

WHY CAN'T MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY GET IT?

Great question. There is almost nothing more frustrating than coming into the full knowledge of what the Torah is and what a blessing it is to follow God and keep His commandments only to have your family shoot it, and you, down. You go from having a pretty good relationship to feeling like you now have some rare disease whose only remedy involves them arguing with you and treating you like a black sheep.



Sometimes sharing new beliefs that are contradictory to other people's belief systems feels like trying to get a one-year-old to eat broccoli. Most of it ends up on the floor and both the giver and prospective receiver end up crying. And ultimately the one-year-old wins because the broccoli goes uneaten.

But what if we've been doing it all wrong? And, I mean, **ALL** wrong. Here is a typical conversation between someone who is beginning to discover her Christian roots and someone

she's excited to share the news with. We'll call the woman "Beth" and pretend she's talking to her mother:

Beth: Mom, you are not going to believe what I have been learning these past few months.

Mom: Oh yeah, what?

Beth: I watched a video called "Truth or Tradition" a while back about the origins of Christmas and Easter and learned that both holidays are actually pagan and satanic in origin. Santa Claus comes from the Baal of the bible, the god that Yahweh hated and is the sun god from all over the world. And Easter is the Ishtar of the bible...I think it was Baal's wife or sister or something. She was a bare-breasted goddess...

Mom: Bare breasted? What?! Beth, the kids are listening...

Beth: Mom, listen! This is serious! Ishtar was the one that started dying Easter eggs and Santa Claus ends up being her husband when it's all said and done. And the Catholic Church is in on the whole thing! The whole Vatican is in the form of a phallic symbol and...

Mom: Okay, Beth, that's enough. STOP!

Beth: Mom, you gotta see this. It's life-changing! We've decided not to celebrate Christmas and Easter anymore and instead we're going to celebrate Passover and Hanukkah!

Mom: What?!

Beth: Passover, Mom. It's what Yeshua celebrated!

Mom: Who is Yeshua?!

Beth: That's Jesus' real name

Mom: What?! What's wrong with Jesus? And what do you mean you aren't celebrating Christmas and Easter anymore? Are you telling me that I raised you wrong? Who on earth is teaching you this stuff?! You need to run from him; he's a cult leader!

Beth: Mom! Don't say that! You haven't even watched his teachings!

Mom: I'll pray for you Beth. You're being deceived and sound like you're becoming Jewish!

Beth: I'm not trying to be Jewish mom. I'm not even from the southern kingdom!

Mom: What?!

Beth: (taking a deep, depressing breath) Nevermind. I give up.

Mom: I'm still getting the kids presents for Christmas. You're not taking that away from me, Beth!

Beth: (hitting her forehead in disbelief) Forget it. I gotta go to Shabbat service. (walks out of the house)

Mom: She's definitely in a cult.

You laugh because this is way too close to the truth for so many of you. In the last article, the Spirit revealed what the problem was...we are not showing them "God." In this article, I want to propose another practical solution. I call it "The Chocolate Cookie Method."

If a two-year-old is running through the house with an object that could hurt them and they have no intent of giving it up, do you yell at them and chase them around the house telling them to give it back or else? Doing so could cause them to actually get hurt by the very thing you are trying to take away. Instead, you look at a chocolate cookie that is sitting on the table and you politely ask the child if they would like one. With eyebrows up and all smiles, they drop the dangerous object and come running toward you and that cookie.

People are emotional beings. We cannot separate our emotions from the things that we believe. Everything in our lives revolves around the center of our emotions. So, when we are speaking to someone in the language of logic, going through each theological point, they cannot see it because they are not holding onto it with their logic. They are grasping to their belief system with their emotions and you are threatening to take something away from them that is very important to them. No one likes things to be taken away from them. So, instead of taking things away from them, we could stand to take a lesson from the two year old and give them a chocolate cookie. We need to try and **ADD** to their spirituality instead of getting them to focus on the things that might be taken from them.

Just like in the mock interview, the most powerful witness that we can ever be is the testimony of what it has done for us personally. When you're talking with your friends and family, share with them how learning the backdrop, culture, and context of the bible has really made it come alive. Start by sharing things that don't look like broccoli, things that don't threaten their current belief system. Start with things that would interest them (the chocolate cookie), that would encourage their faith. Maybe show them something about the Hebrew language that brings a deeper meaning to a word or scripture. Or start with the feast days and how they are all about Jesus. Once they see "Jesus," they will have the right glasses on and they will be hooked. If you are talking to parents, the first step is to sincerely acknowledge and thank them for how they raised you and how you know they did the best they could. If they did their best to raise you in church, tell them that without them, you would not have the relationship with God that you do now. It is that foundation that the Spirit is building upon now.

Find out what is *missing* in their lives or something that you know they might really be interested in and start there. If it is a better marriage, give them "***Shalom in the Home***" and tell them how much these concepts have worked for you. If they *love* word studies, find a resource like "***The Depth of the Hebrew Alphabet***" that you could give them that would encourage them. Bees are

attracted to honey, so be smart about your approach. If not, you might find yourself giving yourself shots of epinephrine every five minutes just to keep up with all the bees that you didn't even know were hiding in that hive!

When it comes to sharing with others, we need to be a *butler*. A butler's job is to place before them the tantalizing meal and leave the results up to them. The Butler doesn't ask them if they liked it or not, for it is not his job. His only job is to make sure he presents the food in a way that is respectful, delightful and represents well the master of the house. If all of us seek to do just this, I believe many more people would be interested in what we are all so excited about and the Master of the house would be proud.

Shalom,
Jim Staley