



“True Tolerance for the Contradictory Claims of World Religions”

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Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

Matthew 7:13, 14

Building Bridges for Broad Chasms

1. It is simply wrong to say that all world religions basically say the same thing.
 - Islam
 - Buddhism
 - Hinduism
 - Judaism
 - New Age Spirituality
 - Christianity
 - Atheism
2. The major world religions do not affirm the same thing in several important areas.
 - The nature of God
 - The nature of humanity
 - The questions of meaning morality and eternal destiny.
3. Truth is by nature exclusive Christianity is not the only religion to affirm exclusive claims of truth.
4. True (biblical) tolerance has to do with our acceptance of people not every idea.

5. In discussions about religious claims, it's important to distinguish between "matters of taste" and "matters of truth". (Mortimer Adler, *Truth in Religion*.)
6. If we say Jesus is the only way, are we condemning people to hell?
7. What about those who have never heard about Jesus Christ?

He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. Acts 17:26, 27

See also Romans 1:18-23; Romans 2:15-16.

8. How do we offer an effective defense of the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ?
 - Reasonable explanations of truth
 - Generous expressions of grace

Resources for your further study:

The Case for Faith, Lee Strobel. Zondervan, 2000.

Four Views of Salvation in a Pluralistic World, Dennis L. Okholm & Timothy R. Phillips, editors. Zondervan, 1996.

Apologetics, An Introduction, William Lane Craig. Moody Press, 1984.

Jesus Among Other Gods, Ravi Zacharias. Word, 2000..

For your LIFE GROUP:

1. Can you describe in your own words the difference of being tolerant of all people, while not accepting every idea? Why is this a helpful distinction?
2. Again in your own words, what is the difference between matters of "taste" and matters of "truth"?
3. You can see from this study why it is important to have a broad grounding in the scriptures. What areas of knowledge do you need to grow in to be a more effective witness for the claims of Christ? What will you do about that?
4. Read the following verses and identify the unifying theme about becoming an effective communicator of the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ.
 - 1 Peter 2:(9-11)12; Titus 2:6-8; 3:8, 14; Matthew 5:16