

# The Case for ... The Church of God Vs Christmas

Rockin' around the Christmas tree by Brenda Lee 1958 (13 years old)

*...You will get a sentimental feeling when you hear  
Voices singing, let's be jolly  
Deck the halls with boughs of holly!*

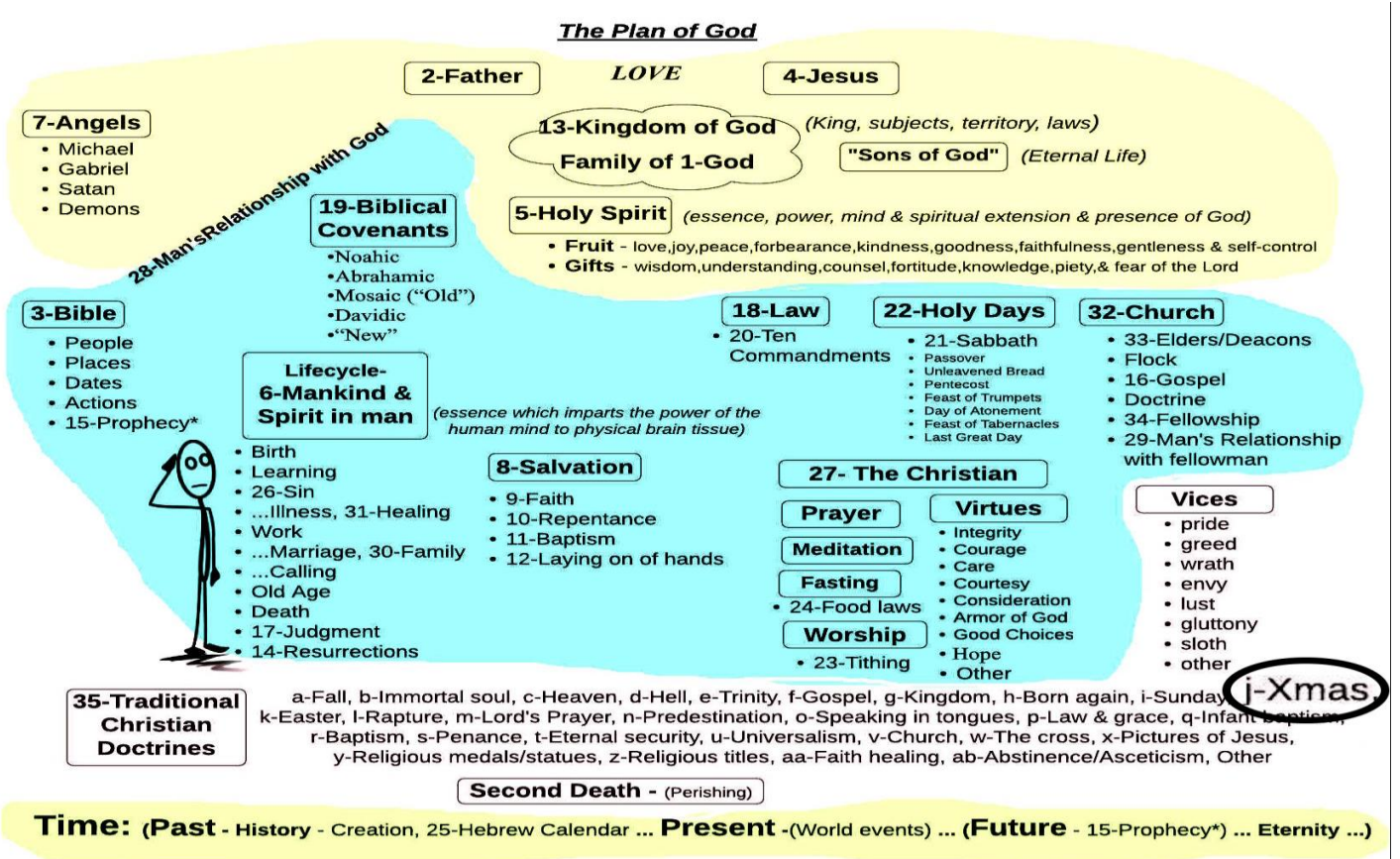


**Sentimental** refers to ...an emotional response that is deeply influenced by feelings of tenderness, affection, or nostalgia. It often involves an emphasis on emotions over logic or practicality, & it may include a tendency to idealize or romanticize situations, people, or memories.

**Nostalgia** is ... a sentimental longing or affection for the past (*good ole days*), often idealized or romanticized. It typically involves positive memories and emotions, such as happiness, warmth, or comfort, associated with a time, place, event, or experience from one's earlier life. Key characteristics of nostalgia include:

- Strong Emotional Connection
- Selective Memory
- Triggers

Nostalgia is a common & complex emotion, playing roles in identity, coping, and connection to others. It can offer comfort, foster resilience, and strengthen social bonds, but excessive nostalgia might also hinder one's ability to engage fully with the present.



## Doctrinal Statement on CHRISTMAS

Christmas is neither Christ's birthday nor a celebration Christians should observe. It is not mentioned in the Bible & in no way is an original Christian practice. As any encyclopedia will confirm, Christmas is an ancient pagan celebration, which predated Christianity, but was renamed & given new meaning when it was adopted into the professing Roman Universal (Catholic) Christian Churches. The Church of God movement recognizes references such as Jeremiah 10 are specifically about "idol worship" (rather than a Christmas tree tradition), but the curious practices today of yule logs, wreaths, & decorating Christmas trees is foreign to Scripture & more akin to characteristics of ancient sun worship & tree worship via evergreens.

**Deuteronomy 12:30–32; Jeremiah 10:2–5**

**Deu 12:30-32** take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do **not** inquire after their gods, saying, '**How did these nations serve their gods?** I also will do likewise.' You shall **not** worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He **hates** they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons & daughters in the fire to their gods. **Whatever I command you**, be careful to **observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.**



**Jer 10:2-5** Thus says the LORD: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them. For the customs of the peoples are futile; For one cuts a tree from the forest, The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They decorate it with silver and gold; They fasten it with nails and hammers So that it will not topple. They are upright, like a palm tree, And they cannot speak; They must be carried, Because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, For they cannot do evil, Nor can they do any good."

CGI.org - 16 links/pages

Refuting Christmas

Christmas Deception

Exposing Christmas

What's Wrong With Christmas?

- Should Christians Observe Christmas?

Christmas: Why Not?

Unwrapping Christmas

The Real Christmas Story

UCG - 831 links/pages

Is Christmas Really Christian?

When People Say, "Have a Merry Christmas,"

How Should You Respond?

- *Would Jesus Celebrate Christmas?*

Quitting Christmas

Why Some Christians Don't Celebrate

Christmas

The Story of Christmas

Christmas: Is It Really "Glory to the Newborn King"?

When was Jesus Christ born? Was Jesus born on December 25 - Christmas Day?

- The Top 10 Reasons Why I Don't Celebrate Christmas

LCG.org - 1470 links/pages

Is Christmas Christian?

- Christmas: Harmful to Children?

What Should We Do About Christmas?

Why Christmas?

- Why Satan Loves Christmas

Is Christmas a Pagan Holiday?

CgiCanada - About 100 items

WCG - About 435 items

## The “Cold Hard Facts” ... about Christmas... a “pre-Christian” pagan festival

*"Cold hard facts" refers to ... objective, undeniable truths or information that is based on evidence and not influenced by emotions, opinions, or personal biases.* These facts are often concrete, verifiable, and cannot easily be disputed or altered. The phrase suggests that the information is straightforward and often harsh, as it is not swayed by interpretation or perspective.

### **1. Date of Celebration (December 25th)**

December 25th is not mentioned in the Bible as the birthdate of Jesus.

Early Christians chose this date to coincide with Saturnalia, a Roman pagan festival honoring Saturn, the god of agriculture, and Dies Natalis Solis Invicti (the "Birthday of the Unconquered Sun"), a celebration of the sun's rebirth after the winter solstice.

### **2. Winter Solstice Traditions**

Many pre-Christian societies celebrated the winter solstice as a time of renewal & the return of light. Pagan customs, such as feasting, lighting candles, & decorating homes with evergreens, were part of these solstice festivities & were later integrated into Christmas traditions.



### **3. Evergreens and Yule**

Decorating with evergreens (such as holly, ivy, and mistletoe) was a pagan practice symbolizing eternal life. The Yule log, originating from Norse pagan traditions, was burned during winter solstice ceremonies to honour the sun and bring warmth and light.

### **4. Gift-Giving and Feasting**

The practice of exchanging gifts and holding feasts during Christmas has roots in Saturnalia, during which Romans exchanged gifts and indulged in revelry.

### **5. Santa Claus's Origins**

Santa Claus evolved from several influences, including St. Nicholas, a Christian saint, and Odin, the Norse god. Odin was said to ride a flying horse during Yule, delivering gifts or punishments.



### **6. Christian Adoption of Pagan Symbols**

Early Christian leaders often repurposed pagan customs and symbols to make Christianity more appealing to converts. For example, the Christmas tree may have its roots in tree worship, common in various pagan traditions.

### **7. Timing of Christmas Celebrations**

The Eastern Orthodox Church initially celebrated Jesus's birth on January 6th (Epiphany). December 25th was chosen later to overlap with pagan festivities, reinforcing the holiday's connection to solstice celebrations.

### **8. Caroling and Wassailing**

The tradition of singing carols stems from pagan practices of wassailing, where people sang and danced in honor of the gods and to bring good fortune. These connections illustrate how Christmas has been shaped by both pagan and Christian influences, blending elements to create the modern holiday we recognize today.

### **9. The Festival of Saturnalia**

Saturnalia, celebrated from December 17–23, was a Roman festival marked by gift-giving, feasting, & role reversals (e.g., slaves & masters switching roles). Many of these customs



influenced the later celebration of Christmas, particularly the focus on joy, revelry, & generosity.

### **10. The Influence of Mithraism**

Mithras, a Persian deity, was worshipped by Romans, and his birthday was celebrated on December 25th as part of the Dies Natalis Solis Invicti.

The association of Mithras with the sun and rebirth made his festival an attractive time for early Christians to align with the birth of Christ.

### **11. The Twelve Days of Christmas**

The "twelve days" likely draw from the pagan Yuletide festival, celebrated by Germanic and Norse peoples. Yule lasted around twelve days, during which communities feasted, honored gods like Odin, and celebrated the changing season.

### **12. Lighting Candles and Fire Worship**

The use of candles and fires in Christmas traditions mirrors pagan solstice practices that honored light during the darkest days of the year.

Bonfires, candles, and Yule logs were symbolic acts to "rekindle" the sun's strength.

### **13. Mistletoe and Fertility Rituals**

Mistletoe was sacred to the Druids, who believed it had magical properties.

It was used in fertility rituals and as a symbol of peace and protection. The custom of kissing under the mistletoe has its roots in these pagan fertility traditions.

### **14. The Christmas Tree**

The practice of bringing evergreen trees indoors originated with pagan traditions.

Ancient peoples, such as the Celts and Germans, decorated trees as symbols of life and rebirth during the winter solstice.

### **15. Bell-Ringing & Noise-Making**

Bells and loud noises, common in Christmas celebrations, stem from pagan practices meant to ward off evil spirits during the solstice.

### **16. Holly and Ivy**

Holly was considered sacred in many pagan traditions and associated with protection and eternal life. Ivy, often paired with holly, symbolized rebirth and regeneration. These plants became popular Christmas decorations because of their enduring symbolism.

### **17. Epiphany and Pagan Water Rituals**

Epiphany (January 6th) commemorates the arrival of the Magi. In pre-Christian cultures, this time marked water-related rituals tied to purification and the changing seasons.

### **18. Feasting on Roasted Meats**

The Christmas feast, particularly the tradition of roasting meats like ham, has roots in Norse Yule practices, where the boar (symbolic of fertility) was sacrificed to Freyr, god of prosperity.

### **19. Christian Intent to Supplant Pagan Festivals**

The deliberate choice of December 25th & the incorporation of solstice traditions were part of a broader effort by early Christians to make the new religion more appealing to converts by aligning with existing cultural celebrations. By adopting & adapting these traditions, Christmas became a syncretic holiday that blends Christian theology with widespread pre-Christian customs.





... do people often ignore facts ...  
to instead **hold onto** false ideas?

**1. Cognitive Dissonance** - When facts contradict deeply held beliefs, people experience **mental discomfort** (cognitive dissonance). To reduce this discomfort, they may reject the facts and reinforce their existing beliefs. *(ie Pharisees & Jesus' Miracles)*

**2. Confirmation Bias** - People tend to seek out, interpret, and remember information that supports their preexisting beliefs while ignoring contradictory evidence. This bias strengthens false ideas because individuals **selectively absorb** only what aligns with their views. *(Israelites Rejecting the Spies' Report)*

**3. Identity and Belonging** - Certain beliefs are tied to personal or group identity. Rejecting these beliefs can feel like betraying one's community, culture, or sense of self, leading people to ignore evidence that challenges their group's narrative. *(Jewish identity)*

**4. Emotional Attachment** - Beliefs often carry emotional significance. Letting go of a cherished belief can feel like losing a sense of security, hope, or purpose, making it easier to dismiss facts. *(Abraham offers Isaac)*

**5. Fear of Change** - Accepting new facts may require people to change their perspective, behavior, or worldview, which can be unsettling or intimidating. People may resist change by clinging to false ideas. *(Lot's Wife)*



## **6. Misinformation and Echo Chambers**

Exposure to misinformation, especially through social media or biased sources, reinforces false ideas. **Echo chambers**—where people only interact with like-minded individuals—amplify this effect by excluding opposing views. *(Eve & the serpent)*

**7. Authority and Trust in Sources** People tend to trust authority figures or sources they perceive as credible. If those authorities promote false ideas, followers may ignore factual evidence from other sources. *(Israel demands a king)*

**8. Overconfidence in Knowledge** - The Dunning-Kruger effect explains how individuals with limited knowledge overestimate their understanding. This overconfidence can lead to dismissing facts because people mistakenly believe they already know the truth. *(Job's friends)*

**9. Simplification of Complex Issues** - Complex topics can be overwhelming or difficult to understand. False ideas often offer simpler, more intuitive explanations that feel easier to accept than nuanced truths. *(Why the man was born Blind)*

**10. Fear of Being Wrong or Embarrassed** - Admitting a belief is wrong can be embarrassing or feel like a failure. To avoid this, people may double down on false ideas despite contrary evidence. *(Parable of the Talents)*

**11. Social and Political Pressure** - People may hold onto false ideas to align with the beliefs of influential groups, leaders, or ideologies. Challenging these ideas might result in social ostracism or political repercussions. *(Crowd choosing Barabbas)*

**12. Motivated Reasoning** - People often process information in a way that supports their goals, desires, or interests. This "motivated reasoning" can make it easier to dismiss facts that conflict with personal objectives. *(Saul sparing King Agag & livestock for sacrifices?!?)*

**13. Emotional or Moral Intuition** - Sometimes, false ideas resonate with people's emotions or moral intuitions, even when they contradict facts. People may feel that the belief "feels true" emotionally, regardless of the evidence. *(Disciples' fear during storm)*



**14. The Power of Repetition** - The illusory truth effect shows that repeated exposure to a statement increases its perceived truthfulness. Even if a statement is false, hearing it repeatedly can make people believe it over time. *(Annual Holy Days)*

**15. Distrust of Experts or Institutions** - Skepticism toward governments, scientists, or the media can make people dismiss factual information. This distrust often stems from past experiences, misinformation campaigns, or conspiracy theories. *(Israel ignoring Prophets, Moses, Jesus)*

**16. Perceived Threat to Worldview** - New facts can challenge someone's core worldview or philosophy, which can feel destabilizing. To protect their worldview, people may reject evidence that conflicts with their existing understanding of the world.

### **17. Social Proof and Herd Mentality**

When many people believe something, others are more likely to believe it too, regardless of the facts. Social proof creates a sense of consensus, making it harder for individuals to question widely held false ideas. *(Exodus 23:2 - "You shall not follow a crowd to do evil")*

**18. Lack of Critical Thinking Skills** - Many people are not taught or encouraged to question information critically. Without these skills, they may lack the tools to assess evidence and identify falsehoods. *(Acts 17:11 - Bereans of more noble character than Thessalonians)*

### **19. Propaganda and Manipulation**

False ideas are often deliberately promoted through propaganda, which uses emotional appeals, repetition, and misinformation to convince people. Skilled manipulation can make falsehoods seem more credible than facts. *(John 8:44 Satan is father of lies)*

**20. Nostalgia for the Past** - False ideas often appeal to a romanticized version of the past, creating a sense of comfort and familiarity. People may cling to these ideas to preserve their sense of identity or cultural heritage. *(Stephen's Martyrdom)*

**21. Perceived Personal Benefit** - False ideas that align with someone's personal or financial interests are more likely to be embraced, even if they're untrue. *(Parable of Unjust Judge)*

**22. Skepticism About Motives Behind Facts** - People may distrust facts if they believe the messenger has ulterior motives (e.g., political agendas, profit-seeking, or control). Even valid information is dismissed when its source is seen as biased or self-serving. (*Scribes, hypocrites*)

**23. Anchored By Early Education or Upbringing** - Beliefs instilled in childhood are deeply ingrained and shape how people interpret the world. Early education or cultural indoctrination can create mental frameworks that resist new facts. (*Prov 22:6 - Train up a child*)

**24. Lack of Accountability** - In many cases, there are no immediate consequences for holding false beliefs, allowing them to persist unchecked. Without accountability, people may not feel the need to confront or correct their misconceptions. (*Eccl 8:11- sentence not executed speedily*)

**25. Overemphasis on "Freedom of Belief"** - Some people interpret the value of personal freedom to mean all ideas are equally valid, dismissing factual evidence as an attempt to impose on their freedom to believe what they choose. (*Narrow gate*)

**26. Groupthink & Peer Pressure** - In tightly-knit groups, dissenting from the majority can feel risky or isolating. To maintain harmony, people may suppress doubts and align with the group's false ideas. (*Gal 2:11 Peter's hypocrisy*)



**Truth is** ... the quality or state of being in accordance with reality, facts, or actuality. It refers to something that is consistent with objective reality or a set of facts, and is often considered to be accurate, verifiable, and free from distortion or falsehood. Truth can apply to various contexts, including statements, beliefs, events, and ideas, and is often contrasted with falsehood or deception.

**2 Thessalonians 2:10-12** And with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because **they did not receive the love of the truth**, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who **did not believe the truth** but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

**2 Peter 3:5** "For this they **willfully forget** (*KJV= **willingly are ignorant***): that by the word of God the heavens were of old, & the earth standing out of water and in the water..."

**2 Timothy 4:3-4** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will **turn their ears away from the truth**, and be turned aside to fables."

**Isaiah 30:9-10** That this is a rebellious people, **lying** children, children who **will not hear** the law of the Lord; Who say to the seers, 'Do not see,' and to the prophets, 'Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.'

**Jeremiah 5:31** "The prophets prophesy **falsely**, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people **love to have it so**. But what will you do in the end?"

**Romans 1:25** "Who **exchanged the truth of God** for the **lie**, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."



## **Methods to influence people to *OVERCOME* false ideas they may cherish**

Overcoming deeply cherished false ideas requires tact, patience, and understanding. Here are effective methods to influence people toward reconsidering their beliefs:

**1. Build Trust and Rapport** - Establish a respectful and empathetic relationship before discussing contentious ideas. People are more likely to listen to someone they trust and who they feel understands them. *(1Thes 5:11 - Encourage & build up one another)*



**2. Use Socratic Questioning** - Ask open-ended questions that encourage critical thinking without being confrontational. Example: “What evidence helped you form this belief?” or “How would you respond to someone who interprets the evidence differently?” *(Matt 22 Whose son is the Christ?)*

**3. Start with Shared Values** - Find common ground to show you’re aligned on core principles, even if you disagree on specifics. This reduces defensiveness and fosters a collaborative environment for discussion. *(1Cor 1:10 - no divisions ... same mind)*

**4. Focus on Empathy, Not Argument** - Acknowledge the emotional and personal significance of their beliefs. Example: “I can see why this belief is meaningful to you. Can we explore its basis together?” *(Good Samaritan)*

**5. Present Information Gradually** - Introduce facts or perspectives incrementally rather than overwhelming someone with too much at once. This makes the new information feel less threatening and easier to process. *(1 Cor 3 - Milk not solid food - you are not ready)*

**6. Use Stories and Analogies** - Stories are more relatable & memorable than raw data. Share narratives or analogies that illustrate the facts in a way that resonates emotionally. *(Parables)*

**7. Appeal to Curiosity** - Frame discussions as a journey of discovery rather than a debate. Example: “Have you ever wondered why experts interpret this issue differently?” *(Proverbs 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal things)*

**8. Use Credible Sources They Trust** - Share information from sources they already respect or are neutral to their worldview. If possible, present evidence endorsed by authorities within their belief system. *(Paul reference to statue of an Unknown God)*

**9. Model Intellectual Humility** - Show a willingness to acknowledge areas of uncertainty or admit when you don’t know something. This sets an example of openness to new information and reduces the perception of confrontation. *(Philp 2- in humility count others more significant)*

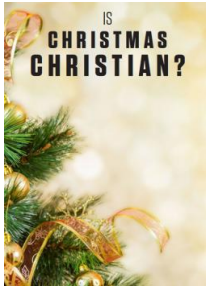
**10. Avoid Direct Confrontation** - Attacking someone’s beliefs often leads to defensiveness & entrenchment. Approach with curiosity & focus on understanding. *(Harmless as doves)*

**11. Normalize Changing Beliefs** - Reframe changing one’s mind *as a strength* rather than a weakness. *(Repentance is change)*

**12. Address the Emotional Root** - Understand the emotional needs driving the false belief (e.g., security, belonging, or identity). Addressing these underlying needs can help loosen the attachment to the belief. *(Mat 9:36 Jesus’ compassion for the harassed & helpless sheep with no shepherd)*



**13. Provide Positive Alternatives** - Offer a replacement narrative or framework that fulfills the same psychological needs as the false belief. Example: “Scripture doesn’t speak of Xmas ... but it does talk of God’s Holy Days!”



**14. Use Visual Aids** - Graphs, charts, or visual examples can be more persuasive than verbal arguments alone. Visual representations often make abstract ideas more concrete & understandable.

*(Eg a Booklet or video)*



**15. Encourage Independent Research** - Suggest that they investigate the topic themselves, providing credible resources. Example: “Here’s an interesting article I read; I’d love to hear your thoughts on it.”

*(1Thes 5:19 - Prove all things)*

**16. Create Cognitive Dissonance Gently** - Present contradictions in their belief system subtly, encouraging them to notice inconsistencies on their own. Example: “How do you reconcile this belief with this other idea you hold?”

*(Romans 7 - Paul’s inner conflict)*

**17. Highlight Consensus** - Emphasize the consensus among experts or within their community to reduce feelings of isolation.

*(Acts 15 Jerusalem council)*

**18. Leverage Social Proof** - Show that others, especially people they respect, have changed their minds on the issue. Example: “This influential figure used to believe the same thing but later found compelling evidence to think differently.”

*(John 4:39 Samaritan woman’s words)*

**19. Use Humor Carefully** - Humor can disarm tension & make difficult topics more approachable. Avoid sarcasm or mockery, as it can alienate rather than persuade.

**20. Be Patient** - Changing deeply held beliefs takes time and often requires multiple exposures to new information. **Plant seeds of doubt.**

*(Peter walking on water)*

**21. Focus on the Process, Not the Outcome** - Encourage critical thinking as a skill rather than targeting a specific belief. Example: “How do you usually evaluate what is true?”

**22. Practice Active Listening** - Make them feel heard by repeating back their arguments and showing genuine interest. This builds goodwill and makes them more receptive to your perspective.

*(Luke 24 - Road to Emmaus - Jesus asks What things?)*

**23. Show the Real-World Implications** - Highlight the consequences of holding false beliefs in a compassionate way. Example: “This belief might seem harmless, but it could lead to decisions that aren’t in your best interest.”

*(1Cor 15-If no resurrection you are still in your sin)*

**24. Use Incremental Challenges** - Start by addressing smaller, less emotionally charged misconceptions before tackling core beliefs. This helps build a foundation of trust and openness to change.

*(Abraham’s pleas for Sodom)*

**25. Create a Safe Space for Discussion** - Ensure the conversation feels nonjudgmental and supportive - not attacking.

*(Jesus & Nicodemus)*

**26. Appeal to Their Identity as a Learner** - Frame changing beliefs as part of being an informed, open-minded person. Example: “You’ve always struck me as someone who values learning and growth.” (*Prov 1:5 increase in learning*)

**27. Share Your Own Journey** - If applicable, share a personal story about how your beliefs changed over time. This humanizes the process and shows that growth is possible and normal. (*Acts 26 Paul’s defense before King Agrippa*)



**28. Avoid Binary Thinking** - Present nuanced viewpoints that allow for partial agreement or incremental shifts. Example: “You don’t have to accept everything at once—what do you think about this one aspect?” (*Rom 14 - welcome weak - vegetarian or meat eaters*)

**29. Reinforce Progress** - Acknowledge even small shifts in thinking as meaningful progress. Example: “I appreciate how you’re considering different perspectives. That’s really important.”

**30. Encourage Critical Thinking Tools** - Introduce methods like fact-checking, recognizing biases, and evaluating sources. Example: “How do you usually decide if something is reliable? Here’s a technique I’ve found helpful.” (*1John 4:1 Test the spirits*)

### **31. Acknowledge the Appeal of the False Idea**

Recognize what might make the false belief compelling and validate that perspective before presenting alternative evidence. Example: “I can see why this idea is attractive—it feels simple and reassuring.” (*Matt 24:24 Beware of signs & wonders*)

**32. Emphasize the Benefits of Correcting Misbeliefs** - Highlight the practical or emotional advantages of letting go of the false idea. Example: “Understanding this differently could lead to better decisions or less stress.” (*Prov 27 - Faithful are the wounds of a friend*)

**33. Address Group Dynamics** - If the belief is reinforced by a group, explore ways to influence the group as a whole or address their collective norms. Example: “Do you think this idea represents what the group stands for, or could it evolve?” (*Acts 6 Daily distribution*)

**34. Deconstruct the Foundation of the Belief** - Help them identify the assumptions underlying their false idea and assess whether those assumptions hold up. Example: “What’s the core idea supporting this belief? Do you think it’s still valid?” (*Matt 5 - You heard it said - But I say...*)

**35. Promote Lifelong Learning** - Frame changing one’s mind as part of being a lifelong learner. Example: “The more I learn, the more I realize how much there is to rethink—that’s what makes it exciting.” (*Prov 2 - Search for wisdom*)

By combining these strategies, you can create a supportive and persuasive environment that **encourages openness & critical thinking**, helping others move past false ideas without feeling threatened or judged.

### **Bad choices People make ...**

**Smoking ... Unhealthy Diets... Credit card abuse ... UnSafe Driving Practices ...  
Substance abuse ...Overexposure to the Sun... &**

**... Religious Deception & choosing religious error ...**