

I had interviewed an atheist friend of mine named Owen Reilly as he knows that my current and future career and passion is that of an individual of a clerical position in the church. When we met up together, I had asked him “If I were to speak to you or your family about God, how would you like me to represent Him?” He had then replied that he would like me to represent God as an unbiased and loving entity that protects world peace and ends all suffering on earth.

This kind of answer although fallacious led to an engaging discussion concerning the nature and character of the Lord. I had told him that while God cares about his creation, he is not obligated to interfere with human affairs that have to do with free will. Owen then had asked “If God is real, how come He does not bless everyone if He loves everyone?” I had then responded, “Think of your favorite professor during your college years, would he give all the students in his class the answer sheet to the multiple-choice questions on a test because he loves them?” Owen had then replied something along the lines of, “Of course not, that would be cheating and he would get fired if he or she did not have tenure.” My response was “God is the same way. While he cares for everyone living on earth, he cannot give free passes of eternal salvation and blessings to them all. If someone wants to be blessed and enter into the Kingdom of God, he or she has to earn it, just like a student earns a good grade through their own effort without any special treatment.”

There was a silence that had dragged on for little while. Owen had then said that while he still was not convinced that God is real, my analogy did make sense to him regarding how the Lord operates. He then asked me “Wouldn’t it be great if God, if He was real, could bless his believers and answer all of their prayers?” I had then replied something along the lines of “Yes, that would be great, but then everyone in the world would eventually take notice of the

phenomenon of every Christian prayer getting answered with yes from God. They would then try to take advantage of that and try to use God as their genie in a lamp to answer all their wishes. They would not truly love the Lord with all of their heart, mind, and soul and would act like a Christian believer and claim that they are Christian when they really are not.” While I do not remember exactly what he had said back to me, I do remember him saying how all the things I have stated actually made sense on the condition if God was truly real and that my religious philosophy had opened his mind slightly to the Christian faith.

While I did not appreciate my Christian theology being called “religious” as if it was only one of the many ambiguous religions that could not be proven true, I held back my tongue because I knew Owen was not a condescending person, although he was at times blunt. Proverbs 10:14 states, “A wise man holds his tongue. Only a fool blurts out everything he knows; that only leads to sorrow and trouble.”

He had then asked me “Do not take this the wrong way, but how do you know that the Bible was inspired by God and was not just fabricated by human hands in the name of God?” I had replied that while it was true that the Bible was organized by the Council of Rome, it was also divinely inspired by God because he had given his apostles, prophets, and believers divine insight through supernatural revelation. I also had told him that there were first eye witness testimonies of biblical events in ancient manuscripts that were recovered to some degree.

In finality, this experience of discussing the Lord with my friend was a precious experience for me as he usually is not open to the “religious topics” as he had unpleasant experiences with recruiters of Jehovah’s witness and Christianity. This was a golden opportunity to share with him the nature and character of the Lord as well as the authenticity of the Bible.