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Sharing Your Faith Based on the News

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Beginning a conversation that leads to a witness opportunity can be a very awkward proposition for a lot of people. It is awkward because religion is a subject that does not fit naturally within most people's everyday conversations where there is no context for discussing faith matters. People generally have a common framework when it comes to what are considered non-controversial subjects like work, family, sports, and other everyday matters. For most, faith simply does not easily fit into that framework. Many also have a fear that they don't have the knowledge to talk intelligently about matters of faith.

The Typical Approach

I have, over the years, had the opportunity to participate in numerous classes that were designed to teach people how to share their faith. Almost without exception, these classes revolve around some canned witnessing opportunity. As I make this observation, please understand that I don't believe the problem is with the methodology itself – regardless of which one is used. Every one of them are nothing more than an explanation of the essentials of a biblical worldview. They are simply explanations of the Gospel message designed to lead people to faith in Christ. Ultimately, if you want to share your faith with someone, this does have to be explained.

However, the typical approach to teaching people how to share their faith doesn't deal very effectively with helping people naturally get a conversation going. Most approaches simply teach the method, then tell people to go out and share it. Thus, what you generally end up with is a cold call situation

where a person simply brings up the topic of Christ out of the blue, then proceeds to share the message.

Again, it is not that there is anything bad with doing this. It is just that it is not natural for most people and most situations. Another drawback of this approach is that it usually doesn't provide for any kind of follow-up opportunity. If you get a positive response, that is great. But if you don't, then you will likely not have future opportunities to share with that person again.

For that reason, I like to recommend that witness opportunities be engaged based on some kind of relationship. It doesn't have to be a close or deep relationship, but it at least needs to be one in which there is opportunity to engage a person over a period of time.

A Natural Approach

There is a reason that, over the years, people have been admonished not to talk about religion and politics in public. The reason is, obviously, that these two topics evoke such strong emotion that people get upset and relationships get destroyed when there is disagreement. These two topics tend to be so embedded in people's personal identity, that having beliefs challenged in these areas is just too uncomfortable.

However, in many ways, the old taboos about that are being challenged. The challenge is not because people are no longer easily offended by these topics. Both still evoke very strong emotional responses. However, it seems that now there is much more of a tendency for people to say what they think without caring about the reaction it invokes. For Christians, that is both a blessing and a curse.

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It is a curse because there is a lot more aggression these days against Christians by people who hold other beliefs. For example, there has been outspoken disdain in the Democrat party against any mention of God in their platform, and many in the Party have even resorted to removing the words "under God" when reciting the pledge of allegiance to the flag. Another example is reflected in the executive orders that certain Democrat state governors have signed related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of them were specifically crafted to restrict churches in ways that were designed to, literally, shut them down. We know that these were aimed specifically at Christians because the same requirements were not forced on non-Christian groups.

On the other hand, the fact that religion is being brought to the forefront is also a blessing in that it makes the topic of faith something that can more easily be discussed. This doesn't mean that the discussions will necessarily be pleasant or easy, as there is often still a lot of emotion tied to it. However, since religion and values are headlining the news, there is a natural opening to talk about the source of faith and values.

To use this approach, though, as a means for sharing one's faith, there are two things that are required (in addition to the ability to share the gospel message itself). The first requirement is that some kind of relationship must be established where enough respect exists between two people to actually allow a discussion to take place. The second requirement is that you, as a Christian, need to come to an understanding of the biblical worldview beliefs that underlie the Christian point of view, AND the non-biblical worldview beliefs that underlie the other person's point of

view regarding the various topics you discuss. For instance, if you are talking about abortion, you have to be conversant with what the Bible teaches about the value of human life as well as the underlying reason why the person you are talking with thinks abortion is okay. This knowledge allows you to intelligently discuss the topics rather than merely spout off about your own personal opinion.

Using Issues in the News to Talk about God

One of the easiest ways to get into these kinds of conversations these days is to talk about specific topics that are in the news. It is easy enough to tell someone that you just read an article about (fill in the blank), then proceed to share what is in the article. Without even commenting about your take on the subject, you can ask the person if they read it, and what they think about the topic. Then you just listen to what they say. You don't even need to respond until they finish.

At that point it is your turn. And since you have respectfully listened to them, they have a certain obligation to listen to you. So, when it is your turn to talk, you can share your biblical beliefs. As you do this, though, be sure that you don't merely share "what" you believe about the topic. Sharing "what" must come out of course, but if that is all you do, you have done nothing but express an opinion that the other person has no reason to accept. So, when you share "what" you believe, go one step further to share "why" you believe the biblical point of view is true. It is the "why" discussion that gets you past pure emotion and allows a deeper discussion to take place. You especially want to get the other person to discuss "why" they believe that their point of view is true, and press them to share what evidence they have to back it up.

The process of doing this should have you asking a lot of questions. As long

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as you are letting them talk, they have nothing to get upset about with you. So let them explain as deeply as is absolutely possible "why" they believe that their beliefs about the topic are true.

As you engage people this way, you want to especially focus on questions that expose the other person's non-biblical beliefs. Understand, at this point, that every non-biblical belief reflects a point of view that does not represent reality. Specifically, it will express a view about God, man, or salvation that is not true. Making them explain "why" they think their beliefs are true regarding these points will move you progressively closer to exposing the untruth of any non-biblical belief.

There are so many issues that are in dispute these days that it is impossible to explain how to use this approach with all of them in an article like this. However, we can look at a few of them as examples to see how it works. Then, you can take the principles of the approach and apply them to other subjects. The examples used here are all based on the assumption that the person you will talk with is a Naturalist. We are using this particular worldview in our examples because that is the most common one that opposes the Christian faith in modern American society. If you have the opportunity to interact with someone from a different worldview, you will need to ask different questions, but the same principles apply.

Examples of Specific Issues That Can Be Used to Lead to a Discussion of Faith

Socialism

Socialism is an economic system that promotes the belief that the means of production, distribution, and exchange in a society should be owned, or at least controlled, by the community as a whole. This is implemented by allowing government con-

trol of virtually every aspect of an economy.

Socialists believe that the collective has priority over the individual, and that the elites in government are better able to regulate and distribute goods to people in society than allowing individuals to make their own decisions. This notion emerges out of the naturalistic belief that man is simply an evolved natural animal, and the survival of the species (the collective) takes precedent over all other priorities. It sees equality of outcome as having priority over equality of opportunity, since it considers that approach to be more effective in helping the collective as a whole. A biblical worldview, on the other hand prioritizes the individual over the collective, as each person is directly responsible to God.

Some of the political policies that emerge out of this economic system include various forms of wealth redistribution such as: various federal grants to "the poor," guaranteed income, guaranteed minimum wage, guaranteed family leave, government paid child care, government imposed affordable housing, government guaranteed retirement income, free contraceptives, single payer health-care (socialized medicine), government paid college tuition, and loan forgiveness for college debts.

Some of the questions one might ask in order to ferret out the problems associated with this system include:

- Do you think it is right for the government to take money from those who earned it and redistribute it to those who have not? Why or why not?
- Where do you believe the money comes from to pay for government welfare programs?
- Who should be the recipients of money from social welfare programs, and why those particular people?

- Are you willing to work more and pay higher taxes so that people who are not working can receive more money from the taxes you pay?
- Do you believe the government ought to have the right to force people to contribute to things that they believe are immoral?

In order to use this as a witnessing opportunity, however, you need to go a step further in your questioning. The questions above begin to show some of the moral inconsistencies with Socialism, but you ultimately want to be able to talk about God and share about salvation in Christ, not just talk politics. The kinds of questions that can move a conversation in a more spiritual direction include:

- Do you believe that human beings are nothing more than naturally evolved animals?
- What, exactly, do you believe about human beings and where do your beliefs come from?
- What do you believe about God and what does it take for a person to please him?
- Do you believe in freedom of conscience?
- Do you believe that God is pleased for people to be content not working and receiving money from those who do?
- Why do you think that a Socialist economic model is moral?
- Who gets to decide what moral principles society must live by?

These questions are, of course, merely suggestions to help you get started. The specific questions you choose to ask should emerge naturally out of the conversation you have with another individual. However, each question you ask should allow you to elicit their naturalistic beliefs about God, man, and salvation, and create an opening for you to share the biblical teachings about these topics.

Guaranteed Minimum Wage

A guaranteed minimum wage is a government demand that employers implement a pay scale that cannot be below a certain amount. The current fad seems to be \$15.00 per hour. When it applies to private companies, it puts restrictions on the way they are able to develop and grow. If a given company is not making enough money to pay the minimum, it must take some kind of measures to meet its expenses. Usually that means doing such things as slowing its growth, laying off workers, cutting workers hours, or, in worst case scenarios, going out of business.

This policy is an expression of a naturalistic worldview. It comes from a belief that the collective has priority over the individual, and that to properly support the collective, there must be equality of outcome – even if forced. A biblical worldview prioritizes the individual over the collective, and puts the primary responsibility for family support on the individual.

Some of the questions one might ask to ferret out the problems associated with this policy include:

- Who is responsible to pay the wages for those who work for a company?
- What should determine how much a person gets paid?
- Who should determine how much a person gets paid?
- Should a person's pay have any connection with how much value they bring to the company?
- If a company begins making less money, should the employees get a pay cut?
- How should a guaranteed minimum wage be calculated?

In order to use this as a witnessing opportunity and not just a political discussion, you will, once again, need to go a step further in your questioning. You ultimately want to be able to talk about God and share about salvation in Christ. The kinds of questions that can move a conversation in that direction include:

- Do you believe that individuals ought to have freedom to begin a business if God leads them to do it?
- Do you believe that it is God's will for government to force people to pay employees a minimum amount? Why or why not?
- Do you believe that people deserve an amount of salary that they have not really earned based on their contribution to the success of the company?
- Do you believe that enforcing a minimum wage is a spiritual priority? Why?

As before, these questions are merely suggestions. Other questions might also be appropriate depending on the specific direction a conversation might take. These questions do, though, allow you to question a person's naturalistic beliefs about God, man, and salvation, and creates an avenue to share biblical teachings about these topics.

Abortion

In a nutshell, abortion is the murder of an innocent pre-born human being. Those who agree with abortion, however, don't see it that way. Instead of focusing on the life of the child, their focus is on the convenience of the mother – often using the slogan "my body, my choice," and calling themselves, "pro-choice" rather than pro-abortion. When advocates of abortion deem having a child to be inconvenient – whether it be for economic, lifestyle, or other reasons – they consider it fine to terminate the baby's life.

This policy is an expression of a naturalistic worldview. It comes from the belief that there is no transcendent reality, and that a human being is nothing more than a natural animal with a highly evolved brain. As such, the value of humanity is in its collective survival, not in the survival of any particular individual human life. Thus, they believe it is okay to eliminate particular individuals if they are deemed to interfere with the priorities of the collective. A biblical worldview understanding of life is that it is created by God, and human beings do not have the right to terminate an innocent human life.

Some of the questions one might ask to bring out the problems associated with a pro-abortion moral stance include:

- Do you think abortion is okay? Why?
- Do you support Planned Parenthood? Why?
- Is there a time frame beyond which you think abortions should not be performed? Why?
- Do you think it is okay to murder innocent people?
- Do you think a pre-born child is an innocent person? Why or why not?
- When do you think a pre-born becomes a human child?
- Does a pre-born human have rights? Why or why not?

In order to use abortion to engage a witnessing opportunity, rather than merely deal with it in political terms, you will need to go a step further in your questioning than what was mentioned above. You will ultimately need to guide the discussion in a way that allows you to talk about God and share about salvation in Christ. The kinds of questions that can possibly move a conversation in that direction include:

- What do you base your moral choices upon concerning human life?
- Do you believe that there is such a thing as objective morality? Why or why not?
- Do you believe in God and that he made man special, in his image? If not, what do you believe and how do you know it is true?
- Do you believe God has revealed to mankind knowledge about the value of human life? How do you know whether or not that is true?
- Do you believe that those who kill innocent human beings deserve any kind of punishment?
- Should God punish people who kill innocent human beings? Why or why not?

As with the previous topics, these questions are merely suggestions. Other questions might also be appropriate depending on the specific direction a conversation might take. These particular ones do, however, allow you to question a person's naturalistic beliefs about God, man, and salvation, and they create an avenue for you to share what the Bible teaches about these topics.

Other Possible Political and Moral Topics That Can Be Used as a Platform for Witness

Virtually any topic that has a moral component is ripe to be used as a means for transitioning to talk about faith matters. Every worldview system has a way that it evaluates morality, and it applies those beliefs to every topic. Some of the very prominent topics that are in the news these days, and that can be used to lead into a faith discussion, include:

Raising taxes on the rich
Teaching sex-ed in schools

Defunding police
Making it easier to prosecute police officers
Emptying the jails
Legalizing the recreational use of drugs
Eliminating cash bail
Abolishing the death penalty
Removing Confederate monuments
Enabling gay adoption and fostering
Promoting transgender "rights" (transgender bathroom and locker room use in schools and businesses)
Curtailing gun rights
Providing federal support for arts and culture
Supporting the Green New Deal
Eliminating carbon based fuels
Counting illegal aliens in the census
Allowing open borders
Providing amnesty for illegal aliens already in the country
Eliminating charter schools
Eliminating private access to medical care for veterans
Providing federal support for embryonic stem cell research
Promoting gay rights

Start Asking Questions

Sharing a witness does not have to be an awkward process if it can be done in a context that corresponds to the natural flow of everyday conversations. By asking questions, you allow other people to express their beliefs, then you have the ability to use their opinions to engage a conversation. That way, it never comes across as you trying to impose your beliefs on others. You get to share your beliefs, but it is in the context of talking about their beliefs. By asking the right questions, you cause other people to consider the implications of beliefs in ways that not only help them see the flaws in their own thinking, but also allows you to share your beliefs and contrast them with theirs.

This has been mentioned before, but it is worth repeating: Using this approach is not simply a matter of sharing your "opinion" – you are sharing the truth about reality. As such, if you are truly interested in making it work, you will have to get up to speed on your own worldview beliefs, as well as those of the person to whom you wish to witness. But if you are willing to make the effort to do that, you will be in a position to share your faith with virtually anyone in a way that is not awkward, but fits the natural flow of conversation based on the news of the day.

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