

# Sign Post 6: The Path

## THE QUEST

- \*A quest is a search for something of great value, an adventure in pursuit of a treasure.
  - \*A quest is a longing that God has placed in our hearts, Ecclesiastes 3:11
  - \***WHAT YOU BELIEVE AFFECTS THE CHOICES YOU MAKE.**
- THE CHOICES YOU MAKE DETERMINE THE PATH YOU TAKE.**

## Review

### Signpost 1 – The Quest

What you believe determines where you go in life

### Signpost 2 – The Beginning

What you believe about creation determines who you view yourself and life.

### Signpost 3 – The Word

What you believe about the bible determines how you live your life

### Signpost 4 – The Question

What you believe about God's goodness defines your relationship with Him.

### Signpost 5 - The King

What you believe about Jesus' identity determines your path in life.

## HOW DO WE RELATE WITH PEOPLE WHO DON'T BELIEVE THE WAY WE DO?

- \*No other religion offers this sort of intimate connection with the founder. Muslims can't have a relationship with Mohammed: they must follow the Five Pillars of Islam. Followers of Buddha can't relate to their founder personally; all they can do is embrace his teachings.
- \*Christianity alone offers the followers of its founder the opportunity to be in a constant, personal, real time relationship with God Himself through the person of Jesus.
- \*We live today in a multicultural, pluralistic society where there are many competing ideologies and worldviews.
- \*If we want to show people the way we can't take the stance – "I'm right and you're wrong, deal with it." mentality and attitude.
- \*One quarter of the world is considered Christian. One quarter of the world is Muslim. That is 60% of the population of the world. Just of global stability, Christians and Muslims need to figure out a way to show mutual respect.

### □ Live at Peace with everyone – Romans 12:18

### □ There is truth in other religious and belief systems.

\*There is common ground. All truth is God's truth. Truth is truth no matter where it is found. There is truth in Islam, Hinduism and even atheistic worldviews. This does not mean that all of these belief systems are equally valid. We need to not be threatened by truth outside the Bible, for all truth is a reflection of the Holy Creator God.- **Psalm 19:1-2**

\*It doesn't cost us anything to agree on truth within other belief systems. It doesn't cost us anything to agree that there is a problem (that all belief systems have to answer) we just disagree on the solutions that these belief systems put forward.

\*This is how we engage the culture, taking it on its own terms. We claim truth wherever you find it and use it to lead others to the truth of Jesus – the source of all that is good, true and beautiful.

**"If Christians, Muslims and Jews are at each other's throat, nobody is the world is safe." Brian McLaren**

### **Romans 12:18 (NIV)**

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone

### **Psalm 19:1-2 (NIV)**

(1) The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. (2) Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

## EXAMPLES

\*Take for example **Paul** in the book of **Acts 17:16-34** in dealing with the Greeks.

- ◇ Paul is mad at what he sees in Athens—the culture was all screwed up—v. 16
- ◇ Paul talks about Jesus in the Marketplace—v. 17
- ◇ They take Paul to their meeting Place—v.19
- ◇ Paul shows respect for their belief and uses their own teachings to talk about Jesus—v. 22
- ◇ Paul gets three different reactions—v. 32 Unbelief & Scorn, Another meeting, Belief

\*Successful witnessing is telling the truth of the gospel and leaving the results up to God. It is not our job who receives and how they receive it, our job is to present the truth in love. – **1 Peter 3:15-16**

\*Look at **Jesus** at how he dealt with other beliefs. The Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. Here was a woman who was hurting, callous and for good reason by how she was treated and her past. But Jesus answered her hard and sarcastic responses to His statements (John 4:9,15) with truth but no accusations, no judgment, no anger, just honestly and love. He never lets her off the hook, he pursued her because of love and that she was worth it (lost people matter to God.)

\*Jesus was constantly being accused of being a glutton and a drunkard (Matthew 11:19) because he hung out with them – and here is the thing – they wanted to hear what he had to say – and he was telling them the truth, showing them a better way.

“for in him we live and move and have our being.” Cretan poet Epimenides (600 BC)  
“We are his offspring” Cilician poet Aratus in 315-240 BC in his Phaenomena, as well as Cleanthes (331-233 BC) in his Hymn to Zeus

## WHAT BAD IMPRESSION DO CHRISTIANS LEAVE?

- ◇ Hypocrisy – Christians often focus on particular sins such as homosexuality, while they are committing other egregious sins in their own lives. Pride is spoken against 119 times in the bible.
- ◇ Christians don’t take their religion seriously. Why don’t they read, study, pray and follow the bible if they really believe it is a word from God?
- ◇ Christians often criticize us for not having good reasons for what we believe, but when pressed; they can’t provide evidence for their own beliefs. Ignorant. They should be at least consistent and admit this. (buy the book “Know what you Believe” and “Know why you Believe” by John Stott.)

## WHAT BLIND SPOTS DO CHRISTIANS HAVE?

- ◇ Christians are often rational in all areas of their lives, but they leave their brain stems at the door when they enter the church.
- ◇ Christians notice the faults in others but not in themselves.
- ◇ Christians often discourage questions once they have the truth. In fact, knowing the truth tends to silence further inquiry.

## HOW CAN CHRISTIANS IMPROVE THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH THOSE WHO DON'T BELIEVE?

- ◇ Listen
- ◇ Have a more open dialogue
- ◇ Stop looking at those who don’t believe as alien or that they are wearing a scarlet letter.
- ◇ Don’t associate beliefs with the person. Christians often get defensive when they are criticized.
- ◇ Stop making slanderous remarks about non-believers. No cheap shots.

## NOTES:

### Acts 17:16-34 (NIV)

(16) While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. (17) So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. (18) A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. (19) Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? (20) You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean." (21) (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.) (22) Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. (23) For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you. (24) "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. (25) And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. (26) From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. (27) God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. (28) 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' (29) "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone--an image made by man's design and skill. (30) In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. (31) For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead." (32) When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." (33) At that, Paul left the Council. (34) A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.