

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Campus Union

University of Florida students who meet Doug Crescimanno will be entertained—and they might meet Jesus, too.

☒ My friend Doug Crescimanno is my favorite amateur comedian. If you hang out with him for half an hour you feel as if you've been on the set of *Saturday Night Live*. (He's at least as funny as Bill Hader or Fred Armisen.) But this 25-year-old University of Florida (UF) graduate, who lives in an apartment near the huge campus in Gainesville, Fla., is also passionately in love with Jesus—and he has given his life to sharing the gospel with students.

“People need God. They are hurt, broken, deceived, depressed and dying. We have the only solution. We can be used to give people life ... and life abundantly!” –Doug Crescimanno

Doug earned a degree in advertising from UF, but he's not pursuing a career in his field because he's too busy evangelizing the campus. He sets up a table on the Reitz Union plaza four days a week and posts a sign that says “BIBLE TRIVIA!” He loads the table with Blow Pops and Jolly Ranchers and

then invites students to play his game. The script goes like this:

"You, my friend! Would you like to play Bible Trivia? It's super fast and super easy."

When a student agrees to play, Doug asks three questions—all in his over-the-top comedic voice:

"Question #1:

Jesus was commonly referred to as Jesus of ____? Was it a) Galilee; b) Los Angeles; c) the Bronx; or d) Nazareth?"

"Question #2: Who

wrote the book of David in the Bible? Was it a) David; b) Saul; c) Solomon; or d) There is no actual book called David in the Bible?"

"Question #3:

Jesus said that unless a man is born-_____, he can't even see the kingdom of heaven. Is the answer a) born-again; b) born-twice; c) born a lady; or d) born once, twice, three times a lady?"

By this time the person being interrogated is laughing and enjoying free candy if they get the answers right. As they pick out their final prizes, Doug asks them what it means to be born again. Then he shares about his own conversion experience (he gave his heart to Jesus while a senior in college) and offers to pray with them.

Since Doug began running his game table at UF last August, he's led 15 people

to Christ, and he says countless others have made commitments to the Lord. He and his friends, Mike and Lalaine, have prayed for people at the table and seen miraculous healings. Some have visited their home congregation, Victory Church of Gainesville.

When I stopped to see Doug at his apartment last weekend, he told me about a wheelchair-bound guy who recently visited the ministry table. "He didn't get completely healed," Doug said. "However when we saw him a couple days later, he became a Christian because he said after he was prayed for, he felt the power of God flowing through his body for over an hour!"

I'm sharing Doug's story because I often hear people lamenting the sad spiritual state of America's young people. It's true that many Millennials have left the faith—or are just plain uninterested in spiritual things—but I also meet many young men and women like Doug Crescimanno. They really don't care about making lots of money or having important careers; they'd rather stop the world's injustices, fight sex trafficking, go on the mission field or help drug addicts kick the habit.

Today's young Christians are also bold and adventurous—and willing to face ridicule for their beliefs. Yet Doug rarely gets heckled on the campus because,

for one, he's so
funny, and two, he's sincerely interested in listening to
people's problems.

"The reason why
the persecution hasn't been that bad," Doug told me, "is
because when you love
and honor people, and when you actually listen to what they
have to say instead
of just quickly jumping into a sales pitch, they're gonna be
open to the
gospel. They see you actually care and that this is real."

When I asked Doug
why he's made this sacrifice to reach lost people, he said:
"People
need God. They are hurt, broken, deceived, depressed and
dying. We have the
only solution. We can be used to give people life ... and life
abundantly!"

We hear a lot these days
about mentoring the next generation—and I'm committed to doing
that. But I also
know I can learn from my younger friends. Doug is young enough
to be my son,
but he has inspired me to be bolder in evangelism, more
aggressive in my faith
and more compassionate in my attitude toward the people around
me.

I hope Doug's zeal will
challenge you, and that his joy in serving God will infect
every church in
America.

(And he wanted me to tell you
that if you want to use his Bible Trivia script on your

campus, there's no
charge—but you have to buy your own Blow Pops.)

J. Lee Grady is editor of *Charisma*. You can find him on
Twitter at leegrady. His book *10
Lies Men Believe* releases this month from Charisma House.