Early Church Fathers have many writings that are helpful, but they were men, not the authors God used to write Scripture.

Baptists

Baptists originated from the Anabaptists as did the Mennonite Brethren (one branch of which are the Amish) which are named after Menno Simmons. The core distinctive of Baptists is that they don't hold to creeds but to the Scriptures alone as the standard of truth. They are very well known for being focused on the Gospel and sharing Jesus—do people KNOW Jesus personally? Very well known for evangelism, many of the great revivalists have come from their ranks including Billy Graham, D.L. Moody, and Billy Sunday. Most Baptists have maintained a Calvinist leaning (such as never losing one's salvation) although the free will (Arminian) view in regards to accepting Christ as Savior by one's own choice is widely accepted.

Some distinctives:

- Very high emphasis on Called pastors and ministers as opposed to merely educated
- Unpaid pastor—many times in their history the pastor served for nothing
- All Christians are equal, no hierarchy
- Priesthood of all Believers
- Baptism by immersion

Methodism

Methodism actually had its beginnings with George Whitefield but he did not desire to start a denomination and so his friends John and Charles Wesley took leadership. The Wesley's broke fellowship with George Whitefield later on. Methodism gets its name from the very structured and methodical devotion to the Christian life that John and Charles Wesley and a group of their friends exhibited.

Some distinctive of Methodism:

- Baptize infants
- Missionary focused
- Methodical
- Entire sanctification—an experience subsequent to salvation whereby the Christian ceases to sin and is completely sanctified (made holy) by the Holy Spirit

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- Christian perfection
- Arminian doctrine (opposed to Calvinism)

Pentecostalism

The origin of Pentecostalism was basically birthed out of Methodism and began largely with the Faith and Healing movements of the early 1900s. Largely known for its emphasis on speaking in tongues and divine healing as well as hype and experiences.

Pentecostal Distinctives:

- Health and wealth Gospels
- Speaking in Tongues as evidence of Baptism in the Holy Spirit
- Sometimes known for emphasizing tongues over salvation in Jesus as mark of spirituality
- In many circles healing and sickness are taught to be of the devil
- Supernatural experiences
- Continuing revelation (prophecy, visions, etc.)

For more on Pentecostalism, Focusing on the Mark Ministries has an article which can be accessed here:

<http://www.focusingonthemarkministries.com/2014/09/25/repenting-of-denominational-prejudice-addressing-false-doctrine/>

Christian Extremes

No matter what denomination a person is a member of, there are unbiblical extremes that must be watched out for.

Below we list some of the extremes that occur in among different doctrinal persuasions. NOT ALL Believers that identify themselves with one of these groups believe these extremes.

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- ❖ Extreme Free Will (Arminianism—salvation is completely dependent on us and sustained by us, not by Christ.)
- ❖ Hyper Calvinism (some Babies that die are predestined to Hell)
- ❖ Fundamentalism (no drinking, dancing, cards or movies)
- ❖ Evangelism (very evangelistic, sometimes not very discipling)
- ❖ Liberal (the Bible isn't the authority, explain away miracles with supposed scholarly explanations)

True Christian unity is that in Jesus Christ all Christian churches have unity. We do not and will not have unity for unity's sake but for the fact that we believe Jesus alone is the Savior of the World, the Son of God who was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life and died in our place for our sins and offers us the free gift of eternal life for receiving Him as our Savior and Lord.

For Deeper Study:

The Seven Churches—Problems in Christian Churches (potentially seven classes)
Revelation 2-3

The Gospels preached today:

- ❖ The True Gospel—Romans, Galatians, Gospel of John, Acts
- ❖ Works based--legalism
- ❖ Seeker Friendly—extreme/cheap grace (example statement: we're children of God so we don't need to confess our sin or worry about it anymore [truth, we're sinners saved by Grace, Paul said that, see below], programs focused not Bible focused)
- ❖ Health and Wealth Gospel—name it and claim it, Jesus is a genie in a bottle

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 1 Tim 1:15 (KJV)

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. Gal 1:8-9 (KJV)

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Week 2-3 Common Cults: What they Believe and Core Scriptures that disprove them Mormons—7th Day Adventists—Jehovah’s Witnesses-- Christian Science” In a Cult, you can’t have a brain

Cults and most religions, such as Islam, do not allow their adherents to have brains and question the illogical or contradictory statements of their sacred texts. You must believe without question or you are a heretic. Realize this fear when on the other side of the conversation when sharing Christ.

Mormons—work to earn salvation....Jesus was a prophet

Founded by Joseph Smith who supposedly had revelations from an angel. The Mormonism, or as their also know LDS—The Church of Latter Day Saints, was established based on the group that followed Smith’s “revelations” and teachings. The Book of Mormon is their main text, they also accept most of the Scriptures but grossly misinterpret them. Jesus is taught to simply be their spiritual brother. Mormons work to earn their salvation. This is why they are such “good people” their deeds earn them a level in heaven, the more perfectly they live the Mormon life, the more eternal rewards. Many Christians are deceived that Mormons are Christians because they talk of Jesus, the Gospel, the Virgin Birth. ...but their Gospel is another Gospel, a different one than the Bible teaches.

Remember:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so

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say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, **let him be accursed.** Gal 1:8-9 (KJV)

Distinctives:

- Joseph Smith is “The Prophet”
- Works based “salvation”
- Polygamy--multiple wives allowed
- Levels to heaven (based on a misinterpretation of the statement by Paul of a man caught up to “*the third Heaven.*” The Hebrew understanding of Heaven refutes the Mormon error of levels in Heaven based on your life. The Hebrew understanding is that the 1st Heavens were composed of the sky, the atmosphere around the earth, the 2nd Heavens were the firmament, outer space and the stars, and the 3rd Heavens were the abode of God, the Heaven we look forward to with Jesus).
- The higher levels of Mormonism are very satanic
- Baptism by immersion
- Mormon bishops (pastor/elder) serve for no pay
- Marriage lasts for eternity (in heaven as well as on earth)
- Tithing
- Large families
- The Mormon church is very wealthy and prepared for economic collapse (they have a system of radios and stockpiles of provisions)
- The popular book *7 Habits for Highly Successful People* was written by a Mormon
- All human beings can become gods if they are good Mormons
- We are not born sinners, we are free from sin until we reach the age of accountability that they define as 8
- There is no hell

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Christian Science

Not Christian at all. Founded by Mary Baker Eddy, it is essentially a health gospel. Jesus is their supernatural genie in a bottle and we should be “operating in the supernatural.”

Distinctives:

- Sickness not real but a mental problem and can be corrected by prayer alone
- Will not receive most medicines and surgeries for prayer is sufficient alone
- The Spiritual world is all that is reality, the material world is an illusion
- It is never God’s will for anyone to be sick, suffer, or die

7th Day Adventists

Some claim that Seventh Day Adventists are not a cult, but based on their history we believe that it is. Ellen G. White was the Founder, she supposedly had a “spirit of prophecy.”

Distinctions:

- Claim to believe in the Trinity, that all mankind are sinners, and that Jesus alone saves.
- Predicted the coming of Christ to be in 1844
- Believe that true Christianity was corrupted by Catholicism when Jewish Sabbath (Friday evening to Saturday) was removed from faith and practice of Christians by the Catholic church. They claim “the mark of the beast” (so they say) is Sunday worship. They are the only Remnant of true Believers.
- Sabbath-keeping is required by Christians
- Soul-sleep (you don’t go to Heaven when you die but enter a subconscious state until the Day of Judgment)
- Say that prior to Christ’s return “the mark of the beast” will be mandatory Sunday worship for the whole world
- Eternal hell doesn’t exist, unbelievers will be annihilated
- Some accounts say the early Adventist churches had the Spirit fall and the people were barking like dogs (sounds like demonic activity)

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My conversation with an Adventist

In the course of a couple hour conversation, I was told that to truly keep Christ's commandments I must keep the Jewish Sabbath (Friday night to Saturday) in order to obey Scripture. I asked bluntly, so are you saying only those who worship on Saturday are the only one's saved? The response was "god winks at sin when you don't know the truth" and was repeatedly told that the mark of Christians was keeping God's commandments based on one passage: "Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev 14:12 (KJV). Seventh day Adventism is very legalistic and has troubling origins. Is it true Christianity or legalism? Really seems to be legalism and some false doctrine among Adventists. In regards to when we worship, study Scripture, you'll find that Paul talked about the early church meeting on the first day of the week (Sunday) because that was the day of the week on which our Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. In addition, Sunday Worship is not the mark of the Beast nor are we saved based on what day we worship. The principle of Sabbath rest should be honored, but ultimately for the Christian our Sabbath is Christ Jesus (Hebrews 4). My conversation with this Adventist was very troubling, I was left confused and told that when I wanted to talk more of spiritual things to contact and we'd talk again. I dove into the Scriptures and the root of the issue is, my friends, we aren't saved by legalistic observance of the Sabbath but by the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ that paid the price for our sin!

Jehovah's Witnesses

Founded by Charles Taze Russell when he independently "studied the Bible" and wrote several books on his findings.

Distinctives:

- They claim to regard the Scriptures as God's Word....they do reinterpret John 1:1 which talks of Jesus to say "and the Word was a god" as opposed to "the Word was God"
- The Trinity is denied
- Jesus was Jehovah's first created being (but not His Son)

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- The Holy Spirit is merely “God’s active force”
- The dead go to Sheol and are not conscious of anything
- To be “saved” have must Faith, baptism by immersion, active association with the Jehovah’s Witnesses, live righteously, and be completely loyal to Jehovah. Salvation is not guaranteed, but a resurrection is hoped for.
- Those who are saved....originally it was taught that only 144,000 could be saved. After their membership exceeded that they changed their doctrine. There will be 144,000 “anointed class” that go to heaven at death to rule with Jesus. The others that are “saved” are “other sheep” or “the great multitude before the throne.”
- Armageddon will be here soon and it is Jehovah’s war. This world will be destroyed along with “apostate Christendom.” “Jehovah’s people” will survive and repopulate the earth for 1,000.
- Jehovah’s Witnesses will inherit a perfect earth following the millennium and live forever in it.
- Those who do not serve Jehovah will be annihilated (ie Hell is not eternal). Eternal Hell is considered out of God’s character since He is loving.

Further information: 4Truth.net

Week 3-5 Major Religions: Hinduism—Buddhism—Islam

Hinduism

Hinduism originated in India and is still most strongly evident there. It is the third largest religion in the world.

Some distinctives:

- Polytheistic (many gods)
- Cast system
- Don't kill animals, it's your reincarnated uncle Fred
- Karma
- Prostitution—young girls enslaved at shrines to serve as sex victims to honor the god/goddesses

Red Light district—10,000s of women in brothels...I have heard a missionary preach who lives and works in India under the guise of a businessman. His wife and daughter and 10 little girls that prostitutes given them to raise endeavor to reach the sex slaves in India. Human trafficking, sex trafficking, is all over the world, even in the United States. This man's wife would go and witness to the women when they "were off" and they pour into the lives of the little girls they've been given sharing the Gospel and Jesus' love.

These brothels are a perverted family unit. The women are serviced to upward of 40 men a day at times, any children that are born as a result

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almost always get sucked into the family business. Girls become prostitutes, boys become the patriarchal pimps.

Buddhism

Originated from Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha (enlightened one).

Distinctives:

- Self-denial
- Achieving a state of heavenly Nirvana
- Ethical teachings—aim for morality
- Monastic
- Meditation
- Life Cycles (reincarnation)

More Facts: <http://www.religionfacts.com/buddhism/fastfacts.htm>

Islam

At the time of this writing approx. 1/5 of the world claims to be Muslim

Islam means submission to the will of Allah. Islam was founded by Mohammed. Mohammed was born a poor man but eventually married a wealth older widow and claims to have received visions in which the Angel Gabriel revealed the truth to him and made him the prophet of Allah. The Qur'an originated over Mohammed's lifetime and is claimed to be without any error. Mohammed eventually amassed a harem, his youngest wife was a child whom he consummated the "marriage" with when she was 9. Anyone who questions Qur'an's authenticity or Mohammed's prophethood is divinely sentenced to death. Jesus, Paul, Peter, Noah, Elijah, and Abraham were "prophets of Allah" but were not error free as Mohammed was. Jesus is taught never to have died but a man with a similar appearance to Jesus was hung on the cross and mistaken as Him.

Core Scripture that refutes Islam:

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But though we, or **an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel** unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, **let him be accursed.** Gal 1:8-9 (KJV)

What Islam teaches

- Muslims claim to originally have descended from Ishmael, the son of Hagar, Abraham's adulterous partner. This is true. If Abraham hadn't tried to get a son before God's timing, Muslims likely would never have been around. Ironically Ishmael's name means and Scripture testifies that he would be a donkey of a man and yet become a numerous people. Islam is sex crazed and violent as you will see.
- Allah divinely decides who will go to paradise and who will not. You cannot just work your way in or be saved. You must try to live worthy your entire life and hope it is enough to enter paradise, otherwise, eternal fire awaits.
- Islam will one day take over the whole world by force for Allah
- Allah is one. He is not a Trinity and Jesus Christ is not God.
- The Qur'an teaches a Muslim to lie and deceive while he is weak and when he is strong to destroy the infidel (any non-Muslim whom they label unbelievers)
- The man who goes to paradise will receive 72 virgins for his eternal pleasure. One writer even claims that the Islamic man will receive little boys as well; however, Islam is very much against homosexuality so that seems unlikely.
- Women must submit absolutely to their husbands hand have little to no rights. Many are beaten by their husbands and it is not considered wrong.
- Allah is transcendent and unknowable (no personal relationship is possible)
- **Sharia Law** it takes 2 women to equal a man in matters of testimony, a woman must have male relatives to speak for her, polygamy and temporary "marriage are fine, sodomy gets the death sentence
- "the obligatory tenets include belief in the immortality of the soul; the resurrection; the Day of Judgment; and in Allah's absolute, eternal decree for good and evil." –The Sword of the Prophet, Serge Trifkovic
- 5 Pillars of Islam:

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- 1) Creed of Belief: “there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the prophet of Allah.”
 - 2) Ritual prayers 5x’s a day
 - 3) Alms—1/40 of income to needy
 - 4) Fasting during Ramadan
 - 5) Pilgrimage to Mecca before death.
- Pilgrimage is only required once in a lifetime by those who have the means and are healthy.
 - Jihad—Holy War for Allah is divinely mandated (Quran says: “Allah guarantees that He will admit the Muhahid in His Cause into Paradise if he is killed, otherwise He will return him to his home safely with rewards and war booty.”)
 - In Jihad *raping of women is Allah’s gift to the men* (Quran says: “And all married women are forbidden unto you except those captives whom your right hand possess. It is a decree of Allah for you.”)
 - Male children are desired, women are basically dirt
 - Slavery is permissible and taking one slave for sensual pleasure is permissible
 - Mecca is the Holy City

The Facts

- Muslims have taken over most of Europe.
- Many Muslims are in the Middle East and control much of the world’s fossil fuels
- Islam hates Jews and Christians
- Muslims are populating at a rate of 5-7% per year and often have large families. For a country to survive (have as many born as die) they need a rate of about 2.1-2.4% a year. The United States is currently hovering around 2.5% a year with an average family having 1.7 children.
- Muslims execute homosexuals

Reaching Muslims:

Many are Muslims by tradition, not choice. The **God’s Not Dead** movie pictures this well.

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Many Muslims come to Christ through Podcasts and international Gospel broadcasts. Many also testify they had a vision of Christ which led them out of Islam.

Remember Jesus loves Muslims and wants them to come to Him and be saved. Yet, remember the solemn warning of Scripture: “But though we, or **an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel** unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, **let him be accursed.**” Gal 1:8-9 (KJV)

True Muslims are what we often hear described as radical terrorists today—and that is what the Quran teaches. Islam is a political and religious movement. *We do not need to Fear Muslims though. They are people who need Jesus! And take heart, let not your heart be troubled for Jesus has overcome this world and Christ's followers go through many trials and tribulations in this world but Christ is with them!*

Week 6 Religions of Today: New Age—Secular Humanism

New Age

The New Age religion sounds like Christianity in many respects. There is much talk about being what God created you to be, living your calling, listening to the inner voice.but it boils down to whose voice are you listening to? Your own. New Age is the Follow your Heart religion. You have divinity within yourself. Sin and Hell won't be discussed, but O grace and love probably will! One of the Oprah Winfrey, one of the leaders of the New Age movement (which is actually not "new" at all, but rather a mixture of eastern religions that have been around for centuries) says, "Every time you suppress some part of yourself or allow others to play you small, you are in essence ignoring the owner's manual your creator gave you and destroying your design." Some parts of those statement such as your creator sound very much like what we hear in many Christian circles today. The problem is, the New Age is a deception, it is a distortion of the Truth and far too many Believers have become ensnared by it in some way. Many seeker friendly churches have been ensnared by it and are thus preaching a Gospel other than Christ's—love tolerantly every one, don't talk about sin and Judgment and only talk about Jesus as a good teacher who we can all feel good about.

Main Points

- Look for the YouTube video *The Secret is You* by Oprah. Looks much like a Christian ministry promo, doesn't it? But notice what is left out.

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- Sin is redefined as a mistake not transgression (breaking) of God’s Law (1 John 3:4). Sin as being “missing the mark” is only one of the definitions for sin in Greek. The Bible clearly teaches that sin is breaking God’s law by our thoughts, actions, and words. Sin is simply a mistake in the New Age mind and the way to get back on track is to “alter one’s consciousness.
- The New Age Jesus is not the Biblical Jesus. Jesus is simply an example of being in sync with your inner self.
- The New Age teaches that we are our own God. Our inner self is god and we need to be one with it.
- You are your own judge not God. Hell’s existence is completely denied.
- All humanity is divine.
- Good and evil are one, not separate. (think a Yen/Yang kind of thing).
- The focus is self.

Secular Humanism—the state religion of America

Secular humanism is humanism or the religion and worship of man. Mankind is good and not fallen sinners who need Jesus Christ’s redemption. Their goal is to destroy religion in America—get God out of the schools, silence Christians, and stop people from “blindly” believing in God. In short, a confederation of atheists, agnostics, and “freethinkers.” Human reason is exalted, this life is all there is and the Bible is fairy tale.

Humanist Manifesto 2000

A Call for a New Planetary Humanism

Drafted by Professor Paul Kurtz, International Academy of Humanism, USA

I. Preamble

Humanism is an ethical, scientific, and philosophical outlook that has changed the world. Its heritage traces back to the philosophers and poets of ancient Greece and Rome, Confucian China, and the Charvaka movement in classical India. Humanist artists, writers, scientists, and thinkers have been shaping the modern era for over

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half a millennium. Indeed, humanism and modernism have often seemed synonymous for humanist ideas and values express a renewed confidence in the power of human beings to solve their own problems and conquer uncharted frontiers.

II. Prospects for a Better Future

For the first time in human history we possess the means provided by science and technology to ameliorate the human condition, advance happiness and freedom, and enhance human life for all people on this planet.

III. Scientific Naturalism

The unique message of humanism on the current world scene is its commitment to scientific naturalism. Most world views accepted today are spiritual, mystical, or theological in character. They have their origins in ancient pre-urban, nomadic, and agricultural societies of the past, not in the modern industrial or postindustrial global information culture that is emerging. Scientific naturalism enables human beings to construct a coherent world view disentangled from metaphysics or theology and based on the sciences.

IV. The Benefits of Technology

Humanists have consistently defended the beneficent values of scientific technology for human welfare. Philosophers from Francis Bacon to John Dewey have emphasized the increased power over nature that scientific knowledge affords and how it can contribute immeasurably to human advancement and happiness.

V. Ethics and Reason

The realization of the highest ethical values is essential to the humanist outlook. We believe that growth of scientific knowledge will enable humans to make wiser choices. In this way there is no impenetrable wall between fact and value, is and

ought. Using reason and cognition will better enable us to appraise our values in the light of evidence and by their consequences.

VI. A Universal Commitment to Humanity as a Whole

The overriding need of the world community today is to develop a new Planetary Humanism—one that seeks to preserve human rights and enhance human freedom and dignity, but also emphasizes our commitment to humanity as a whole. The underlying ethical principle of Planetary Humanism is the need to respect the dignity and worth of all persons in the world community.

VII. A Planetary Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

To fulfill our commitment to Planetary Humanism, we offer a Planetary Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, which embodies our planetary commitment to the well-being of humanity as a whole. It incorporates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but goes beyond it by offering some new provisions. Many independent countries have sought to implement these provisions within their own national borders. But there is a growing need for an explicit Planetary Bill of Rights and Responsibilities that applies to all members of the human species.

VIII. A New Global Agenda

Many of the high ideals that emerged following the Second World War, and that found expression in such instruments as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, have waned through the world. If we are to influence the future of humankind, we will need to work increasingly with and through the new centers of power and influence to improve equity and stability, alleviate poverty, reduce conflict, and safeguard the environment.

IX. The Need for New Planetary Institutions

The urgent question in the twenty-first century is whether humankind can develop global institutions to address these problems. Many of the best remedies are those adopted on the local, national, and regional level by voluntary, private, and public

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efforts. One strategy is to seek solutions through free-market initiatives; another is to use international voluntary foundations and organizations for educational and social development. We believe, however, that there remains a need to develop new global institutions that will deal with the problems directly and will focus on the needs of humanity as a whole. These include the call for a bicameral legislature in the United Nations, with a World Parliament elected by the people, an income tax to help the underdeveloped countries, the end of the veto in the Security Council, an environmental agency, and a world court with powers of enforcement.

X. Optimism about the Human Prospect

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, as members of the human community on this planet we need to nurture a sense of optimism about the human prospect. Although many problems may seem intractable, we have good reasons to believe that we can marshal our talent to solve them, and that by goodwill and dedication a better life will be attainable by more and more members of the human community. Planetary humanism holds forth great promises for humankind. We wish to cultivate a sense of wonder and excitement about the potential opportunities for realizing enriched lives for ourselves and for generations yet to be born.

--accessed 1/8/2015 from <http://secularhumanism.org/index.php/1169>

Concluding Points

- 1/3 of the World claims to be Christian
- 70-90% of American's profess to be Christians
- MANY will say on Judgment Day:
On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' Matt 7:22-23 (ESV)
- There will be MANY who don't KNOW Jesus at the Day of Judgment even though many know about Him.
- Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus?

Other Recommended Resources

On this Topic

For Further Study

4Truth.net

World History and Cultures by Abeka Book

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Bonus

Ryan's Sermon on How to Share your Faith!

Original notes given on Sunday, January 25th at Raintree Church

Good morning.

Great is our Savior, Amen.

Prayer—Father, please guide me by your Spirit to share your Word with your people. Lord, open our hearts and guide us by your Holy Spirit today. Thank you for Jesus. Amen.

Well for those who don't know me, I'm Ryan Marks. I'm in seminary and have been writing and preaching over the last 6 years as the Lord has opened doors. I've been attending Raintree for about 18 months now and am a member.

Today, the Lord has laid on my heart a message to share your Faith. Over the last several months in Raintree Pastor Kenny has taken us through Jude and we know how essential it is to contend for the Faith and stand against false doctrine and through Galatians how the Gospel of Grace must be guarded and not perverted by salvation by works, legalism, or a cheapened grace that is a license to sin. Those two are vitally connected as I hope you'll see today.

But to begin, how can we share our Faith? Can it merely be taught? Back in the Young Adult and College Bible study we've started talking about How to Share your Faith with People of other Faiths but I've really been thinking and praying about how do we learn to share our Faith? It is not by going to a class or reading a book or watching somebody alone. No, that's not it. Yes, some valuable tools can be given from study and watching others, I've picked up some tools from that in my own life.

But when we witness, we cannot do it in our own strength. We don't have the power in ourselves to stand up and preach Jesus. Peter and the other Disciples were weak men, but when the Holy Spirit came, he gave them the power to witness. The

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Holy Spirit is essential. We're going to walk through some Scripture on this and then I'll be sharing some of my own testimony today and we'll move on to other topics. We're going to look at a lot of Scripture because as Paul said, our faith must not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Who is the Holy Spirit? He's our helper, comforter, and empowerer. One of my mentors who is here today taught me one main thing. He taught me that in order to live the Christian life and in order to minister we must depend on the Holy Spirit. We must rely on Him and not on our own strength.

In the Early Church, they depended on the Holy Spirit. The book of Acts is not the Acts of the Apostles but the Acts of the Holy Spirit. They simply relied on the Lord to guide them and empower them by His Spirit and there was life, there was power in their witness. Daily, the Scripture says, God added to them those being saved. Weak and timid disciples were turned into bold men of God.

The leaders of the Early Church knew that their focus must be on the ministry of the Word of God and prayer so they appointed deacons to be responsible for the practical matters of the Church so that they could feed the flock. That's what pastor means—a shepherd, one who feeds and protects the flock as a sub-shepherd, an undershepherd, a subordinate of Jesus Christ the chief shepherd who declares if anyone here's his voice and follows Him then He is Christ's sheep.

Sometimes today, as has been discussed in seminary, churches hire a pastor to do the work of the ministry. But that's unbiblical. The Pastor is to shepherd and it says in Ephesians that pastors, shepherds, teachers, evangelists—are gifts of the Lord Himself to a local body to equip them to do the work of the ministry. You see, every single one of you who is a follower of Jesus Christ in this room is a minister. We are all ministers of the Gospel. We are to share it everywhere we go. That is why the church leaders Jesus has given you are to equip you, they are to give you tools and feed you with the Word and protect you from false doctrine so that you may do the work of the ministry. It's not just the pastor's job. Jesus Christ has commissioned us all to Go (evangelism) and make disciples of all nations (mentorship, teaching, discipleship). That's the Great Commission.

We are to disciples nations! The media does that don't they? Hollywood, the top recording artists, and even politicians have disciples. Did you know this? Satan is in the business of making disciples to. His own disciples. Those who are

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dedicated to anything and everything other than Jesus Christ. We can't reach this world in our own power? Jesus said that it is better that I leave so that the Comforter will come to you. Why? Because the comforter, the Holy Spirit would live inside each and every Believer. He is a Spirit and not limited by time or space. Jesus was in a human body and could only be one place at a time. But the Holy Spirit could individually comfort and equip and counsel and empower each and every Believer.

It is the Holy Spirit, ultimately, who teaches you how to witness. He may use another Christian to help you grow in that area, but when you're talking to someone, what a book told you may or may not apply. But the Holy Spirit will guide you.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

John 14:26 (ESV)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:16-17 (ESV)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

In Hillsboro, in Missouri, in the Midwest and to the whole world!

God only ask for our Obedience to Him. I didn't learn how to witness by a book or somebody. **I learned as I was obedient to Go and Say what the Lord's Word says as I abided in Christ and sought the Lord.**

Adrian Rogers said, "What is the blessing of obedience? Intimacy with God. You will come to know things that you could never know any other way when you become intimate with God.....Talk to God about your relationship with Him. ...Ask God to teach you how to strengthen your relationship with Him today."

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I'm rather introverted and definitely not an extrovert. I struggled for a long time with how to share my Faith I also did not like getting up in front of people.

I was 15 when the Lord clearly directed me to preach. It was crystal clear what God wanted me to do. I had no training. Didn't know squat about speaking in public much less preaching. But I obeyed. I still remember and still at times have that same waves of fear come over me, legs feel like they're about to give way, mouth goes dry, lump in the throat, nausea. But you know how I got through it? I just turned to the Lord, "Lord, you've called me to do this. I don't know how, all I feel I can do is obey and walk up there. Holy Spirit, give me the power, you've got to do this cause I can't.the Lord taught me so many lessons and has continued to. Lives aren't changed when we do things in our own strength. Lives are changed by Jesus Christ as His Spirit convicts and guides.

I was 17, dual enrolled in Jefferson college and a homeschool senior and I had a lot of opportunities. I remember to guys I sat next to in Algebra were always talking it seemed about what ladies they would find on the weekend. The Lord began to open up conversations with one of them especially. He had created his own religion with 23 reincarnations and you only went to heaven if you were really good and only went to hell if you were really bad. I always carried my Bible around and set it on the desk in front of me in my classes because I had a clear conviction from the Lord before I ever started college that God was calling me to share His Word and I could not compromise my Faith for a grade. The Scripture were Jesus says if you are ashamed of me before men, I'll be ashamed of you before my Father stuck in my head. So this guys sees my Bible and begins to ask if I'm religious and proceeds to rant on how he's been studying the history of the political roman church and how it started the dark ages. I responded that that wasn't the Biblical church but a time when religion was used to control people. ...later on when I talked to a mentor about that situation, I believe the Lord prompted him to remind me of something. He said, Ryan, do you know why the dark ages ended? Ya, the printing press. Yes, but do you know what was the first book of the printing press? The Bible! When God's Word got into the hands of the people and they could understand it rather than obeying what they were told in Latin as they sat in service every week, reformation which means back to the Bible movement broke out! Soon there was

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Martin Luther! The Lollards! The Puritans! The Baptists! The Lutherans! The Presbyterians! The Quakers and Pietists!

Sharing your Faith is not about having all the right words, it is about following the Lord. It is a process. We are constantly to be learning and growing from the Lord and ultimately His Word how to share our Faith with others. It is a life-long part of our walk.

Sometimes, the Lord may prompt us to but things very bluntly. Remember those 2 guys that I said I sat by in Algebra? As I prayed around Christmas time as the semester was ending the Lord prompted me to write a letter and share the Gospel and give them each a little new testament. To one of the young men, the Lord directed me to write one short statement. He was very bright and intellectual, but he needed Jesus. I wrote very simply. Here is a Bible. Try to disprove it and if you can't then it must be right. I gave those letters out the last day of class and forgot I had a final still. When I showed up early for the final, nobody was there except these guys. I started to get a little afraid. I'm gonna get beat up because I shared Jesus. I'm 17, these guys are in their mid-twenties...O great. They ended up not saying anything, but they did look at me and I can't describe it fully, but they respected me.later on the next semester I saw that guy that I wrote try to prove the Bible wrong to on the first day of class. I was reading my Bible in the hallway as I was waiting for the class before mine to let out when he walked up to me and asked me how I was doing. I said I was doing well and we chit chatted for a few minutes and then it was time to class to start so we both had to run, but something was different about him. He was so depressed and discouraged all the time the previous semester, this time when I talked to him, he seemed peaceful and joyful.

Just follow the Lord. Obey Him as He prompts you by His Spirit to share your Faith. Here are some encouragements from Scripture

Not Earthly

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have **divine power to destroy strongholds.** ⁵ **We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God,** and **take every thought captive to obey Christ**

2 Cor 10:3-5 (ESV)

Not about Eloquence

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For they say, [about Paul] “His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account.”

2 Cor 10:10 (ESV)

were saying, Paul writes so eloquently but when he comes in person, he seems so weak and his speech is simple to understand and so loving, not like some of his letters are reproving us with the Word

Exacting (piercing the heart)

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.

Heb 4:12 (ESV)

THE WORD— is God’s revealed will

Contend for your Faith—don’t compromise or back down

What is your Standard of Truth?

....I was homeschooled and educated much the same way that people have been for the last 6,000 years of human history, particularly much the way the Jewish people educated their children. The Bible was the foundation of everything. I had a Bible Class like Sunday School everyday, my history, science, handwriting, English, and reading all had the Scripture verses all over it.

HOLD UP BIBLE **Sola Scriptura** (Latin) was the Cry of the Reformation—Scripture alone, not tradition, not some other writings, but Scripture alone as the standard for truth.

The Word is Jesus. Jesus is the Word.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 1:1-4 (ESV)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of **grace** and **truth**.

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John 1:14 (ESV)

As we studied in the Creation and Evolution class over about 3 months
Genesis Chapters 1-11 alone deal with so many of today's topics

Chart....

The prediction of the Messiah	Necessity of blood to cover sin	Clothing
Salvation (the Ark)	Judgment (the Curse & the Flood)	Pride
Marriage	Work	Rebellion
Redemption	Human Cloning	Immorality
Homosexuality	Genetic enhancement	Manhood
Sin	Temptation	Womanhood
The Family	Capital Punishment	Obedience
Murder	Dominion	The Trinity

God's Word has the answers to the debates of our Day

Taxation—God's Word answers it. It says in the Law that the rich and poor should be taxed the same and in such a manner that the tax is not too burdensome for the poor

Abortion—each life begins at conception and each baby is knit together by God inside the mother

God is concerned with Truth and Faithfulness not making people happy

God loves us so much that He's given us the Scriptures to tell us the Truth

Guard the Gospel of Grace! It's not by works, it's now be what we do or how good we are that gets us into Heaven. IT IS JESUS ALONE! We can't be good enough. We all sin each and every day. Jesus alone is our Plea! Jesus alone is our Savior, our

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Lord, our Refuge, our Hope. The economy isn't your hope. Money isn't your Savior. A special somebody won't fulfill you. Jesus alone is the answer. To War, to Hate, to Ferguson, to the Deficit, to the White House, to the Outhouse

Yet we also must not forget to love

...by your love you shall know them Jesus said

No matter what Christian denomination you look at—we all agree on 97-99% of doctrine. It's the 1-3% that causes division, fights, hate, and pride. Be united in Christ.

Yet 70-90% of Americans (depending on what survey you look at) profess that Christ is their Savior

The problem is, He isn't their Lord.

We look around us and we look at the Fruit as Jesus told us to and we know that America is no longer a Christian nation. By their fruit you shall know them. Is the fruit lives touched and transformed by Jesus or the empire of Man?

Don't ask people what denomination they are, what church they attend or if they're a Christian. It doesn't matter if their "Baptist" "Pentecostal" "Lutheran" or "Catholic" **Ask them if they KNOW Jesus.** A personal relationship with Jesus is the only question that matters. It matters for eternity. Every single one of us in this room are ministers (that's what Scripture teaches. Pastors and church leaders are not to do the ministry of the church, they are to equip the Body to do the work of the ministry).

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. ²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Matt 7:15-23 (ESV)

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Let us not only contend for the Faith and guard the Gospel of Grace but pray for those who are in error. Those who are trying to earn their salvation—our heart should break for them. Those who are perverting the Gospel to suit their own sinful desires of wealth, health, and pleasure should grieve our hearts that they are ensnared by this world. Those who profess Christ as Savior but don't know Him as Lord should break our hearts. Let us pray for them!

Don't endorse their sin

Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. **10** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, **11** for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

2 John 1:9-11 (ESV)

Expose their sin

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. **7** Therefore do not become partners with them; **8** for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light **9** (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), **10** and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. **11** Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. **12** For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. **13** But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, **14** for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Eph 5:6-14 (ESV)

Enclose (hedge em in) them with the Compassion of Christ

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 13:35 (ESV)

"But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, **28** bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. **29** To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. **30** Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. **31** And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. **32** "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. **33** And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. **34** And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. **35** But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the

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ungrateful and the evil. **36** Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. **37** “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; **38** give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

Luke 6:27-38 (ESV)

Believers, share your Faith in Grace and in Truth as our Lord Jesus did.

- Rely on the Spirit
- Love all people.
- Stand uncompromisingly upon the Word.
- Extend the Gospel of Grace to All.

Chart/images

In Genesis God directed Noah to Make

Ark—symbol of salvation

Pitch—covered inside and out with Christ’s blood

Door—only way in or out of the Ark of Salvation. Jesus is the ONLY Way, Truth, and Life. Behold He stands at the door of your heart today and knocks. Will you let Him in to make His home there?

The Door was shut and sealed by the Hand of God—God seals your salvation with His own finger when you come to Jesus and make Him your Lord

The Flood—symbolizes our Baptism which is a symbol that we have died with Christ

The Olive branch—New Life in Christ

The Dove—the Holy Spirit, He won’t leave you just as Dove’s mate for life

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Jesus took your identity on the Cross. He took the slimy, black, filth out of your heart and put it upon Himself and paid the Price. He redeemed you by His death. That means he bought you back from slavery to sin. You are blood bought by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

Scripture says that today is the day of salvation. Do not harden your heart, but come to Jesus.

Jesus is standing at your heart's door knocking, and saying let me come in and let my Spirit live in you. Let me save you and be your Master. I love you, will care for you and will one day bring you to the place I've prepared for you in Heaven.

Don't harden your heart. Don't push aside the conviction of the Holy Spirit. It's not me who's making you feel convicted, it's God's Holy Spirit convicting you with the truth.

Will you receive Jesus today as your Savior and Lord?

Share Your Faith

Ryan Marks, Jan 25, 2015 @RaintreeChurch

But you **will receive power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you **will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8 (ESV)

The Holy Spirit's power to witness is

- **Not Earthly**
2 Cor 10:3-5
- **Not about Eloquence**
2 Cor 10:10
- **Is Exacting (pierces hearts)**
Heb 4:12

THE WORD of God, the Bible— is God's revealed will to us

Contend for your Faith—don't compromise or back down

The Word is Jesus. Jesus is the Word.
John 1:1-4, 14

Study to show yourself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed...

Genesis 1-11 and it's cross references teach on:

Love Jesus Salvation Sin

Coming Judgment Pride Rebellion
Work Marriage Homosexuality
Manhood Womanhood Temptation
Animal Kingdom Dinosaurs Clothing
Abortion Human Cloning
Capital Punishment Blood Sacrifice
Redemption Is a Day a 24 hr day?
Atmosphere of the Earth Dragons
The End Times Immorality Obedience
Murder Dominion The Family
Genetic Enhancement The Trinity

God's Word has the answers to the debates of our Day!

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Let us not only contend for the Faith and guard the Gospel of Grace but pray for those who are in error.

- **Don't Endorse their sin**
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About

Focusing on the Mark Ministries and the Author

The Author

Ryan M Marks began preaching and teaching the Word of God at the age of 14. At 15, he was called to the ministry. At 16, he earned the Gold Medal of Achievement from Royal Rangers, the equivalent of an Eagle Scout at that time. By 20, Ryan had graduated with his Bachelor of Arts in Communications and authored over 70 books and minibooks as well as having preached and/or podcasted over 100 messages. Ryan has a passion for the Lord and for helping people develop their relationship with and follow Christ, walk in wisdom, study the Word, and purposefully prepare to live their Faith and launch into their God-given calling. Ryan especially is passionate about discipling young men to be faithful men who will stand for Christ in their community, church, and as spiritual leaders in their future households.

At the time of this writing, Ryan is in seminary and serving as Director of Focusing on the Mark Ministries and ministers as an author, blogger, speaker, teacher, evangelist, and podcaster.

Focusing on the Mark Ministries

Our Mission

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:19-20 (KJV)

We pray that you are encouraged in your Christian walk to drawn nearer to The Lord.

The mission of Focusing on the Mark Ministries is to 2 fold.

1. We desire to harvest the lost through preaching a clear messages of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. We desire to stir up Believers to revival.

Our core values are

- Foundation
- Discipleship
- Grace
- Focus
- Remembrance
- Waiting
- And Jesus Christ

Our mission is to Revive the Church. Disciple Believers. Win the Lost. Do all through the power of the Holy Spirit. To Christ be all the Glory!

What we do is:

Every week endeavor to help you get the Word in your heart and life by

Daily: providing a [blog](#) post on our blog and send out via [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) we share Scriptures, helpful quotes, our resources, YouTube videos, encouragement from other ministries and more. Our goal is to help you keep Christ as the center and focus of every day.

Bi-weekly: putting out thoughts, challenges, and prayers on the [Repentant Church blog](#) every Tuesday and Thursday at 9am.

Weekly: an encouraging [podcast](#) comes out every Wednesday at 3pm.

Monthly: our monthly devotional email [Devo Blast](#) comes out at the beginning of each month to the inbox of those who sign up.

All the Time: books, articles, free books and resources, sub-ministry websites, Youtube videos, and more resources are available for discipleship and evangelism.