

LIVING WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED AND TEACHING BY THE WAY WE LIVE

By EW

EW is a Middle Eastern Christian who has been ministering in the Arabian Peninsula for many years. He is actively involved in sharing Christ with Muslims and discipling those who believe.

Discipleship is living out what we have learned, and teaching by the way we live. The ultimate goal of discipleship is that we reflect the image and character of Jesus. When our Muslim friends receive Jesus as their personal Saviour, they have many confusing ideas in their minds about God, the Christian community, their new faith, and many other related things. These central issues needed to be handled with care.

Their Understanding of God

What your friend believes or thinks about God varies according to his circumstances and an understanding of this will determine the appropriate response. For example, if he thinks that 'God loves me when I am a good person and He punishes me when I am a sinner', then you need to speak to him about the love of God which doesn't change with time because He is a God who does not change and has no shadow of turning (James 1:17). Proclaiming the love of an unchanging God is a brilliant truth for our Muslim friend because this is the first time he has heard this teaching. It is a truth which dazzles him, secures him in his faith, and opens his mind to receive the holy word with joy.

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Their Understanding of the Christian Community or the Community of Believers

Muslims often think that the Christian community 'is a dirty community that drinks alcohol and eats unclean pork and is openly permissive in its relationships.' Inviting your friend to your home, introducing him to your wife and children, and sharing with him a meal in your house is a language that speaks stronger than words. He accepts it easily and this will leave with him a testimony about the truth of our faith and may even change his mind towards believers. This is advice has been around from the time of Henry Martin.

Their Understanding of their New Faith

Your Muslim friend has lived all of his life under rituals and laws for worship and prayer. He fasts one month each year and prays 5 times a day because it is

expected of him. When he becomes a Christian, he will begin to hate that lifestyle and faith practice. Why? Two of the chief reasons are the abundance of laws and special systems of the Muslim faith, and because he doesn't see any change in his life or actions as a result of following them.

During discipleship, the majority of questions will be practical questions such as: How do you pray? Do we pray towards Jerusalem? What is the method of worship, standing or sitting? The answers to these questions are very important to him because these are foundational points of the Muslim faith which he has learned from childhood. Here it is necessary to teach him what the Word of God says regarding these questions and the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 and 6 is the strongest teaching on this topic. This passage will show him from the Word of God what Jesus personally said about prayer and fasting.

The main question here is: 'Are you among the believers who don't fast?' You will find difficulty in explaining the importance of fasting, so any instruction or explanation that you give should also be reinforced by how you fast and live. And pray that this new believer will see and understand the truths of God's Word through your example.

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