

How To Settle Any Disagreement Between Two Christians in 35 Easy Steps

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First Rule:

Don't be quick to quarrel. If you are, you're a fool. If you're a fool, don't expect to get wisdom. Even if it's pounded into you, you probably still won't get it.

Proverbs 20:3 "It is a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel."

Proverbs 23:9 "Do not speak to a fool, for he will scorn the wisdom of your words."

Proverbs 27:22 "Though you grind a fool in a mortar, grinding him like grain with a pestle, you will not remove his folly from him."

Titus 3:9-11 "But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, but these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; his is self-condemned."

Second Rule:

If you have to contend on a point, do it in love for mutual edification. If you do it to build yourself up, you're a fool.

Romans 14:19 "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification."

I Thess. 5:11 "Therefore encourage each other and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

Third Rule:

Only Truth can be trusted. It is rare and pure and only comes from God. Any man-made thing will burn off in the fire. Focus on the eternal. See the big picture.

Romans 1:25 "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator -- who is forever praised. Amen."

I Corin. 13:9-11 "For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me."

Ready? Ok, here we go.

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1. Are we in agreement that we are going to seek Truth so as to build each other up, not to just win an argument?
Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop talking RIGHT NOW. What were you thinking? Is this the best you can do with your time?
2. Are we in agreement that this is something that has eternal consequences on our souls or on those around us?
Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop wasting time on it and go preach the Gospel.
3. Are we going to love each other no matter how this discussion turns out?
Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop talking now and get on your knees and pray to be more like Jesus.
4. If we find that we are in the wrong, are we going to change our ways in keeping with the Truth we found?
Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop talking. What's the point of talking at all if you're unwilling to change anyway?
5. Do we agree that the Bible is the Word of God?
Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop talking. At least one of you is probably not a Christian.
6. Do we agree the Bible is absolute and pure Truth?
Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop talking. You're not going to get anywhere if there is no baseline that all can agree upon.
7. Do we agree that there is no person, denomination, philosophy, opinion or belief, no matter how pervasive or common, that overrides the Word of the Bible?
Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop talking, at least one of you has violated the First Commandment.
8. That is, do we agree that the Bible is MORE true than anything from any other source, even our own personal experience?
Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop talking. See # 7.

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9. Again, do we agree that there is not anything ELSE that shares the SAME level of authority as the Bible? That is, nothing just as good.

Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop talking. See # 7.

10. Do we agree that there may be questions for which we will not be able to know the final answer until we can ask Jesus in person?

Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop talking. At least one of you is too arrogant and short-sighted.

11. Are we willing to concede that it's a possibility, however remote, that this argument could be one of those?

Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop talking. See # 10.

12. Are we willing to speak slowly, calmly, humbly and pray continuously that nothing that comes out of our mouths will be anything other than the Truth in love?

Yes _____ No _____ If not, probably ought to stop talking. Likely it will go badly.

13. Are we willing to quietly listen to the Holy Spirit as we work this out together, even if He says something we don't like?

Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop talking, at least one of you doesn't understand who is really in charge.

14. Are we willing to pray honestly and earnestly before we start talking to ask that God control and direct this discussion?

Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop talking, one of you is relying on your own power instead of God.

15. Are we willing to stop immediately and walk away if it turns out either of us didn't really mean any of the above?

Yes _____ No _____ If not, stop talking and start at the top again and pray harder. Or let it go.

OK, if you got this far, there's a pretty good chance you both love Jesus. This could still go badly, so be VERY careful.

16. Clearly state the true point of contention in as simple and pure a form as possible:

17. List Bible verses in agreement:

18. List Bible verses in disagreement:

19. Do we agree that these are all quoted in context and appropriate to the discussion at hand?

Yes _____ No _____ If no, negotiate through those verses in as much detail as possible.

20. Do we see a clear winner in the argument right now?

Yes _____ If yes, then one of you needs to adjust their actions accordingly. Maybe even repentance is in order. Pray together and thank God for His love and mercy shown to you and that He cared enough to send someone to lovingly correct you. Thank God that you were used by God to bring this word of reproof or instruction. Both pray that you will be able to learn from this process and be better at it next time.

No _____ Proceed below.

21. Is there non-Biblical information that needs to be included?

Yes _____ Really? Are you sure you need to be talking about this? Couldn't you wait and do it in heaven? If yes, proceed.

No _____ Good for you. Skip to # 28.

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22. Just as a double check, do you both agree non-Biblical information of any sort is secondary to Scriptural authority?
Yes _____ No _____ Shoot! You've messed this all up! Start over at the top. We were doing so well, too!

23. Can you both agree on the non-Biblical information included and it's needfulness and validity to resolve this issue?
Yes _____ OK then, keep moving.
No _____ BE VERY CAREFUL! This is where things always start falling apart.

24. List the non-Biblical evidence that is in agreement by both:

25. If there is non-Biblical evidence that is in disagreement:

26. Is there Scripture that specifically counters, rebukes or otherwise nullifies ANY of the non-Biblical evidence. List it:

27. Do we see a clear winner in the argument right now?

Yes _____ Then one of you needs to adjust their actions accordingly. Maybe even repentance is in order. Pray together and thank God for His love and mercy shown to you and that He cared enough to send someone to lovingly correct you. Thank God that you were used by God to bring this word of reproof or instruction. Both pray that you will be able to learn from this process and be better at it next time.
No _____ Proceed below.

28. Is everybody still smiling and speaking carefully and prayerfully?

Yes _____ Good for you! Jesus is SOOO happy! He's knows this is hard. Keep moving.
No _____ Stop right now and drop it - or, if you both agree, pray and calmly start again. Anger, bitterness and pride are of the enemy.

29. Are you so worn out by this process that you'd just like to drop it?

Yes _____ Wait! You said it had "eternal consequences" to somebody's soul! Maybe you should stick it out. (Unless you've come to see it really doesn't.)
No _____ Ok, then keep moving.

30. Is everyone clear on where everyone stands and what the evidence is?

Yes _____ No _____ If no, then go back and try to talk through the areas of confusion. Maybe it's because evidence provided is "proof texted" and not really about the issue at hand.

31. Is it possible there is other important information out there that needs to be found and included?

Yes _____ Table this until that information can be gathered. Pray that the Holy Spirit would guide you to find it.
No _____ Wow, that's kind of a strong assertion. But if you both agree, OK then, keep moving.

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32. If there is no other information out there and you're still not in agreement, you should pray to see if there is any human obstacle placed in the way of Truth - like pride, selfishness, laziness, disobedience, sin, factions, etc. Praying together would be best, but table it and pray individually if you agree that would be fine. Take as long as you need and mutually agree to. Listen to the direction of the Holy Spirit very carefully. If it has "eternal consequences" it's worth handling right - even if it doesn't go as fast as you'd like. Wait on the Lord. Be willing to change if you're the problem.

Did that help and settle the issue?

Yes _____ Great! Wasn't that fun? Then one of you needs to adjust their actions accordingly. Maybe even repentance is in order. Pray together and thank God for His love and mercy shown to you and that He cared enough to send someone to lovingly correct you. Thank God that you were used by God to bring this word of reproof or instruction. Both pray that you will be able to learn from this process and be better at it next time.

No _____ Wow. This is a tough one! Ok, keep moving.

33. Does one or both of you believe the other one is stubbornly refusing to face reality and what has clearly been laid out in front of them?

Yes _____ There you go. That's the problem. Somebody's not being loving (probably both). Start over and mean it this time. Pray harder to be like Jesus.

No _____

34. Is it possible that this is one of those things to which we just won't know the answer until we ask Jesus in person?

Yes _____ Then let's just leave it there and go preach the Gospel. Don't spend any more time on it and don't let it divide you.

No _____ That's awfully strong. Maybe you should seek council from others who have lots and lots of discernment and clearly hear God (as evidenced by the positive fruit in their lives). NOTE: That's not necessarily seminary graduates or people that have written books. Keep moving.

35. Is it resolved?

Yes _____ Then one of you needs to adjust their actions accordingly. Maybe even repentance is in order. Pray together and thank God for His love and mercy shown to you and that He cared enough to send someone to lovingly correct you. Thank God that you were used by God to bring this word of reproof or instruction. Both pray that you will be able to learn from this process and be better at it next time.

No _____ Nothing left to be done but to keep praying for wisdom. God always honors that. Don't pray the other person will see it your way. Pray that you will both have wisdom and find Truth. Check back on the topic as agreed, but don't push so hard. If it has eternal consequences God is highly motivated to help you resolve it. Be holy and clean. That always helps.

NOTES:

What did we learn? _____

What do we need to do differently next time? _____

Did we repent of everything necessary and leave on good terms? _____
