

Ex-Atheist Shares 3 Ways to Win Unbelievers to Christ

Every day people from around the world message me with questions about life, theology, God and more.

Inevitably, the No. 1 question I get is, "Chris, why did you become a Christian?" This is usually followed by some derivation of the following statement: "... because my son (daughter, mother, father, friend, co-worker and so on) says he is an atheist and I don't know how to talk to him about God."

Don't get me started on the church's current failure to train the body how to address this issue. Shameless plug: Check out my book *Prove It: The Art and Science of Understanding and Articulating Why You Believe What You Believe* if you're looking for strategic communication techniques and a general understanding of the arguments for the existence of God, the deity of Christ and the reliability of Scripture.

As for my personal testimony, I have, historically, just sent people to one of several interviews in which I have spoken about my transformation. This morning, however, something struck me. **There is a clearly recognizable process in my testimony that can be duplicated.** So while the testimony itself is a long process, I can break it down into three simple steps for you here.

1. The first point that caught my attention was the life of those who truly cared about others, who lived their lives as if God really existed. **Their character and actions spoke to His tangible presence in their lives.** Everything they did (or didn't do), was based on their relationship with God and they let me know that God was the reason when I asked.

2. The second element was study. I always had an idea of what Christianity was, but I had never paid much attention to it, likely because the people who professed it rarely spoke about it. The few that I had seen speak regularly about it were so rare that they just seemed like oddballs. **I had never seen Christian belief lived out so totally that I could see Christianity as a complete worldview.** It wasn't until I was 25 that I began studying the things of God. **Once I really began to listen, I began to see the deep truths within Scripture.** Don't get me wrong, I still kept on my skeptic's hat, but I decided to consider some of its claims.
3. **Most importantly, after a lifetime of receiving pain from, and inflicting pain on, this world and its inhabitants, I became so utterly convinced of my sinful nature that I could no longer deny the need for a Lord and Savior.**

An interesting pattern arises when you look closer into this story. The first thing that spoke to me was the lives of those around me—the character witness of Christians. Assisi is famous for saying that we should “preach the gospel always, and if necessary, use words.” The statement itself is problematic (as it is always necessary to use words), but his emphasis on the need for character is spot on.

Likewise, it has also been said that people won't care what you know until they know that you care. We are overwhelmed by information, to the tune of roughly 34 gigabytes of data per day. We have to make decisions about which information paths we choose to listen to and consider.

It was not until I knew they cared that I cared what they knew. Then I began to want to know what they knew. Of all the data being thrown at me daily, I decided to listen to their voices. I listened to what they had to say and what their God had to say.

I began listening to the Word of God—spoken through His people and occasionally directly through His Bible. Once this happened, it was game over. It wasn't that I would read about sin and felt like I needed to repent or perish. It was that as I got closer to God and His Word and His people, I began to see the contrasting sin in my own life—His holiness to my worldliness. In truth, the actions that I had been committing were no worse than the actions from my past. **The difference was not the degree of my sin. The difference was my proximity to Him.**

Closing Thoughts

So there you have it: one way to reach the unreachable.

1. Let your actions shout from the rooftops. Let people see that God is good and He really is the way, the truth and the life.
2. Help people find truth when they are ready. Guide them when they are willing to be guided.
3. Watch God be God. As they get closer to Him, they won't be able to avoid their need for Christ! {eoa}

Chris Townsend spent the first 26 years of his life as an atheist. He now leverages that background to help reach the lost and disciple the found. He has studied supply chain management & business information systems at Texas Christian University, theology at Christ for the Nations Institute (CFNI), church history at Liberty University, and apologetics at Biola. Chris is the president of Redeemed Royalty Ministries, a professor at Christ for the Nations Institute, and an itinerant apologist for . Chris has written several books including *Prove It: The Art and Science of Understanding* and *Articulating Why You Believe What You Believe* and *Ekklesia Rising: The Organization Formerly Known as Church*. Connect with Chris at .