

Can You Be Trusted?

✖ No matter how good your explanation is of the gospel, and no matter how well you know the Bible, if your Jewish neighbor doesn't trust you, your witness will fail. But what makes a person trustworthy?

In my 35 years of talking to my people about the Messiah, I've found that the first step in gaining someone's trust is honesty. This is especially true between Christians and Jews.

All Jewish people know that during the Crusades and Spanish Inquisition vast numbers of Jews were killed "in the name of Christ." Even more so, many Nazis gassed Jews and went to church on Sunday. Many Jewish people have negative feelings about Christians, because of 2,000 years of anti-Semitism from those who named the name of Jesus.

Of course, Yeshua (Jesus) being a Jew, would condemn any actions against his own people in His name, and millions of Christians have sacrificed for and loved the Jewish people. Yet, this feeling is real among many Jews and has to be overcome with trust.

I still remember, while doing missionary work in Skokie, Illinois, I was talking about Yeshua to a kosher butcher whose store was next door to my storefront. After a while, he rolled up his right sleeve and showed me the numbers he received in a concentration camp, saying, "This is why I can't believe in Jesus." Like many of the chosen people, this old man was unable to distinguish between the teaching and way of Jesus and the behavior of some who say they follow him. Overcoming this can and is being done, with patience and love.

On the other hand, many Christians have negative feelings toward Jews. When I was a kid, one of my best friends called me a Christ-killer after coming home from church, and distanced himself from me for a while. Clearly, he heard a

sermon preaching the lie that the “Jews killed Christ.” It took months for our relationship to heal. It was never the same after that.

Another reason Christians have trouble trusting Jews is that, since our people were forced to live in closed communities (ghettos) in most countries in which we have lived, we developed a need to keep among ourselves for protection. This “clannishness” has caused many Christians to avoid trying to get to know Jewish people. Yet, especially in the United States, this has been less necessary. However, a subtle feeling of fear of the unknown Jew exists among some Christians.

I’ve met many Christians who don’t want to witness to their Jewish neighbors because they expect to be yelled at, criticized, or rejected. My people are really quite kind but we can be a bit difficult at times. We can be intense, insecure, and intimidating, but my people are some of most generous, kind and thoughtful people in the world.

Jews give more to charity per capita than any other people, yet we can also seem cheap. Charles Dickens’s *Fagin*, the moneylender, fostered this. The comedy of Jack Benny, a Jew, was based on most Christian’s view that Jews were cheap, although Benny, too, was one of the most generous men in Hollywood.

These prejudices have made it hard for Christians to trust Jews, just as history has made it hard for Jews to trust Christians. But never before in history, especially in the United States, has the groundwork been laid for Jews and Christians to learn how to get to know each other ... and establish a basis for trust. From that platform, it is becoming easier for Christians to share their faith with Jews.

Credibility is critical to any communication, especially when presenting the gospel. It’s the most important message anyone

can communicate. Let me challenge you to learn more about your Jewish neighbor so you might identify more with him or her, as well as become more trusting since you have let them get to know you and your love for them, often coming from Yeshua's love flowing through you for His people.

You have no idea what impact your Jewish neighbor will have on the world when he or she becomes a Messianic Jew. Just think of Paul.

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