

# How will we survive as a Church?

Protecting the next generation

Teaching, Keeping & Restoring

Convicting the non-believer

# Convicting the Non-Believer

1 Peter 3:15

Part of being ready is understanding the opposition and what they are thinking

# Convicting the Non-Believer

Matthew 13:1-23

Wayside – Hears but never responds

Stony ground – Hears but no root

Thorny ground – Cares of the world

Good Ground – Hears, grows, produces

# The Educated Skeptic

Who they are:

- Intellectual objections
- Often a student of an educated skeptic
- Pride (education, intelligence, understanding)
- Possibly unaware of their mental gymnastics

# The Educated Skeptic

## What to do:

- Be respectful, but not intimidated
- Clarify their position
- Point out any inconsistencies

# The Educated Skeptic

## What to do:

- Remember 2 things:
  - Their beliefs are in spite of evidence
  - They may believe what they do because someone they perceive as intelligent has told them what to believe

# The Wounded Skeptic

Who they are:

- Some source of pain
- They blame God

# The Wounded Skeptic

## What to do:

- They need compassion and love
- Let them vent a little
- Long term reciprocal relationship

# The Frightened Skeptic

Who they are:

- Believe they are being ask to “switch off”
- Afraid of being outside their comfort zone
- Afraid of giving up things important to them

# The Frightened Skeptic

## What to do:

- Figure out what they are afraid of
- Do not minimize their fears

# The Frightened Skeptic

If there are things they must stop doing:

- God is not looking for sequestered monks
- It is not up to their willpower alone, let God
- You cannot “make” them stop

# The Frightened Skeptic

If they are afraid of “switching off”

- God encourages us to use our brains

# The Frightened Skeptic

If they are afraid of leaving their zone

- Be honest, they will
- They will first use the gifts they have
- God will equip them for other things

# The Proud Skeptic

Who they are:

- They perceive no need in their life
- They believe they are good enough for God
- They may be arrogant and boastful
- “I am not as bad as the other guy.”

# The Proud Skeptic

## What to do:

- Requires long term relationship
- No apologetics or “gotcha” arguments
- You are undercutting their world view
- Pray, pray, pray for time and patience

# The Proud Skeptic

## What to do:

- Remember “they don’t need your help”
- Your first goal is to be a faithful christian
- Be ready for apologetics when they are

# The Proud Skeptic

## Special Case – The Religiously Proud Skeptic

- Very sure of their righteousness
- Think of the Pharisees
- Need to be shown, telling alone does little

# The Orphaned Skeptic

Who they are:

- Have trouble believing in a loving father
- Often accept heresies
- May be drawn in by a cult
- Often become atheists

# The Orphaned Skeptic

## What to do:

- Compare their fathers to God (not the other way)
- Show example of God being a good father
- Show examples of people reacting to Him
- Focus on the concept of adoption

# The Orphaned Skeptic

## What to do:

- Do not drift away or abandon them
- Consider suggesting professional counseling

# The Tolerant Skeptic

Who they are:

- No proselytizing from one religion to another
- Who cares what you believe, be quiet
- None right or wrong
- May believe postmodernism

# The Tolerant Skeptic

## What to do:

- Philosophical arguments are circular
- Usually open to intellectual discussions
- Use the law of non-contradiction
- Don't lecture, ask questions

# The Tolerant Skeptic

What to do:

- Don't force a decision (that is intolerant)
- Take a break & build a relationship

# The Sensual Skeptic

Who they are:

- Each person is free to determine ethics
- “If it feels right, it must be right”
- Any addiction can be the issue

# The Sensual Skeptic

## What to do:

- The sensual pleasure is not your first priority
- Focus on the spiritual
- Don't get pulled into their sensual pleasure
- Put 1 Cor. 6:12 and 2 Pet 2:19 to good use

# The Sensual Skeptic

What to do:

- Don't underestimate the pull of the pleasure
- Don't abandon them if they fall back into it

# The Seeking Skeptic

Who they are:

- They may know the Bible fairly well
- They are truly seeking answers (to a point)
- They are unwilling (unable) to commit
- Think about King Agrippa (Acts 26)

# The Seeking Skeptic

## What to do:

- They are not trying to deceive you
- Paul did not water down the Gospel
- When is enough time enough time?
- You may have to insist on a decision



# The Syncretistic skeptic

## Who they are:

- Convinced all beliefs are equal at their core
- Often follow whatever is popular
- Differences are because men alter God
- Not usually hostile to any religion
- May point out that “all roads lead to God”

# The Syncretistic skeptic

## What to do:

- They will believe almost anything
- Probably don't truly understand any religion
- Get a basic understanding of major religions
- Show that they can't all be right

# The Syncretistic skeptic

## The Syncretic Christian:

- Think they accept all teachings of Christianity
- Wants to add something (just a little bit)
- Becoming more prevalent in our society
- Astrology, spiritualism, new age, superstition

# The Honest Skeptic

Who they are:

- Don't directly attack or believe any religion
- Will listen and ask honest questions
- Often have pre-conceived ideas about religion

# The Honest Skeptic

## What to do:

- Don't try to make the Gospel more palatable
- Be completely honest in a loving way
- Show them their need for God

# Convicting the Non-Believer

In all situations:

- Luke 20:21
- 2 Corinthians 4:2
- Ephesians 6:14

# Convicting the Non-Believer

Here is the big question:

Which of these is “Good Ground?”