



A Ten Minute Witness

Greg Koukl

The fisherman recounts an opportunity he had to use the rod and bait God has given us, and he didn't even have to leave his living room.

I had a conversation today that I wish you could have eavesdropped on. It was that precious. I was preparing for the show about an hour ago at my home and I heard a knock at the door. There was a gentleman who had something to sell. Fortunately, it was a bona fide product, it had genuine value to me. He wasn't knocking on my door offering me some lousy chocolate so that he could go to Disneyland and not spray paint my wall. No, it was the real McCoy. In fact, it was a product I had used in the past and I thought it was great, so he got three sentences into his presentation and I said, 'Hey, how much is it and where do I sign?' I had him come in and wrote him a check right then.

I had been lecturing two nights before at the Evangelical Free Church in Corona, talking about tactics in defending the faith. One of the questions that was asked in the Q & A afterwards had to do with boldness and getting out there, getting involved and actually using the things you are learning so you can hopefully win people to your faith in Jesus Christ.

I know a lot of times it is easier to sit in a class and learn about evangelism and defending your faith than it is to get out there and do it. That is why I always encourage people to take every opportunity they can to get out and mix it up, even if they don't think they are up to snuff on answering the questions and the issues. I will tell you, quite frankly, I don't always feel up to snuff myself. There are many circumstances I go into

that I just don't feel up to, either emotionally or intellectually.

You might think, 'How can that be? He's been doing this for years?' It's because there is a lot to know. Every time I step out, I still have to trust that God is going to use me and will work in the circumstance in just the same way that you have to do. My encouragement to the folks during the Q & A that night is to just step out and mix it up. Just get into the fray.

Begin by asking questions. Find some way into the conversation such that spiritual issues become a topic of conversation. Maybe you get beat up, maybe not; but it is the way to learn. It's the way to begin having an impact. You've got to start somewhere.

Today, as this gentleman came in, it just flowed very nicely. I saw a great opportunity to take ten minutes, which is all I had with this man, to tell him something about Jesus Christ. I didn't know how I was going to get into it. I didn't know if I was going to run into objections or obstacles. But it was wonderful the way it all turned out.

As I was filling out my check, he asked me something about sports and if I was watching the football game. I said no, I was studying.

He said, 'What do you do? Are you in school?'

I said, 'I'm in school, I teach in school, I run an educational organization, I host a radio show, and that is why I'm studying.'

'What school is it?'

'Simon Greenleaf University, a Christian school. I teach Apologetics. Do you know what that is?'

'No, I never heard of it.'

He was sitting on my easy chair in my living room. I'd already given him the check. He was looking at me.

'Apologetics is a field in which we defend the Christian faith. People ask questions, challenge Christianity, they think Christianity is mindless. My point of view is that if you are really mindful, if you use your mind and your reason, you will

become rationally obliged to become a Christian. The evidence is that good.'

It wasn't anything fancy, in fact that is about all that I had to say.

He said, 'Let me ask you a question. What mystifies me is that there are so many different religions in the world, there are hundreds of them, and everybody has a different idea about God. How could it be the case then that there is only one way to God?'

This is a classic question that's asked of Christians often. It seemed to him that the fact that many people believe different things was evidence that no one thing could be true.

He followed up with the comment, 'When I die I believe I will meet the God I believe in.'

I asked him a simple question, 'If there is a God and there is one God, then when we die we will meet somebody, right?'

'Yeah, that's right.'

'How is it that believing that God is Allah, for example, makes God into Allah when I die and meet him? Or if I believe he is Jesus, how does that make God into Jesus when I die? In other words, my belief before death doesn't cause what God is going to be after it. He is going to be what He is. The real question is whether my view of God is accurate or not.'

He nodded and said, 'I guess that is the question.'

I said, 'And if you understand that to be the issue, I guess that answers your question. How could there be so many religions? Easily, because people have different opinions. But it certainly doesn't follow from that, that all those opinions lead to God. In fact, either God is personal like the Christians describe, or He is a floating cosmic battery cell, some impersonal power or force in the universe. But I'll tell you one thing, He can't be both. If He can't be both, that means there are a whole lot of people that are simply mistaken in their belief. Now, the question you have to ask yourself is, is your belief about God correct?'

He nodded in understanding. That's when I made

the switch, because I didn't want to leave it, especially in a short encounter like this, just talking about philosophy and apologetics, or just talking about answering his questions. There was something more critical he needed to know about. This is not just an intellectual argument. I wanted him to understand about Jesus.

I will tell you a secret. I'm not always excited about getting to the Jesus part. Sometimes it is a lot easier for me to talk about ideas. Why? You can talk about ideas and get different opinions and, even though there are differing views, it seems somewhat safe. But when you start talking about Jesus, that gets personal. It is awkward even for me. I admit it. But I needed to get to Jesus. Why? This man wasn't going to be saved by my ideas. He could only be changed and influenced and forgiven through Jesus, so I had to get to Him.

I think Jesus had some things going for Him. Jesus said that He was God and that He understood spiritual matters. He said the choice you make about Him will determine where you spend eternity. It's one thing for a person to claim such a thing, it's another thing for someone to back it up. Look at Jesus. He gave the greatest moral teaching the world has ever seen. He worked miracles. He healed people. He raised people from the dead. When people practice His principles, they transform society for good. In fact, Jesus even predicted His own death, and in fact, died and self-consciously raised Himself from the dead. There's a guy who has some credibility.

What about Buddha? He's still in the grave. What about Mohammed? He didn't work any miracles. What about Krishna? It is not even clear that he even existed. But Jesus did and He changed the world. It seems to me if you are going to put your bets on some spiritual option, it is best to go with Somebody and listen to Somebody who has credibility. That is Jesus Christ.

He looked around my library and said, 'Gee, you've got a lot of books here. Guess you've got a lot of learning to do.'

I said, 'Yeah, there are a lot of things to learn. It is a life-long process. But the simple gospel is very simple. I'll tell you what that is. The simple gospel

is that you have sinned before God. You are a sinner. You know it.'

You might think, 'Boy, that's kind of bold.' But we were having a friendly conversation and I was telling him the truth and I wasn't being nasty about it. I wasn't condemning him. I was telling him something true about himself that he already knew. By the way, this is called the 'back of the book' tactic. Everyone has a sense of guilt. I know that because I've read the book that talks about everyone.

I said, 'You know it,' and he nodded his head. 'Jesus has come to make it possible for you to be forgiven. God is responding to your guilt with an offer of forgiveness. Now, you can receive the forgiveness that He offers through Jesus, you can bend your knee, you can ask Christ to forgive you, and then follow Jesus with your life. Or you can ignore Him, shine Him on and turn your back on Him, and then you stand before God when you die, guilty for your crimes and you will have to pay for them.'

He paused for a moment. I said, 'There is a lot to know but that is the beginning point. Everything else after that is learning. You learn how to apply this. How does this affect my life? How does this affect my marriage? How do I apply this in raising children? How do I apply this in my business? How do I understand these verses? How do I live before God? How do I know God? All of that comes and that is the lifelong process. But the basics, the fundamentals are very simple.'

That was my opportunity to tell him very clearly, very directly and very personally what this is about. Having removed his smoke screen, I answered a question he had about people and God and the person of Jesus. That's the same for me and you and everyone else. That is the real question that makes all the difference in the world. That is the only ultimate question that matters.

He said, 'Why is it that people reject that?'

I said, 'Well, I think it really comes down to one thing. It is not cultural. I've been in 23 different countries and it seems the same everywhere. The questions may be different, influenced by the culture, but the issue is still the same. The issue is

man's heart. Men don't want to bend the knee. They want to be captain of their own ship. They want to be master of their own fate. They don't know who they are or where they are going, but they think they can run things pretty much themselves. They don't want God sticking His nose into their business. They don't want God sticking His nose into their bedroom. They don't want God in their checkbook. They don't want God in their business life. They don't want God in their dating life. They don't want God anywhere. In fact, the only time they want anything to do with God is when they want something from God, or they want to complain to God for something bad that has happened to them. That's it. Other than that, get rid of God.'

That is the appeal of a lot of eastern religions. Low on responsibility, high on individual freedom. You don't have to bend the knee.

I ended with this, 'Why do people reject that? That's a question you can answer yourself. I don't know you. I don't know what your background is. Only you can answer whether Jesus Christ is the most important thing in your life, whether you are seeking to love Him and obey Him with your life. I suspect not. If that's the case, then my question to you is your question to me. Why do you reject Him?'

He chuckled and said, 'I was asking myself the same question.'

Well, that's the question and that's the question that I left him with. I gave him a copy of *Clear Thinking*, gave him a business card, and I hope he's listening.

If you are, I really enjoyed our talk together and I hope that it stays with you, and I hope you spend some time pondering the only question that really matters. Why don't you bend your knee to Jesus Christ and follow Him? You can walk away from Him. You certainly are capable of doing that because God gives you that right. But there will be a day of reckoning and He will hold you responsible for your decision. I hope you make the right one.