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# **Why Won't People Listen To Us?**

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As you've probably noticed, biblical truths aren't exactly popular these days. Statistics have proven that each passing generation is becoming less religious and more accepting of what the Bible calls immoral, and our attempts to convince people with the truth seem to be getting less effective by the day. It's easy to just throw our hands up and just assume that nobody wants to listen anymore, but A) that would be an incorrect assumption and B) God has called us to keep on preaching the truth anyway.

So why won't they listen? Here are four reasons why it seems like our words fall on deaf ears, along with what we can do to improve our effectiveness.

## **Because of sin.**

In 1 Corinthians 1:18 Paul called the way of the cross "foolishness" to those who have never put their faith in Christ. They just aren't going to understand the joy of following Christ and putting trust in His plan for our lives, our homes, and our nation until they grasp the magnitude of their sins and seek Him. We look at those who are so open to sin and wonder why they could believe such terrible lies. Here's what we have to remember: People don't have bad morals because they have bad beliefs. They have bad beliefs because they have bad morals.

You've probably noticed that facts mean little in arguments these days. We can present all the evidence in the world that homosexuality is wrong, God created the earth, or whatever else we're trying to prove, and it rarely changes any minds at all. Why? Because their hearts are hardened toward God. We have to start by getting them to come to grips with the concept of right and wrong and their own personal sins.

## **Because of our hypocrisy.**

It's easy to just blame everything on the world, saying that the only reason they won't listen is because of their sins. While it's a major reason, it's often not the only reason, and we should never end a discussion without looking inwardly. While every person is ultimately responsible for his or her own decision, stumbling blocks will be responsible for the difficulty they cause others in finding God.

When we single out other people's sins and don't deal with our own, we show the world that we aren't serious about sin. Plenty of congregations are now having to make contingency plans for what they'll do if homosexuals ask to be married there or become members, all while cohabiting heterosexual couples are sometimes given a pass. What the world has to see is that we aren't against certain groups of people or certain sins, but rather that we're for what God teaches, which naturally places us against *all* sin.

When we are able to show people that we, too, sin and fall short of the glory of God, we begin to relate to them. It's at that point that we can show them how much we hate our own sins and how Jesus can change the hardest heart and cleanse even the "chief of sinners."

### **Because we aren't listening.**

So much of our focus and literature is still aimed at combating denominationalism. While there's a need for that to a certain extent, we aren't in the 1950s anymore. It's not likely that everyone we meet is in some so-called "Christian" religion or another and needs to be brought out of denominationalism. In fact, today most people don't seem to even recognize many of the terms we use. Instead, there are millions of adherents to today's religion of choice, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD), where it's our job to just "be good people" and God is someone we can believe in and turn to when we need Him, but otherwise isn't a part of our daily lives.

More Americans than ever are identifying themselves as "nones" when it comes to religious beliefs, meaning they aren't affiliated with churches at all. At least one out of every three millennials claims no religious affiliation. It's really difficult to convince people of the one true church when they don't see the need for any church at all. And, when they don't see the need for church or a daily relationship with God, then they aren't going to adhere to biblical moral standards - not because they simply don't know what it says.

What this should tell us is that we have to reach people where they are, not where they used to be or where we want them to be. It's an incredibly worn out cliché, but it's still true that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. If we go at them throwing facts, figures, or Scriptures that mean nothing to them, it will tell them that we aren't interested in who they are or what they believe. We have to care enough to listen and build our message based on each individual.

### **Because we aren't showing them something better.**

Of these four reasons, I know I can improve in each area but it's this one that I know I need to work on the most. So many of my discussions (and the discussions I've read between others) seem to leave people with the impression that beliefs are nothing more than an "I say tomato, you say to-mah-to" disagreement of my preference vs. yours. But we are not arguing merely from human reason. We stand on the only hope mankind has. We have life-altering, eternity-changing truth. The more we hold up the beauty, the love, and the goodness of Jesus, the brighter His light will shine in this dark world.

It seems our goal has been to keep homosexuals from being able to claim that they are married in the eyes of the government. What they need isn't really to be kept from "marrying," what they need is for Jesus to guide them out of their sins and show them the truth about marriage and everything else. The biggest concern of the atheist's life isn't just that he doesn't believe God exists, but that He does not know what it means that Jesus died for Him. Our goal can't only be to make people live more moral lives. Our goal has to be introducing them to Jesus. We have to be able to take these discussions out of the arenas of politics, science, or wherever else the culture wants to pick a fight and bring them back to the foundational spiritual truth of God's Word - "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

We must glorify the name of Jesus every chance we get by living out His Word, loving people like He would, and crossing the lines that might make us uncomfortable to reach the souls who are in need. There is no guarantee that they will listen to us, but that doesn't mean we stop telling them what they need to hear with love in our hearts. It's our job to sow the seed and let God reach the hearts who are ready to grow, so let's focus on doing everything we can to get ourselves out of the way and let His message work.