

## The Weakness of Atheist's Arguments

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(Adapted from a post by Mike Winger)

Some of those who reject Christ are often guilty of failing to truly engage in dialogue with Christians. This is because many who reject Christ do so on the basis of misinformation and misrepresentation (errors and lies). One thing I have come to realize is how bitterness often seems to play a primary role in many people's rejection of Christianity. It is becoming increasingly obvious that, for some people, their arguments are not really about facts and evidence but about supporting an emotional reaction of bitterness and maintaining active malice toward Christianity. The primary objective of this assault of bitterness seems to be to provoke an overall cultural attitude of disgust in any consideration of Christ and reaction to Christianity. This explains why so much popular-level descent and portrayal of the Christian Faith is loaded with blatant misrepresentations, ideas taken out of context, and gross misinformation.

If the real intention of these misrepresentations is to fuel bitterness, which, as I said, is at the root of many people's rejection of Christ, and to provoke the same feelings of bitterness in others, then this onslaught of pop-criticisms is probably the most effective way to do so. That is, when the objective is to spread hatred and bitter feelings toward someone or something, such as a particular group of people, then promulgating lies, rumors, and hostile rhetoric is and has generally always been the tactic of choice, and these tactics would be effective in the culture regardless of their accuracy or level of coherence. In fact, we would expect to find that the most blatant misrepresentations of Christianity would be the most effective at creating and supporting unbelief in others. We would also see that many complaints against God and Christianity would center on non-essential issues and examples of bad behavior amongst supposed Christians. Because these things are not logical reasons for rejecting Christ but they are powerful tools for embittering people, these tactics are the ones most commonly employed by those who oppose Christianity in our contemporary, postmodern, Western culture. In preferring these particular tactics today, atheists and agnostics who actively work to oppose Christ and Christianity reveal their true motive, which is to use lies about Christ and Christians in order to spread bitterness and hate toward Christ and Christians.

To back up this notion, you only need to review the complaints most often leveled against God, Jesus, the Bible, the church, and Christianity as a whole most commonly presented in pop-atheism, pop-culture, and so-called "Progressive Christianity." When you do, you will see that so many of these groups share the same, often repeated talking points, which seem well-suited to provoke emotional reactions but show very little concern for the nature and quality of good evidence. The reality of it is that the intention of these complaints is to guide and direct the heart via the doorway of emotion. They are not meant to be carefully considered and examined. There seems to be no consideration or expectation that there might be legitimate responses to these objections and complaints. There is no thought that there might actually be several possible responses for a particular complaint, and that some potential

responses might be good, others might be bad, and some might be better than others. This would mean that responses offered by Christians would need to be thoroughly understood and carefully weighed, and the vast majority of those who oppose Christianity are far from that level of careful, thoughtful consideration of the actual issues and details.

Another thing that this explains is why thoughtful responses to these complaints are almost always unwelcome. The complainer is not seeking an answer to the problem and doesn't even seem to want an answer. This is because the problem or complaint will not be effective at creating bitterness if it is undermined by a thoughtful response. Another line of evidence that both supports what I'm saying here and exposes this tactic is when so many of those who bring these kinds of complaints against Christianity often respond to thoughtful answers by changing the subject to a new complaint. After all, they have hundreds of them to pull from. There is a seemingly endless supply of such popular complaints to launch at any particular defender of Christianity and call it dialogue, and each time one complaint is answered, two more are brought up, usually with no counter of substantial response given to the answer that was just provided. Rather, the complainant attempts to steamroll over the Christian by launching complaint after complaint in a quick, rapid-fire succession, doing very little listening, if any, to the viewpoints which differ from or in opposition to his or her own. At the end this kind of exchange, the atheist oftentimes feels even more grounded in his or her view of Christianity as absurd, false, and evil. Also, they perceive themselves as champions for diversity in their resistance of Christianity, all the while they are seemingly unaware of the fact that they rejected any allowance of diversity in thinking and point of view by refusing to engage in thoughtful dialogue in favor of merely shutting down those who think anything differently than them without really listening or responding to the points offered by those on the other side of the isle.

So, what do we do with this information? It is important that Christians keep in mind that we are not just answering riddles when presented with popular complaints against Jesus and Christianity. Sometimes we are responding to hearts that have become bitter toward the very idea of Jesus due to a flood of complaints they never even intended to get answers to, or they perhaps intended to not get answers to. We still need to provide answers as we are able and as it seems wise to us to do so, in a spirit of gentleness and respect, defending the truth to whatever extent we know it and can see it in reality, and remaining humble by realizing that we don't know everything but always have something to learn, even from atheists. Let us not fall into the same trap of failing to truly listen to and communicate with others who believe and think differently than we do and in opposition to the truth. However, we must also recognize there is a lot more taking place in these encounters than intellectual discussion. There is real spiritual warfare going on, and now we know that there is an emotional battlefield, as well. Finally, we must never allow someone else's bitter mentality to rub off on us and cause us to become bitter toward them.

In summary, this article exposes a fundamental weakness in the arguments of popular atheists against Christianity, the simple fact that there is often no argument there whatsoever, only attempts to attack Christians, Christ, and Christianity as a whole, in order to emotionally sway people away from

Jesus and the truth of the Christian Faith. We absolutely need to be aware of this tactic and to expose the lack of substance in this type of rhetoric leveled against Christianity. We also need to be aware of the spiritual nature of this intellectual and verbal warfare, remembering that the Scripture says,

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12),

and,

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:4-5a).

Now that we are equipped with all of these realizations and armed with the truth of God's Word, let us engage in this spiritual warfare wholeheartedly, as ambassadors for Christ, for the glory of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, in hopes and effort that we might win as many more as possible to the love and eternal life that He provides, so that they may escape the coming final judgement. Amen.

In considering this and preparing to engage in this spiritual warfare for the winning side, God's Kingdom, let us end by completing our look at the thought of the passage in 2 Corinthians 10:4-6, which we began above. It continues,

bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Therefore, let us remember as first importance that, when we engage in debate and dialogue with people who seek to oppose Christ and Christianity, our primary objective and responsibility is to call them to obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ and invite them to join our family by becoming His child and disciple, that they may thereby escape the judgement of all evil and sin and the wrath to come which will sweep away and consume all the children of disobedience. We are "more than conquerors" when we not only overcome sin for ourselves but when we take ground from the kingdom of darkness by winning people over to God's Kingdom of light and eternal life. See the Apostle Paul's sentiments in Romans 8:35-9:5 and in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, especially verses 19-21.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:3-5).

Amen.