

# Rules for Religious Discussions

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: 1 Peter 3:15

It is incumbent upon all Christians to be ready to teach others. Our text describes teaching that is done in the course of a discussion. How do we make the best use of our opportunities to discuss the Scriptures with others?

## Be Willing to Defend the Truth

- Paul, as an apostle, was “appointed for the defense of the gospel” (Philippians 1:16) – all Christians must be “ready to make a defense” as well (1 Peter 3:15)
- God does not force us to do anything – anytime we have an opportunity to defend the truth in a religious discussion, we have a choice to be silent, defend the truth in the wrong way, or defend the truth in the right way

## Speak the Truth in Love

- Choosing to speak in defense of truth is essential – but it must be done with the right attitude (Ephesians 4:15)
- We must have love for God and teach to bring glory to Him (1 Peter 4:11); love for the truth by teaching all of God’s word without additions or subtractions (Acts 20:27; Revelation 22:18-19); and love for the souls of men, desiring them to know the truth and be saved (1 Timothy 2:4)

## Always Appeal to Scripture

- We are to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11) – to lead people to faith, we must make our appeal to the source of faith, the word (Romans 10:17)
- If people are to believe our message, they must recognize it as being from God (1 Thessalonians 2:13) – cite book, chapter, and verse; need to study to be able to do this (2 Timothy 2:15)

## Build upon Common Ground

- Paul used common ground as a foundation when he taught others – with the Jews in the synagogue he agreed on the inspiration of the OT (Acts 17:2-3); with the Gentiles on Mars Hill he agreed with the need for religion (Acts 17:22-23)
- In discussions with people, find common ground to build upon – belief in God, inspiration of the Bible, need for authority, simplicity of NT Christianity, etc.

## **Do Not Be Quarrelsome**

- “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome” (2 Timothy 2:24) – of course, this don’t mean we can’t contend for the faith (Jude 3) or refute error (Titus 1:9)
- When we fight against error, we must fight fair – don’t use personal attacks (Jude 8-9), attack arguments (2 Corinthians 10:5); don’t think we need the last word (Titus 3:10-11); use the weapon that God has provided (Ephesians 6:17)

## **Don’t Take Personal Offense**

- When we try to teach people, they may not listen; they might argue, reject or oppose what we say
- It’s easy to take this personally – don’t (Luke 10:16); shake the dust off our feet and move on (Luke 10:10-11)

## **Conclusion**

- The only way people can be saved is through the gospel (Romans 1:16)
- So we should take advantage of opportunities to engage in religious discussions
- As we do so, let’s be careful to do it the right way and avoid doing it the wrong way