

MythBusters: Aren't all Religions Basically the same?

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Years ago our Lord said "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel." Well some of us did that real well, others didn't do too well and sort of let it slide. Well God said, I'm not going to wait anymore and if you Americans aren't going to go out into all the world, I'm going to send the world to you. And nowhere else is that more apparent than here in the Bay Area. In the past most people grew up surrounded by people who were either Christians or knew what Christianity was.

But nowadays with the entire world coming to Silicon Valley you can't spit without hitting an Indian or Hindu or a Muslim or a Buddhist or a New Age Devotee or a 7-11 owner or the founder of some new high tech company, and that means that they are at work with you, that they are living across from you, that **their** kids are going to school with your kids. That means that your kids are now going to be coming home and asking you: How come we aren't vegetarians? How come we do eat pork? Why don't we pray in a temple? How come we believe that Jesus is the ONLY way to God and everyone else in my class is going to HELL. That seems rather intolerant dad.

How are you going to answer them? How are you going to witness to that guy in the cube next to you? To your next door neighbor who brings their Hindu kids over for a play date? And why is our religion of Christianity better than theirs? And how is Christianity different? Why do we believe what we believe?

Today's being the last Sunday of the MythBusters Series we are going to deal with 2 Myths. The first is myth is **Aren't all religions basically the same?**
The second myth is : Isn't all Faith Blind and isn't the opposite of Blind faith - No Faith.

As we start, let me ask you this question: What sort of things must a religion have for it to be good religion?

How about: Kindness, A religion must teach kindness that's important isn't it.
Love, got to have love. How about Acceptance, Forgiveness, Eternal Life, 70 Virgins...OK I'm kidding about that.

But the truth is, those are all valid reasons for WANTING a religion, but they are not good reasons for choosing a religion. There is only one thing that you should use to judge and choose a religion: Do you know what that is?

Here's the one thing you should judge a religion by:

It is: Is it TRUE!

Is it true. There's really nothing else that counts.

You have to test each religion's claims the same way you would check out a used car or hire a babysitter

Eternal life is too important to squander on a religion that cannot stand the same type of tests that I would ask when screening my child's babysitter.

Having grown up in Africa and the Middle East speaking Arabic, I was exposed to a whole slew of various religions. From Islam to Hinduism to Zoroastrianism to Buddhism to Tribal Animism. In fact, while I was in Yemen, my closest American friends were the two youngest sons of 11 kids. Anyone want to guess what religion they were? Yes, Mormonism.

So today we are going to do a whirlwind review of some of the major Religions and see if they are all basically the same and compare and contrast them to Christianity. OK put on your seatbelts and listen fast.

Let's start with the religion that is lately of interest to all of us. Islam.

1: Islam

Mohammed founded Islam in 622AD. He was fasting one day in a cave in the desert and he said that God sent the angel Gabriel to him. The angel over a period of time proceeded to recite to him what became their holy book the Koran. Their fundamental belief is that you have to do 5 things to get into heaven.

They are called the 5 pillars.

1. Each Muslim must recite the profession of faith, Allah hu Akbar, Bismallahi Rahman hu rahim. La illallah, Mohamed rasulallah.

"In the name of God, most Gracious, most Compassionate, There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His prophet. Allah is great and Mohammed is His prophet".

2. He must pray corporately five times a day.

3. He must give the "zakat" which is a tax to help the poor.

4. He must fast from daybreak until sunset during the month of Ramadan.

And 5. He must go on a pilgrimage, to the holy city of Mecca. This is known as the Hajj.

In addition to this, Islam is based on a scale system. When you die God weighs your good deeds vs. your bad deeds and decides if you enter heaven. Although the only way to be sure is to die in Jihad, i.e. the struggle against evil.

When people came to Mohammed and asked him how he could prove that the Angel really talked to him he said: God made **ME** the Prophet. He told ME to show you the way - **I don't need to prove anything to you.**

First, I saw a vision, then the angel came to me in person. If God saw fit to speak to me that should be enough for you.

When I talked to my college friends in Yemen and asked them why they were Muslims, they would say **They say: The Koran tells me so and I believe it.**

I've heard interviews of Muslim converts usually prisoners who have embraced Islam. When you ask them why are you a Muslims,

Allah has changed my life and I have never been the same since.

Or when you ask a regular Arab Muslim why they think infidels should be destroyed they say: Our Mullah i.e. Priest told us.

List of reasons people give as to why they believe their religion:

1. Allah gave me a vision
2. Allah spoke to me
3. The Koran tells me so
4. Allah changed my life
5. It's what my mosque/mullah told me

2: Hinduism

Hinduism claims to be over 10,000 years old.

However, my father who is an expert on Hinduism and has written extensively on it travels believes that there is historical evidence that Hinduism is about 1800 years old. One piece of evidence is that it's primary books are written in Sanskrit which is a 2nd century AD language and secondly he shows Hinduism is actually a Gnostic Heresy of another religion...guess which religion Hinduism probably comes from?

...yes believe it or not, we can show that Hinduism is actually Gnostic Heresy of Christianity. Hinduism is what happens to Christianity when it becomes syncretistic and tries to become inclusive accepting all things.

In fact here's a chant inscribed on many Hindu temple walls with their translations.

Om Sri Brahma putra, Namaha

O God, Son of God, We worship you.

Om Sri Uma thaya, Namaha

O God, the Holy Spirit, We worship you.

Om Sri Kannya Sutha, Namaha

O God, born of a virgin, We worship you.

Om Sri Vish taya, Namaha

O God, who is circumcised, We worship you.

Om Sri Pancha Kaya, Namaha

O God, who has five wounds, We worship you.

Om Shri Verit Sula Arul Daya, Namaha

O God, who died on a tree to provide mercy, We worship you.

Om Sri Mirit Hu Jae-a, Namaha

O God, who overcame death, We worship you.

Om Sri Dakshina Murthy, Namaha

O God, who sits on the right hand, We worship you.

Tell me who that is describing.

But Hindu's don't believe in Christ or the resurrection, they believe that **Krishna, one of the avatars of God who came to show us the way** has told us in the Baghavat Gita that man lives, dies, and his soul called the atman reincarnates with a new body over and over again.

This can continue for all infinity. If you are good you reincarnate as a higher caste. If you are bad you first reincarnate as a woman and then you reincarnate as a lower caste. If you are still bad you end up as a Cow and you continue down the animal kingdom. On the other hand if you ARE a good enough person. You get to dissolve into the Brahma and become nothing. You get to leave this painful existence.

What I've always found fascinating in my study of the various religions is that in Hinduism one has to work very hard and diligently to rise to the point of dying and becoming nothing. However Atheists get to die and be nothing without any work. You can see the vast difference.

When I talk to Hindus and witness to them about reality of Christ's resurrection, they say: That's good for you. Krishna came to teach us the way to the Brahman God, **but** what ever you believe is **good** for you. Whatever you believe is **true** for you. **I believe Hinduism, so it is true for me.** You believe Jesus so that's true for you. As long as you believe it, that's enough for you.

Let's add that to our list:

List of reasons people give as to why they believe their religion:

1. Allah gave me a vision
2. Allah spoke to me
3. The Koran tells me so
4. Allah changed my life
5. It's what my mosque/mullah told me
6. **I believe it, that's enough for me**

3. Buddhism:

Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama.

Siddhartha was a young prince with a young wife. He had lived in a sheltered palace his whole life. And the first time he came face to face with sickness, death and poverty it was when he was 29. At this sight, he decides to leave all he has and seek the solution to life's pain. He spent many years seeking this until finally at the wise old age of...of...of... 35 he found the solution to life's problems and achieved what he called Nirvana, yes he named it after his favorite rock band. Nirvana was when the pains of life did not bother you.

He said to get to nirvana you had to follow the 8 fold path. This path basically teaches that to avoid pain and suffering in the world you just had to distance your self from everything and become a monk. True Buddhism even claims that there is NO God.

Buddha shows us the way to Nirvana via the 8 Fold Path

Growing up with Buddhist friends I would ask the why they were Buddhists, they would say well **my parents are Buddhist and essentially, I trust that they would not lead me wrong.**

Adding that to our list gives us:

List of reasons people give as to why they believe their religion:

1. Allah gave me a vision
2. Allah spoke to me

3. The Koran tells me so
4. Allah changed my life
5. It's what my mosque/mullah told me
6. I believe it, that's enough for me
7. **My parents are and I trust them**

4: Mormonism

Joseph Smith a young man in Palmyra New York was praying in the woods about which denomination to join. When suddenly God the father and Jesus the Son appeared to him. They were flesh and blood and fully human. They directed him to a set of gold plates buried in the hill Commorah. Joseph said the writing on the plates were reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics..

He said that he translated them using some translating stones call the ummin and the thummin.

He stuck the stones in a hat and stuck his face in the hat and as he did the English translation of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics became visible. The English was in Old King James English. He read the words and his friend Martin Harris wrote it down. That became the book of Mormon. Unfortunately, no one ever saw the plates though since God took them back when Joseph was done.

Joseph taught that they would become Gods over their own planet just like our God and you had to have multiple wives, and have celestial sex to populate your planet with your spirit children.

Blood Atonement

They believe that the blood of Jesus was not sufficient to wash away ALL your sins, so you have to work towards that salvation, and their second prophet Brigham Young even preached that sometimes if you were bad enough, your own blood had to be spilled for your salvation. "...when they have committed a sin that cannot be atoned for without the shedding of their blood? Will you love that man or woman well enough to shed their blood?"

One day a traveling Egyptologist approached Joseph Smith and asked him to translate a Papyrus with some tears in it that came from Egypt. When Smith saw the papyrus he got very excited. He said the Papyrus contained the actual handwritings of Abraham from the Bible himself. He immediately translated it and he published the book as the Book of Abraham. This slide is an actual drawing from the book of Abraham.



But unfortunately for Smith, historians located the actual parchment with Smiths own handwriting on it. Turns out the parchment is really a scrap of the Egyptian book of the dead. Not written by Abraham at all.

When I've shown this to Mormons they tell me that it doesn't matter what the evidence is, they still believe the book of Mormon is true **because they say you just have to have faith. They can feel it in their heart that it is true.**

So now we have:

List of reasons people give as to why they believe their religion:

1. Allah gave me a vision
2. Allah spoke to me
3. The Koran tells me so
4. Allah changed my life
5. It's what my mosque/mullah told me
6. I believe it, that's enough for me
7. My parents are and I trust them
8. I have faith
9. **I accepted the Book of Mormon, I feel it in my heart**

So that's our quick whirlwind tour.

First these are the 9 reasons people of other religions give to explain why they follow that religion:

1. Allah gave me a vision
2. Allah spoke to me
3. The Koran tells me so
4. Allah changed my life
5. It's what my mosque/mullah told me
6. I believe it, that's enough for me
7. My parents are and I trust them
8. I have faith
9. I accepted the Book of Mormon, I feel it in my heart

I've put the basic religions into a table:

	God	Exclusive	Heaven	Reincarnation	Grace or Works?
Islam	✓	✓	✓		Works
Hinduism	✓			✓	Works
Buddhism				✓	Works
Mormonism	✓	✓	✓		Works

OK what do you notice? Well first that all religions are **not** the same, they all have different ways to get to God and different gods and different concepts of what heaven is. Religions like Islam, Christianity, and Mormonism are exclusive in that they say everyone else is going to hell or something like it. Hinduism and Buddhism say there is no Hell or that life is hell and heaven is becoming nothing. Now it's true that they have some minor similarities like they are ALL based on works, but they are not similar in their core beliefs.

So in the first myth: Aren't all religions basically the same?

Well I'd say this myth is **BUSTED**

But having said that we need to determine which religion we should believe in. Remember your neighbor or the guy in the cube at work next to you? Why is his religion wrong and yours right? Are you just lucky that you were born a Christian?

So I've come up with 5 key tests. An appropriately so, we'll use the acronym TESTS for it. These TESTS show us both the differences between all religions and Christianity and show us what we should look for in a religion before we pick one.

The first T stands for Trust Me vs. Verify Me First

All other leaders said: Trust me. Don't ask for proof for it shows you are unworthy.

But Jesus said Verify Me. Then trust me. Need proof? Well I'll give it to you in just a second. Let us first look at the second point.

E stands for Emotional Blind Faith vs. Rational Proven Faith

Diabetes

Diabetes is a very tough disease. If you have diabetes, one of the things you have to deal with is the fact that your body does not produce insulin. Insulin is needed for your body to process sugar. There is a way to control diabetes; it's done by injecting insulin into your blood to make up for the lack of insulin. So everyday you have to give yourself shots of insulin. If you don't get the insulin, you will have lots of side effects and possibly go into a coma and die.

Now let me ask you this. Let's say you have diabetes? And one day I meet you just outside Safeway and I tell you:

Hi my name is Neil Mammen; I have a cure for diabetes. Do you want to be cured? And since you are not an idiot you say yes. Well that's great, so here's what you have to do to be cured of diabetes.

1. You have to pay me \$25
2. You have to stop taking your regular diabetes medicine and give it to me.
3. You cannot tell anybody that you have stopped taking your medicine.
4. You have to have faith in me
5. You have to take some of these pills that I give you.

Then I give you these pills that happen to look like M&Ms. No really they're for diabetes. Trust me. That m stands for Mammen.

OK How many of you would give me \$25 and stop taking your diabetes medicine?

But why not? I'm a great guy. I would never rob you blind and take your \$25 and give you 4 M&Ms. How come you don't trust me?

How come you don't have faith in me? How come you don't have BLIND faith in me?

Let me ask you this:

Is trust something you give blindly? No

Is faith something you give blindly? Do you blindly have faith in the first con man that comes to your door selling you something? No?

Ladies, do you blindly have faith in the first greasy man who offers to give you a ride in his car? Why not?

Exactly because faith and trust is something others have to earn. Faith and trust is something that you develop in others over time and only with Evidence.

Now let me ask you this. Let's say that you have diabetes you go to your doctor at the hospital. The Doctor is wearing a white coat and behind him on the wall are a whole row of plaques with all his degrees. He now turns to you and says: OK Mr. Johnson: We have this new pill that we are trying. It will allow you to stop having to take insulin shots, because it will give you the insulin you need orally. It's FDA approved after 10 years. So I want you to do this. I want you to stop taking your insulin shots and give them to me. Because you can't take both. Then I want you to try these pills for the next few days. Then he charges you 6 times as much as I was going to charge you. He gives you a bill for whopping \$150.

Would you trust him?

Of course you would? But why?

1. **Because** he had references that you could trust.
2. **Because** you know he works for the hospital, you know he has a reputation to keep.
3. **Because** he can show you evidence that the pills work for others.
4. **Because** you know that if he accidentally hurts you, you can sue him for millions of dollars.

So in this case are you having blind faith in the doctor? Absolutely not!

Are you have NO faith in the doctor? Not at all.

You are having SOME faith in the doctor.

You have faith that he's not out to make you sicker or kill you or take all your money for a quack treatment. (snake oil picture). You have faith that he isn't an idiot. You have faith that he's not absent minded and isn't mistaken you for a

pregnant lady? Or you have to have faith that he's not secretly having an affair with your wife and is trying to KILL you. OK you can tell that I've been watching 48 hours.

But you got to the point of having faith in him, after you had some good experiences with him. You have faith in him because he earned your trust.

Because the last few times he actually helped you.

Let me ask you this: Once someone earns your trust is that Blind faith?

No, it is a rational faith based on some solid evidence. So don't confuse rational faith with 100% proof. Rational faith is STILL faith, just like you STILL had to trust that Doctor with the pills, but it is Faith based on experience and earned trust. It is never 100% but it IS rational.

So let me say this very clearly: The opposite of blind faith is a Rational Faith.

This is like our Faith in God, there are some awesome mysteries of his nature that we may never be able to understand. We can understand the proof of Deity. Is someone claims to be God he'd better be able to prove it. That's the rational part.

Now ask yourself: if it's important that you have a rational faith in someone about your physical health for something that affects you in the **short** run? How much more important is it to have a rational faith in something that may have **eternal** consequences?

If it's important that you **NOT** blindly trust some weird tall Indian guy with a Jewish nose for a measly 25 dollars, why is it **NOT EVEN** more important that you **NOT** blindly trust someone about where you are going to go after you die?

You see in life you will run into religious people who think that religion is to be treated differently than your wealth or health.

1. They will tell you that you should never blindly believe a con man who tries to sell you a used car; **but then they will** tell you to blindly believe some strange New Age teacher with a thick Indian accent like Deepak Chopra. Who says things like: Let me tell you Life is terminal disease that is sexually transmitted.

And everyone thinks he's very wise... it's supposed to be a joke.

2. They will tell you that you should never let your kids talk to strangers; **but then they will** tell you that they believe that what their Psychic said to them last week.

3. They will tell you that you should never buy a used car without having it check out by a mechanic; **but then they will** tell you that these group of guys with "The Secret" on Oprah are telling the truth. Even though it's not a secret and hasn't worked in the past. Even that not working part isn't a secret.

No I have no idea what that car salesman has in his teeth.

But wait Neil, you say. We have to treat religion and faith differently from our health? And without faith it is impossible to please God. Well in that case let me ask you this. First what KIND of faith is the Bible talking about?

Thagees

In India there used to be a cult of Hindus called the Thagees, the movie Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom was made about them. So was the movie Gunga Din back in the 30's. The Thagees believed that their Goddess Kali who is the Hindu Goddess of death required them to strangle someone to achieve nirvana.

So why are they wrong if all you need is blind faith? They have more blind faith in Kali than we have in Jesus. They are willing to go outside their comfort zone to kill someone. We are afraid to even go out of our comfort zone to save someone - from hell. Why are they wrong and you right? What's the difference?

Remember Rajneesh, Jim Jones, and David Koresh and all the religions we just covered? What is common amongst all the people who followed these guys? Two words: **Blind Faith**. In all this, none of the followers of these men asked their leaders for proof that God was really talking to them. Or what the men said was true. And if any proof was given to them it was proof that could be falsified.

You see if you have blind faith, you have no basis for your faith except for a very strong feeling about it. And as we know in the case of Jim Jones, Rajneesh and David Koresh et al, these people had very strong feelings and were very sincere about their faith. In fact, many of them were more sincere than we Christians are in our faith.

But at the end of the day their faith was still what? **Blind.**
And at the end of that day their faith did what for them? It killed them.
And the end of the day their faith did the worst thing ever. **It sent them to hell for all eternity.**

So do you agree that you can have blind faith in the wrong things?

So let me ask you this?

If you have Blind faith how do you know that as a Christian what you believe in isn't as invalid as what the followers of Jim Jones believed in?

Are you just lucky that you ended up believing in Christ?

In fact let me ask you this, is there any case that you can think of where blind faith is a good thing?

How about in picking the person who baby-sits your kids?
How about the preacher who says that you shouldn't go to the doctor for your diabetes, just stay at home and pray.
How about the preacher who teaches you new things that aren't in the Bible that he claims God told him?

In none of these cases is blind faith a good idea.

Now it is true that blind faith may not always kill you. But it's not the way we live our lives is it. It is not practical and we have learned that it is dangerous. Remember the opposite of Blind faith is not NO faith, but Rational Faith.

Rational Faith is faith based on facts, experiences, research, logic, and discernment.

Blind Faith is based on feelings.

Remember feelings are not bad, it's just that they should not come first. How many people do you know that felt they were in love and married the wrong guy? For crying out loud some women claim to be madly in Love with Scott Peterson, who is in jail for murdering his wife and baby son. Tell me that rationality should not come first and then feelings. Love is not enough, despite what the Beatles thought.

So we see: **Blind Faith is a Bad Idea**

Now let me ask you this: We know we should not have blind faith. We know that if we have blind faith, it can kill us, or cause us to lose money or be ripped off.

But can you think of a reason why it's important to you why **others** should not have blind faith? Let me ask you that again. We've seen how blind faith is bad for us. But is there a good reason besides compassion why we need to make sure other people don't have Blind Faith? After all why do we care what others believe in? Let them believe what they want. Especially if they live half way around the world?

Well here's one reason why we do care what **others** believe?
9-11.

You see not only is someone else's blind faith bad for them, but it can also be very bad for us. In fact, I would suggest that whenever people have blind faith, wherever they may live, whatever it may be that they believe it is very dangerous for everybody else in this small easy to travel world. Blind faith is dangerous because it can easily lead to fanaticism.

So our next main point is:

Blind Faith is Dangerous - even when others have it

So let me ask you this? Do you have blind faith in Christianity? Do your kids have blind faith in Christianity? How do you know Christianity is true? How do your kids know that Christianity is true? What happens when someone in college challenges their faith? I had a close friend who grew up in an evangelical church just like this, was a firm believer. But one day she started dating a Mormon and then decided to become a Mormon. How will your kids be protected?

If you are here today and NOT a Christ follower? I have a tough question for you if you don't mind? It's the same question I'm asking the Christians here. Why do you believe in that other religion or no religion? Is it blind faith? Is it based

on feelings? Haven't you known situations where your feelings have misled you before? How many times did you think you were in love, and this WAS the one, only to find out that you were wrong? How many times have you been angry at someone, only to find out that you had misunderstood the situation? Are you mistakenly angry at God? Are you sure you know the whole story?

You see I'm convinced that I can prove to you that there is only one religion that will stand the test of time. There is only one religion that will prove itself to be worthy of your belief. There is only one religion that is from God and can prove it is from God.

That is Christianity.

You see unlike ALL the other religions **Christianity isn't a Blind Faith, it's a Rational Faith built on a Logical and Historical Foundation.**

It's just that most people don't realize this. Not even most Christians.

How can I say Christianity is Rational? Well rather easily. There are many reasons. One of them is that Christ did the silliest thing in the history of any religion. Do you know what he did?

He made a claim that could be tested.

He claimed to be God, he claimed he would prove this by rising from the dead.

Contrast this to other leaders who refused to prove anything.

This is just one of the many verses that are in the Bible that show this.

In Matthew 9:2-8

Some friends of a paralytic bring their friends to be healed. Jesus says: Your sins are forgiven. But the Pharisees start muttering. So Jesus says to the crowd: Anyone can say your sins are forgiven. But to **prove** to you that I have the authority to forgive sins. Get up take your mat and go home. At this, the man did so. When the crowd saw this they believed and praised God.

There are lots more verses like this (see the appendix)

So we can see that **Blind Faith was refuted by Jesus**

OK let's look at Paul the Apostle:

He says in effect in 1 Cor 15:14

If there is no resurrection of the dead and
if Christ did not physically rise from the dead
then our faith is in vain

and we of all people are idiots to be pitied. (OK I added the idiots part)

So we see that: **Blind Faith was refuted by Paul**

In the Old Testament God condemns the Jews for blindly believing in Idols they themselves had made.

God says: I brought you out of the land of Egypt, I parted the red sea, I destroyed the Egyptians to show you I am the Creator of all things and I prophesied things to you so you could not say that your idols of wood and metal did them. Yet you blindly follow idols that you made with your own hands. Then he punished them by sending in the other nations to destroy and kill them and take them into exile.

Why because they blindly believed in false gods, never stopping to ask if the evidence God had provided to them proved him to be the only God.

Remember too that we were to test the prophets if they were wrong, we were to stone them.

There're 100's of verses that prove this concept.

So we see that **Blind Faith is considered un-Godly and was punished by Him.**

Remember: there is no question about Christianity to which the answer is ever –Just have blind faith. NEVER say that. Especially never to your kids or to someone who is curious about Christianity.

"I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason and intellect has intended us to forego their use." - Galileo Galilei

Bertrand Russell an Atheist said this of us:
“Christians would rather die than think. In fact many do.”

Some people say well if we knew God existed for sure then it wouldn't be faith. But that doesn't make sense.

Remember Abraham and Moses and Enoch met God in person and so they knew God existed for sure and yet they are all in Hebrews 11 in the great Hall of Faith as some of the people with the greatest faith.

So let us look at our second myth: Isn't all faith blind faith? NO
The opposite of Blind Faith is reasoned faith not No faith.
This myth is busted.

The opposite of Blind Faith is Rational faith.

OK back to our Tests and differences.

The S in TESTS stands for Show the way vs. Be the Way

If you remember, all the other teachers said they came to show us the way. We have to follow their teachings to be saved or to achieve nirvana or to become nothing.

But Jesus – Jesus didn't come to SHOW the way. Jesus didn't come to make sure we LEARN the way. Jesus didn't come to LEAD the way . What did he come to do?

He came to BE the way.

Without Jesus there is no Christianity. You can teach the love of Jesus all day long, but if you don't have the death and resurrection you don't have Christianity. Without the blood of Christ there IS no way.

This are not my words, I can show you the string of early Church fathers who were disciples of St John and Peter who were at the Council of Jerusalem in AD51 who all say the same thing as the Gospels.

The last T in TESTS stands for Told Them vs. Physically Experienced

The followers of each of the other religions died for what their leader told them.

But Christianity is different. Yes, all the disciples suffered greatly for what they believed, and all but one were killed in horrible violent ways. But here's the question: did the apostles die for what they were told by Jesus and believed? Did they die just for something Jesus said? Did they die for Jesus' teachings?

No they didn't! They died for what they **physically experienced themselves.**

See the difference. In all other religions, the first followers died for what their prophet or leader told them. The prophet or leader could have been a con man or misguided and the followers would not have known the difference.

But not in Christianity

In all other religions they died for **THEIR PROPHET OR LEADERS'** witness.

In Christianity, the disciples died for the **THEIR OWN** witness, that they'd personally seen the Risen Christ.

In all all other religions they died for what they heard **SOMEONE ELSE** say.

In Christianity, the disciples died for what they **PERSONALLY** saw and touched.

In all other religions they died for what their **MASTER** said that he had personally experienced.

In Christianity, the disciples died for what they said **THEY PERSONALLY** experienced.

There is a world of difference.

Nobody would be stupid enough to die for a lie that they themselves had created.

And finally for the last S in TESTS: There only 2 kinds of religions in the world. Self-Serve and Full serve

All other religions are self-serve. You have to WORK your way to God. Christianity is the only full serve religion. God does all the work. There's nothing you can do to earn salvation. You can't be good enough, kind enough, loving enough. It's full serve. Why is this important? Because you can't control the masses if you can't make them work for their salvation. No one is in control in Christianity it's between you and God.

Remember that list of 9 things that we slowly built up? It's why most people believe their religion.

1. **Allah gave me a vision**
2. **Allah spoke to me**
3. **The Koran tells me so**
4. **Allah changed my life**
5. **It's what my mosque/mullah told me**
6. **I believe it, that's enough for me**
7. **My parents are and I trust them**
8. **I have faith**
9. **I accepted the Book of Mormon, I feel it in my heart**

Josh McDowell did a survey of Christians and Christian kids; he asked them why they were Christians. Can you guess what the top 9 reasons most people gave. YES they were the same 9 reasons.

1. **God gave me a vision**
2. **God spoke to me**
3. **The Bible tells me so**
4. **Jesus changed my life**
5. **It's what my church/pastor told me**
6. **I believe it, that's enough for me**
7. **My parents are and I trust them**
8. **I have faith**
9. **I accepted Jesus, I feel Him in my heart**

It's the same 9 reasons. Just change Allah to God or Jesus. The Koran to the Bible.

You see to tell the truth these may be good reasons to start to look at Christianity, but they aren't valid reasons to REMAIN a Christian. They are all subjective and if they were valid reasons then you have no reason to say that Hinduism or Islam is wrong?

So there had better be other reasons to stay a Christian. There had better be objective reasons. Even when Paul the apostle had a vision, he still went back and confirmed it with the Old Testament prophecies. And he also did research into the historicity of the physical resurrection of Jesus as we see him quoting historical creeds that date **before** the time he got saved.

Pastor Tere Johnson told me that you have about 100 kids in your Junior High and High School Groups.

I'm going to give you some statistics here that are going to shock you. And it should scare you. Josh McDowell's research shows that 96% of Christian kids will abandon their faith when they get to College. The major reason they cite is that their professors and peers challenged them intellectually and since they could not respond, they abandoned their faith. My wife and I met another young gal who grew up in a church just like this, she went on mission trips, was in Bible Studies, even led them, but whenever she asked her parents tough questions about God or philosophy they'd say: You shouldn't ask such questions. You need to pray for faith instead. Now she says she's abandoned her faith.

So parents: Of the 100 kids in Sunday School today, statistics say that only 4 of them will stay Christians. Yes, that's just four. Will they be your sons or daughters? Or someone else's? Does this alarm you? It should. Be afraid. Be very afraid.

Oh sure you may say "but I know their faith is strong." Yes, their faith may be **EMOTIONALLY** strong. It may even fall under one of those 9 items we listed.

But those 9 items are the same 9 items that the 96% of the kids who aren't Christians anymore said they USED to have too.

You see your kids may be subjective emotional Christians and they'll stay with the faith while they are living in your home and coming to this church. But when they get to college, there are 1000's of new things to quench the fire, to compete with their first love and to give them new emotions.

Emotions can be replaced with new emotions.

Emotions can be replaced with false emotions.
Emotions can be affected by hormones.
Emotions can be affected by circumstances.

BUT facts don't change. Objective reasons don't change. Today as you drive home from church. Why don't you ask your kids why they are Christians? And if they give you one of those same 9 reasons, maybe it's time you gave them something different, something they can count on not to change even when their circumstances or emotions change?

What is that you ask? It is called Apologetics. We need to teach our kids Apologetics in our home while they are young.

With apologetics we can change **4 staying with the faith to over 75.**

How many people would like to do that?

What is apologetics? Most of you, of course know this, but let's cover it anyway.

Apologetics is the evidence and defense of the Rational Faith of Christianity using Facts, Logic History, Science, Philosophy, and Reasoning.

It's the OTHER reasons why you should be Christian. And it's the primary reasons why you should remain a Christian even if your feelings change.

If your kids know apologetics, 75 out of a 100 of them will stay with the faith.

Now here's the reason I'm talking about this in a Church well known for its yearly apologetics series. You see you can't just rely on your church to protect your kids and you can't blame the church for not doing enough.

Josh McDowell's research shows that this Church cannot change that number from 4 to 75.

Your pastor cannot change that number.

Their Sunday Schools cannot change that number.

Their Bible Studies cannot change that number, nor can their Youth counselors change that number. Only 2 people can change that number. YOU know whom those 2 people are don't you? Yes it's mom and dad. Only you parents can change that number.

You know why?

Because the church only has a 17% influence on your kids.

Peers, school and the Media, like MTV have 26%.

That means we parents have a whopping 57%.

What does this mean? It's quite simple.

With the church teaching apologetics but not the parents, you have this.

Church Positive 17% parents 57% neutral world 26%

So it's the worlds 26% against the Churches' 17%. The world wins.

But if you parents know apologetics and if you **ARE** involved in apologetics and training **YOUR** kids in **YOUR OWN** home you get this

Church + Parents Positive 74%

World: with a feeble 26%

Look at the difference.

So I'm going to ask you for a commitment today. This church unlike most churches spends an entire month on apologetics every year. You have a wonderful Pastor here who really understands this need. You won't believe how many other pastors don't.

BUT I want to ask you to develop a culture of Apologetics in your home.

Even if you don't have kids, our compassion and love insists that we have an answer to the Muslim and the Hindus who are our friends too. We need an answer for them as well. For they too are our loved ones. Make Apologetics as integral a part of your faith as reading the Bible and praying..

I then want to ask you to commit to not only attending every one of these apologetics sermons in these next 4 weeks, but you may even want to consider having your older kids and non Christian friends in here too. Last year I invited 3 Hindu Friends to hear Greg Koukl speak.

But I also want to ask if you would do one more thing. Make one more commitment for me. Will you commit to coming and bringing your kids to the California Christian Apologetics Conference with Lee Strobel and Greg Koukl. It's coming up on September 7th and 8th, a Friday Evening and all day Saturday.

It's only \$10 for kids in Junior High and above and \$40 for adults. They will train you to be able to show using facts, historical evidence and science why Christianity is a rational faith and teach you how you can immunize your kids from the world. You can sign up today at the back. They have a special session for Junior High and High School. I'll be teaching them how to answer "Where did God come from." And no I don't get any money from them. I just think it is very very critical for our nation and our children. There is also an email list at the back table that you can sign up for that will alert you whenever an Apologetics speaker is in the area.

And once you go to that conference I want to ask you to commit to taking the materials from the conference and using it to continue to teach your kids daily to immunize your kids against the world. Creating a culture of apologetics at home.

By the way, if you are not a Christ follower and are visiting us here today, I would like to invite you to the conference as well. Especially if you are a skeptic and are visiting here today. In fact if you come and stay for the whole conference I will personally pay for you to come to it.

And if you know a skeptic at work, invite him and offer to pay for him.

The a group of Atheists on the web, challenging Christian kids in something they call the Blasphemy Challenge. They are asking teens from Christian families to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. They ask them to say that "Through basic observation of the world around me and logical thinking I've come to the conclusion that is no God."

1000's of kids did that. Most of them under 16 years old. Your kids are being attacked in your own home on the internet. Are you going to be ready? And no the answer is not to ban YouTube. You have to deal with it head on.

We need to immunize our kids against the world. In fact make it a project to prove that Jesus really existed using Historical books besides the Bible.

The reason Brian Flemming the atheist in that challenge has fodder is because many Christians blindly believe their beliefs. They don't realize that we believe in the Bible because it is TRUE and can be proven to be historically accurate.

They don't realize that we believe in God because we can PROVE that he exists scientifically historically and rationally.

And most of all they don't realize that we believe in Jesus Christ because there is historical evidence besides the Bible that will stand up in a court of law to show that he existed, physically died and physically rose from the dead. And in fact some of the speakers in the weeks to come will be addressing exactly that.

So the question is: Do you kids know this? Do your kids know this well enough so that they won't get persuaded by their professors? Do YOU know it well enough to teach it to your kids and your neighbors?

Thank you.