

It Is Not A Waste Of Time!

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I recently received a letter from a Jehovah's Witness seemingly "out of the blue" as they say. I did not know this person, nevertheless, I did respond to him. Over the years, I have tried to engage with Jehovah's Witnesses (JW's) whenever I could, but it seems like the conversations do not last very long. This is very puzzling to me because as an Evangelical Christian I would be delighted to talk with anyone about the Bible as long as they were willing to discuss it. After all, this is what witnessing is all about is it not, engaging-comparing-discussing, leading someone to God? One would think that considering all the doors that JW's have had slammed in their faces, they would be just as delighted when they came across someone willing to discuss the Bible! For the sake of privacy, I will use only his first name in this writing since it is a common name, and I have no desire or intent to "single out," any one person in particular, nor defame them in any way. I will now share my brief encounter with Brandon who is in the same age group as my son (Mid to late 40's.) As with all exchanges I have had with JW's, it started out friendly enough, and it seemed as though Brandon had an interest in me as a person. Don't get me wrong... Brandon remained cordial throughout our exchanges! He came across as a genuine person, secure in his beliefs. Like all JW's I have met in the past, he seemed concerned about others, wanting to share something he deemed important for the welfare of others; I can relate to this as I have the same desire. This initial impression soon faded and I would like to share my thoughts as to why it faded. I will be sharing some excerpts from my exchanges with Brandon to illustrate why I feel that Jehovah's Witnesses may not be as secure in their beliefs and convictions as they portray themselves to be. I say that because in my experience, they will engage in conversation as long as they have control of the narrative, but will disengage as soon as they lose that control, or the conversation forces them to question their own belief system. I will begin with my initial response to Brandon's letter with some irrelevant sections edited out:

Brandon,

I have had discussions with many Jehovah's Witnesses in the past, as I too am a "Truth Seeker." When time permits, I invite Witnesses in for discussion, rather than closing the door in their faces, I am very interested in "Eschatology." I believe we are living in "The End Times" as evidenced in daily news reports and current events. In light of our mutual interest in these subjects, I would like to converse with you as well. I do however wish to set a few ground rules for our discussions. I noticed in the past when having discussions with Jehovah's Witnesses that it is hard to get a personal answer without being steered to the Watchtower Publication, or the JW.org website. If possible, I would like for you to talk with me from your heart and your personal knowledge rather than referring me to various publications as opposed to the Bible by itself. If this is agreeable to you, I have a lot of questions for you. If not, I feel it would be a waste of time as I already visit JW.org and have a New World Translation of the Bible. When I study the Bible I use these sources as well as virtually hundreds of others... As I said, I too am a Truth Seeker... The question is, "Are you?" I prefer E-Mail as the medium as I am on the computer a lot every day exploring these very topics. Let me know if you are willing to talk. Most Jehovah's Witnesses I have dealt with in the past seem unwilling when the Bible is the only reference book allowed.

I would also like to know many specific answers to many specific questions concerning your beliefs.

I will be looking forward to talking with you in the future.

As a Christian, I would be ecstatic to get a response like this from someone I witnessed to! After all, most people in society these days consider the Bible to be a "Taboo" subject. I am sure that Brandon had similar feelings when he got my initial response; after all, isn't that the reason that JW's go door to door, to engage people in conversations about the Bible and Jehovah (God)?

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My exchanges with Brandon lasted less than a month before he stopped replying to me although I have to give him credit for lasting a few more days than the last JW I engaged in conversation with.

Brandon's last words to me were the following:

From Brandon: As I explained our lives focus around our ministry so I stay very busy with that. The purpose of our ministry and my initial contact to you was in obedience to the command Jesus gave at Matthew 28:19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." We devote our time to helping others to learn and appreciate what we have found in the Bible. I would be more than happy to share my knowledge of the Bible with you but as I have already stated I have already proven to myself that I have found the truth. Therefore, I have no need to explore alternate reasonings on scriptures. If you have any additional questions about the Bible or the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses then I am more than happy to answer these using only the scriptures as you requested but if your purpose is to somehow "enlighten" me, I think we have come to a point where our conversations will be a waste of time.

Because I questioned or challenged some of what Brandon said to me, he now considered further exchanges of thoughts and opinions with me to be a "Waste of Time!" I need to point out here that in my initial response to Brandon, I too referred to "wasted time." However, I was referring to being directed to the Watchtower or the JW website as I regularly explore these and consider them in such conversations or debates as well as The New World Translation of the Bible published by Watchtower. Back in the early 1980's I worked for a large defense contractor and every day during lunch break about 5 or 6 "devout atheists" used to gang up on me making fun of my belief in the Bible and would ask all kinds of bizarre questions in hopes of making me look like a fool. This went on for over a year, and you know what... I loved every minute of it and even looked forward to it! The reason I looked forward to it was because I was (and still am) secure in my faith in the Bible. Every day those guys were on one side of the lunch table and I was on the other... the rest of the people at that table and the adjoining tables were listening (and keeping score I might add.) These antagonists were on a mission to try to make a fool out of me every day, but I never considered any exchange I had with any of them a waste of time. As a matter of fact, I believe I was doing exactly what Matthew 28: 19-20 says I should be doing as Brandon pointed out! I will conclude this with my reply to Brandon after which I did not hear from him again... I guess because I was "A Waste of Time." (I have made a few minor edits for clarification)

Brandon,

How can I become a disciple (or how can you convince me of what you consider to be the truth) if you cut off our correspondence? I told you up front that I am a Truth Seeker and you told me that you have found the Truth! Although I began my quest for God over 58 years ago (before you were born), I marvel at the confidence you have, so much so that you consider yourself above further enlightenment. Over the years I have talked and debated with many people, some of whom that have dedicated their entire lives to the study of God's Word, none of them ever claimed to be above further enlightenment! Many of these were Greek and Hebrew Scholars, but they still lacked the confidence that you claim. Therefore, I consider you a valuable resource in my quest to know God, so I hope we can continue. If you are as confident as you say you are, I cannot imagine that you are threatened by my questions and comments as I compare what I have heard from you or other JW's concerning spiritual matters with my personal knowledge and understanding of the Bible.

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It has been my experience in the past with other JW's, that their quest to "make disciples" as mentioned in the passage you referred to in Matt 28, is short lived when JW's are pressed for deeper understanding of Watch Tower doctrine compared to other doctrines, most established much earlier than that of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Studying God's Word and making disciples is never a waste of time according to my understanding of Scripture to this point. "Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the Word," is this not correct? I Hope you are not like the other JW's I talked with in the past. Apparently, they did not have confidence enough to continue to defend their beliefs.

Your Friend Wayne

That is where it ended. I guess what it boils down to, is either a lack of confidence, or the doctrine of the Jehovah's Witnesses simply does not stand up to scrutiny, at least not for long. Nevertheless, I will always be willing to talk with anyone, anytime, about God and the Bible. I don't have all the answers as Brandon claims, but I will do the best I can, So Help Me God! All I can say for sure is that if people are willing to discuss the Bible, it is never a waste of time... ever! I use myself as an example, as I argued and debated with the people who led me to God for over a year before I "Saw The Light." Does anyone want to talk? If so, use the contact link at www.selahlife.net and I will get back to you ASAP.