



Some Tips for Sharing Your Faith with a Jewish Friend

Today in America there is a great deal of disagreement concerning truth. In fact, most people believe that there is no such thing as absolute “Truth”. Our society instead encourages people to seek out their own truth, based on individual knowledge and experience. Unfortunately, this doesn’t provide for the concept of an absolute authority, a one true God, as is found in the Bible. For anyone who accepts and believes the Bible to be absolute and undeniable “Truth”, they must clearly understand at the outset that they will be outside of the parameters of accepted religious thinking in our day. Most Jewish People do not accept the idea of absolute Truth and do not believe in “one way to God”. Judaism actually teaches that non-Jews can reach God in their own way, through their own unique religions, as long as they are at least monotheistic, which would include Christianity and Islam. Because of this understanding you will find that your Jewish friends will agree with everything you might say about Yeshua*, until you bring up their own need to believe in Yeshua as well.

It is important that we begin by answering a very simple, yet extremely profound question: Why do Jewish People need to believe in Yeshua? Today there are Christians who teach that Jewish People do not need to believe in Yeshua. They teach that Jewish People have a special relationship with God through the Mosaic Covenant and that they have no need for Yeshua. This is absolutely false and contradictory not only of New Testament teaching, but also of Old Testament teaching as well. There are three things that we must understand about the Truth of the Good News of Messiah Yeshua:

The Opportunity is universally available – The Good News of the Messiah is for all people regardless of background (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 15:6-21)

The Acceptance of it is Essential – The Good News of the Messiah is the only way to know God (Isaiah 53:11; Acts 4:12)

The Price for our Atonement was already paid – The Good News of the Messiah is a free gift available only through faith in Yeshua’s death (Genesis 15:5-6; Ephesians 2:8-9)

We must never forget that when Yeshua came, he came as the Jewish Messiah for the Jewish People, so that through his own Jewish People the Gospel would go forth as a message of salvation for the rest of the people of the World. Therefore each individual Jewish person must choose for themselves to accept the Jewish Messiah Yeshua if they want to have a relationship with God.

Now that we understand that Jewish People must believe in Messiah Yeshua, let’s take a look at two practical helps for sharing our faith with Jewish friends.

Prayer is essential for Outreach – We must realize that God is in the business of saving souls and we as believers play our most important role when we spend time in concentrated and tenacious prayer on behalf of our unbelieving friends and relatives. When we pray for people’s salvation we should remember to pray specifically and individually.

Genuine Relationships are Important in Outreach – There is nothing wrong with doing street or large meeting Outreach; these are wonderful vehicles for presenting the Good News to people one might never meet through normal circumstances. The fact of the matter is though, that by far most people who come to faith, come to believe through the personal witness of a believing friend who has taken the time to develop a genuine relationship with them. This is what works best with Jewish People. It is through the faithful witness of believing friends that most Jewish People come to believe in Yeshua. Remember if you have a Jewish friend that you are trying to witness to, make the time to regularly pray for them and be sure to build a genuine

* The original Hebrew way to say Jesus

friendship with them.

There are besides this three key principles for sharing your faith with Jewish People: **Be Sensitive, Be Bold, and Be Real**. The first key, **Be Sensitive**, is important because Jewish People have all kinds of pre-established concepts of who and what Christians are, and, believe me, they are not impressed with “Christianity”. If we want to effectively share our faith with our Jewish friends we must be willing to patiently listen and then speak, carefully clarifying who Yeshua is, emphasizing his Jewishness in the Scriptures. Showing genuine interest in your Jewish friend’s holidays, history and culture can be a great way to opening doors of communication concerning the issue of God and Messiah. Past persecutions by so-called “Christians” have caused Jewish People to be extremely sensitive about, and negative toward, Yeshua. Stay away from words and phrases, which can confuse or provoke negative images in their minds, blocking their openness to the Good News. One quick example is the term “Christ”. Most Jewish people have no idea that the term “Christ” is really the Greek for the Jewish title “Messiah”. It is helpful when speaking to your Jewish friend to clarify that “Yeshua is the Jewish Messiah of Israel” instead of just using the phrase “Jesus Christ”. There are many other suggestions concerning sensitivity, but there is only limited space here. Remember what you say and how you say it does matter when you witness to Jewish People, so be sensitive.

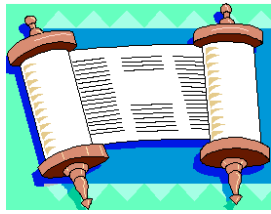
The second key, **Be Bold**, has to do with witnessing by proclamation. We must never forget that as believers we must be willing to open our mouths and speak forth the truth of the Gospel to those around us. Now, being bold does not mean that unless you stand on a street corner with a megaphone you are not sharing the Gospel. Absolutely not! Instead being bold is taking the normal, everyday opportunities that surround us to speak about what God has done in our own lives through Messiah Yeshua with other people. By using natural circumstances to share our faith we will be able to clearly articulate to people what we believe, yet we won’t come off as “forcing the Gospel” on a closed person. One of the best things to do is to encourage people on their own to explore who Yeshua is. Most Jewish People have no understanding of the historical person of Yeshua. Encouraging them to read the book of Matthew for themselves from just an intellectual and historical perspective is an excellent example of witnessing with boldness.

The third key, **Be Real**, may actually be the most important key because this has to do with witnessing by our lifestyle. We, as believers, can talk all we want about God and salvation, but the unbelievers around us, and particularly our Jewish friends, are looking to see if we practice what we believe. Jewish People know all about hypocrisy. For most Jewish People, Judaism is a religion of rules and regulations. People see from a very young age inconsistency and hypocrisy in too many religious people, and for that reason many of them turn their backs on organized religions. Jewish people as a group are over-represented though in cults and Eastern Religions like Buddhism, Hinduism and the New Age Movement. As believers in Yeshua we must show them lives of consistency and humility so that they might be provoked to consider Yeshua as the True Messiah. It is also important for us to remember that we can only share Messiah from out of our own spiritual relationship with God. If we are really not seeking God with all of our heart yet we claim to serve the Lord, people will see through our words and reject our message. It is all right though to speak honestly with people about our humility as believers. It is from our testimony as redeemed men and women who have allowed God’s workings in our lives that our greatest witness can be had.

In this simple and quick overview we have discussed some steps on how to share our faith with Jewish people. For those interested in a more in-depth study, I would recommend to you the book ***Our Jewish Friends*** by Dr. Louis Goldberg (published by Moody Press). In his book he provides more information on Messianic Prophecy, Apologetics and Jewish History. If you would like further help with literature or advice please feel free to contact us at Devar Emet.

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