

10 REASONS

 TO STAY 

Christian



HIGH SCHOOL

A Guide to Staying Sane When Everyone
Else Has Jumped Off the Deep End

MICHAEL ROSS & GREG JOHNSON

gotandem.

An Imprint of Barbour Publishing, Inc.

© 2015 by Back to the Bible

Print ISBN 978-1-63058-375-0

eBook Editions:

Adobe Digital Edition (.epub) 978-1-63409-449-8

Kindle and MobiPocket Edition (.prc) 978-1-63409-450-4

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted for commercial purposes, except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without written permission of the publisher.

Churches and other noncommercial interests may reproduce portions of this book without the express written permission of Barbour Publishing, provided that the text does not exceed 500 words or 5 percent of the entire book, whichever is less, and that the text is not material quoted from another publisher. When reproducing text from this book, include the following credit line: "From *10 Reasons to Stay Christian in High School*, published by Barbour Publishing, Inc. Used by permission."

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked MSG are from *THE MESSAGE*. Copyright © by Eugene H. Peterson 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of Nav-Press Publishing Group.

The authors are represented by and this book is published in association with the literary agency of WordServe Literary Group, Ltd., www.wordserveliterary.com.

Published by goTandem, an imprint of Barbour Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 719, Uhrichsville, Ohio 44683, www.barbourbooks.com.

Our mission is to publish and distribute inspirational products offering exceptional value and biblical encouragement to the masses.



Printed in the United States of America.

Stuff in This Book

Start Here: Know What You Believe and Why You Believe It.	5
Reason 1: Creation and the Created Matter <i>Nothing Makes Sense If We're a Cosmic Accident.</i>	9
Reason 2: Friends Are Worth It <i>You Need Them, They Need You. . . but Watch Out for Toxic People</i>	25
Reason 3: God's Word Is Real. . .and Relevant <i>How to Get the Most from History's Bestselling Book</i>	43
Reason 4: Popularity Isn't Worth the Chase <i>Instead, Refocus on God's View of You</i>	65
Reason 5: Your Work Always Matters <i>Tips on Living Your Beliefs in the Workplace, and the Difference That Makes</i>	79
Reason 6: Relationships Have a Purpose <i>A Few Pretty Important Things You Need to Know about Guy-Girl Connections</i>	97
Reason 7: Love and Respect Win with the LGBT Issue <i>Great Responses to Some Questions That Won't Go Away</i>	111
Reason 8: There Really Are Off-Base Beliefs <i>People Mean Well, but Sometimes They Don't Have the Whole Picture.</i>	133
Reason 9: Life Always Matters, and It's Valuable at Every Age and Stage <i>A Look at Two Hot-Button Issues: Abortion and Euthanasia</i>	149

Reason 10: Unreality Can't Win	
<i>If You Know the Original, You Can</i>	
<i>Spot the Counterfeit</i>	165
Extra Stuff #1: Resolving "Contradictions" in the Bible.....	175
Extra Stuff #2: Power Up Daily:	
A Radical Way to Study Scripture.....	183
Notes	191

START HERE

Know What You Believe and Why You Believe It

Ever felt that outside of a few well-known stories you don't know too much about the Bible, even though you're pretty sure you're a Christian? Ever been stuck when someone asks, "What does a Christian really believe?" Ever felt that you couldn't let others know the real you—especially the spiritual side of you? And have you ever been frustrated because you were too afraid to reveal to others the person inside, who really does believe what the Bible says, who's convinced that the human race is more than a cosmic accident?

If you have, then you're in a massive amount of great company.

But it doesn't feel so hot, does it? Christians have struggled at times with having family and friends thinking weird thoughts about us. Our beliefs have been laughed at, our motives sometimes mistrusted, and we've felt the agony of defeat when it comes to communicating the most important thing—the *most important Person*—in our lives. It is frustrating and demoralizing. Sometimes it's depressing.

And then if people start accusing you of being bigoted or unloving to those who don't act or believe the way you do, it can get even more discouraging.

What's the answer?

It's not enough to just *know* a few basic facts about our faith;

we need to *believe* them and *live* them every day. That's the goal of this book.

We've filled these pages with plenty of Bible wisdom, facts, advice, and tips that will help you do one thing with confidence: show others that you're a real person with real beliefs about a God who is crazy about you—and them. Consider this your guide to staying sane when it feels as if everyone else has jumped off the deep end!

And to help you stand confidently for what you believe, we've identified ten hot-button faith issues along with insights on why Christ-followers hold certain beliefs—or what we call your “ten reasons to stay Christian in high school.”

When you start reading these pages, you'll see that we're hitting two main areas where Christians are viewed as not having much to say—in the classroom and in our lives.

IN THE CLASSROOM

We want you to know what to say, as well as how to say it, when your faith is challenged by teachers or classmates. Though it's not important to be a “Bible answer person,” there really are answers to tough questions about what we believe. About half of this book will give you the tools you need to help you be understood. We identify situations where Christian students are commonly challenged (and sometimes ridiculed) for their faith, and we paint several real-life scenarios about public school life to give you a good start when it comes to verbally defending—or simply explaining—the real you.

Realize that there's a difference between being understood

and being believed. Helping others *understand* where you're coming from is your responsibility. Getting someone to *believe* is up to God. It's His job to bring others into a relationship with Him; it's our job to represent Him as best we can.

IN YOUR LIFE

As a Christian, being understood is only half the battle. You see, many outside the church will not be too impressed with your great logic and well-thought-through answers to the tough issues of faith. To quote an old phrase: they want to see a sermon rather than hear one. And the way you live your life will speak louder than any perfectly delivered speech.

The fact is, some Christians are misunderstood because their lives don't come close to matching what they say they believe about God and the Bible. And though the Bible makes it clear that none of us can bat 1.000, people want to see the heart of a believer. They won't be able to relate to a perfect lifestyle, so don't put moral perfection on your checklist. But they will be attracted to a genuine heart. A good heart that cares for others will get them to ask questions. And when they do, wouldn't it be nice to have a few answers? Our dilemma is that many of us treat ourselves or others poorly, we're judgmental, and we honestly don't have a clue about what our lives are actually communicating.

This job of living what we believe is a lifetime assignment. We cut ourselves slack because we know God does. We aren't scared off by lingering doubts because we know God isn't. And we don't give up on people because we know God never will.

What is the next step you need to take toward becoming

more like Jesus Christ? That's what God wants you to ask yourself. It's one rung up the ladder at a time. No leaps and bounds needed or expected.

So join us, and discover your *ten reasons to stay Christian in high school*. . . .

Reason 1

CREATION AND THE CREATED MATTER

Nothing Makes Sense If We're a Cosmic Accident

I (Mike) was heading through the supermarket checkout lane awhile back when—*pow!*—a headline from one of those crazy tabloids jumped right off the page at me: “Stunning New Scientific Evidence Proves Man Descended from the Flea.”

“Say what?” I gasped. “Evidence? Proof? Who *actually* believes this stuff?”

Then a chilling thought shot through my mind. Every day in classrooms across the country, students just like you are having their own “close encounters” of the equally weird kind.

Check out this scenario: Professor Petridish, your first-period science teacher, points to a big chart showing a hairy, apelike creature evolving into a hairless bodybuilder.

“My friends,” he announces as he peels a banana and takes a bite, “these are your ancestors. You evolved from the ape. And the way you guys monkey around, I’m not surprised!”

While the room breaks up into laughter, your stomach knots up. *Why is he teaching this stuff as fact? Why isn't creationism taken seriously? Should I speak up—or clam up?*

ULTIMATE LAME RESPONSES

- “Gimme a break, Mr. Know-it-all! Science hasn’t proven a thing. In fact, most scientists are so blinded by their own egos and high IQs, they’d like us to think they’re the ones responsible for the human race.”
- “Wake up, class! Don’t you see what’s happening? Evolution is yet another trick of the devil. It’s an evil

scheme designed to lead God's creation away from the Creator and down a path straight to H-E-L-L!"

- "Okay, I admit it. Some of the stuff in the Bible sounds like major storybook material. I mean, really—the entire earth and everything in it glued together in just six days! I have my doubts. But I have my doubts about what you're teaching, too. So here's the deal. You believe whatever *you* think is right, and I'll do the same. Hey, don't step on my toes with *your* opinions."
- "*Evolution?* No way, dude. The only one in my family who even remotely resembles a monkey is my sister. But trust me, with her moods, she's not of *this* world!"

A BETTER RESPONSE

We're convinced that the biblical perspective on human origins matters. While we love and appreciate animals of all shapes and sizes, it's obvious humans have a qualitative difference to them—a spark, a soul. Could big bang evolution really knit your body together with such perfection? Do you truly understand how complicated the human body, including the brain, heart, muscles, nerves, digestive system, and—most stunningly—the sexual parts, really is?

So, should creationism be presented in the classroom? And if so, by whom?

The law in most states and counties says that teachers can't talk about intelligent design or creation by a God of love who actually knew what He was doing. But you are still allowed freedom of speech and expression anywhere in America. Yes, even

in a public school. So every Christian student has a right to respectfully and responsibly share what he or she believes.

Following are some valuable tips—and a pretty good strategy—to help you stand firm even when the pressure makes you squirm. Try this eight-key plan:

EIGHT KEYS TO UNLOCKING THE TRUTH

Key 1: Don't argue, and don't try to act like Mr. Expert.

Your goal should *never* be to blow a classmate or the teacher out of the water, show them up, or *prove* how wacko their arguments are. Your job is to share in a logical manner what you've learned from the Bible and from science, and to allow others to either accept it or reject it.

Since you probably won't change the teacher's mind, a good goal is simply to plant a seed of doubt so your classmates won't swallow the evolution theory without at least questioning it.

Key 2: Get the facts straight.

EVOLUTIONISTS BELIEVE. . .

All life gradually evolved from a single cell, which evolved from dead matter (or perhaps some kind of “big bang”). In the beginning, there was only empty space. Then dust appeared on the scene, followed by gases and chemicals. Where did *they* come from? That's one mystery scientists haven't yet figured out. Eventually everything developed by millions of random changes over aeons of time.

Many (but not all) scientists believe in the big bang theory, which supposedly took place about twenty billion years ago. They say that this material, as a result of gravity, gathered into a huge primordial cloud. After ages it compressed into an immense, unbelievably hot ball, which finally exploded. This explosion flung these same elements into space. More aeons later, gravity caused them to form into millions of smaller balls. And ages after that, they became stars, planets, and galaxies. At some point, these heavenly bodies began rotating in space in an incredibly accurate and predictable manner. All by random chance! This is a pretty fantastic theory, isn't it? But here's the strange deal: most people accept it as truth without examining it. Why? Because that's what many have been taught from kindergarten up. But the truth is, it's only a theory—not scientific fact.

CREATIONISTS BELIEVE . . .

All life and our existence came by the acts of a living, loving Creator. Since their original inception, cells have built themselves from carefully designed and coded information that has been passed from one life to the next.

When creationists use the term *creation*, they are speaking of the original creation of the cosmos—a cosmos in fully working form. Many creationists accept the Bible's historical account, which describes a unique, onetime creation event that took one week and resulted in a complete world, including sea and land, trees, moon, stars, fish, birds, land animals, and man (all fully

formed, in that order). Some Christians would say that all this happened in one week; others would say that a “day”—as written in the Bible—could be a thousand years (see 2 Peter 3:8).

Understand that all Christians do not agree on God’s method of creation. Did He create the universe in one week, or did He use an evolutionary process to accomplish His goal?

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to attempt to account for *every* theory that Bible-believing Christians hold. Our purpose is to give ideas that will help you—and others—question the “facts” taught in most public schools.

Key 3: Look closely at what evolutionists are arguing.

Despite all the scientific gobbledygook, there are two basic definitions you should know: *microevolution* and *macroevolution*. (It’s not really that complicated, so hang with us!)

Scientists studying microevolution can observe small changes within the same types of living organisms. This perspective is valid and actually in line with biblical teaching. In fact, it’s not really evolution at all. Dogs will interbreed, and the world will end up with a new breed of dog. But this dog is still a dog.

So what evolutionists refer to as microevolution—change within a created kind—was orchestrated by God to help preserve life. In some ways, it’s a survival characteristic. Different species experience *small changes* so that they can adapt to a *changing environment*. But they are not transforming into a different species.

On the other hand, macroevolution suggests that over millions of years a dog could evolve into, say, a horse. And that an ape (or a flea, if you believe the tabloids) could one day become a person.

Evolutionists who hold this view claim that the original clump in the primordial soup became a cell, somehow got life, and then divided. One cell ended up on land and became the ancient ancestor of plant life. The other cell stayed in the water to eventually evolve into boneless sea creatures. After millions of years, one of these creatures—by random chance—became a fish with a backbone. And that, these evolutionists say, is the real beginning of humankind.

Something isn't adding up. Of course, advocates of this viewpoint wouldn't agree. They point to what they claim is their proof: fossil records. Fossils are ancient forms of plant and animal life embedded in sedimentary rock in the crust of the earth, and they are found all over the world. There are "graveyards" that contain the fossilized bones of dinosaurs and other huge animals and birds, as well as those of small animals (including apes and early man).

In 1974 scientists claimed they discovered the long-sought "missing link" between apes and humans. An expedition to Ethiopia led by Donald Johanson, president of the Institute of Human Origins, painstakingly pieced together a remarkable ancient primate skeleton. Although about 60 percent of the skeleton—including much of the skull—was missing, the scientists believed that the apelike primate had some characteristics that

were significantly humanlike. They named this “proof” Lucy (or in scientific jargon, *Australopithecus afarensis*).

Key 4: Ask for proof of macroevolutionism.

Know what you’ll get? You guessed it: Z-I-P. The truth is, macroevolutionism is a theory with *no evidence*.

Check out the observations of Charles Darwin—one of the world’s early advocates of evolutionism and a staunch defender of the “macro” view. In Darwin’s own words: “As by this theory innumerable transitional forms must have existed, why do we not find them embedded in countless numbers in the crust of the earth?”¹ In other words, for macroevolution to be true, scientists would have to unearth fossils showing a gradual, step-by-step development of lower animal life into more and more complex forms. No such fossils exist. The millions found are all of highly complex forms of life. The absence of fossil records (of transitional species) proves that it hasn’t happened, current observation proves that it is not happening today, and genetic research proves that it could never happen. In other words, a dog just can’t evolve into a horse, and an ape can’t develop into a man.

Hmmm. . .even Mr. Macroevolution himself couldn’t find evidence to support his claims!

Key 5: Point out that macroevolutionism is not scientific fact.

Crack open any basic biology textbook and pinpoint the traditional definition of the *scientific method*: “principles and

procedures for the systematic pursuit of knowledge, involving the recognition and formulation of a problem, the collection of data through observation and experimentation, and the formulation and testing of hypotheses.”² (Translation: If you can’t duplicate it in a laboratory, you can’t call it scientific.)

Next, locate the definition of a *scientific hypothesis*: an unproved assumption or “an educated guess.”³

Now point to the fact that since macroevolution cannot be observed or measured (partly because of the lack of a fossil record), it’s just a theory and can only be presented as speculation—*not fact*.

Key 6: Show the logic of creationism.

The evidence needed to support creationism is a fossil record that shows complex life appearing suddenly—with no fossils that show lower animals developing into new and complex forms of life.

Guess what? That’s exactly what scientists have discovered. They’ve learned that throughout history, higher categories of living things—fishes, reptiles, primates (including man)—appeared on the scene abruptly.

GOD’S AWESOME CREATION

Think deeply about the origins of life and ask yourself this question: How could this mind-boggling universe, with all of its intricacies, come into being just by chance? Take man, for example. The human body is a marvelously constructed and

complex machine. Examine the most visible part of the body: the skin. In magnified pictures, you can see skin layers, blood vessels, oil glands, hair roots, pores, nerves, and pigment.

One-fourth of all the bones in the body are in the hand. With the hand, an artist can do the most delicate painting and a construction worker can lift heavy beams. Each fingerprint is unique.

Study the digestive system and see how everything works together: the pancreas, liver, gallbladder, lymph glands. And think about how the eyes work. Or what about the brain? It's so complicated that even the most complex computer comes nowhere near its efficiency. Not only does the brain control the body, but we use it to think and create, to put people in outer space, to feel, to live, and with the spirit, to reach out to God.

So the question is, how could such complex and coordinating systems happen by random chance then evolve over millions of years?

Key 7: Point out the second law of thermodynamics.

This scientific law of physics states that all things run down, not up. Anything left unattended falls apart.

How does this relate to the evolutionism-creationism debate? Since living and nonliving things gradually break down and become more disorganized as time passes, it's illogical to believe that matter could have had the capacity to go from a nonliving, disorganized state to a living, organized one.

The fact is, all uphill processes (such as growth) are temporary

and require a separate, intelligent force to put them into motion. (Get the picture?)

Key 8: Lastly, drive home your point with a handy word picture—the “airplane comparison.”

Question: What part of an airplane flies? Is it the fuselage? The cockpit? The wings? The wheels?

Answer: No *single* part can fly. In reality, an airplane is a collection of nonflying parts. The only thing that flies is the total, organized airplane.

Key point: These nonflying parts have no capacity to organize themselves into an airplane—*somebody had to do it.*

Now connect your word picture with a living cell.

Question: What part of a cell is alive? The protoplasm? The cell wall? The nucleus?

Answer: No *single* part of a cell is alive. A living cell is a collection of nonliving parts. The only thing that makes the cell alive is the total organization of nonliving parts.

Key point: These nonliving parts have no capacity to organize themselves into a living cell. Therefore it’s logical to say *somebody had to do it.* (That somebody, of course, is God.)

Conclusion: The whole issue of the origin of man is primarily a faith issue and can’t be proven with observable, scientific facts. But the truth is, creationism

is more in tune with the laws of science than evolutionism is.

This kind of reasoning casts severe doubt on the idea that life could have formed itself. The Christian faith is not a blind faith. It is a reasonable faith that is based on logic. And this point of view should be represented in a classroom.

TERMS TO KNOW

big bang. According to one cosmological theory, the violent cosmic explosion at an infinitesimally small point from which the universe originated billions of years ago.

entropy. A measure of the disorder in a system. Since the law of entropy states that a closed system evolves toward a state of maximum entropy, critics of evolutionary theory point out that the increasing order and complexity involved in evolution would require some kind of outside, intelligent influence.

evolutionary naturalism. The belief that the world can be understood only through the application of evolutionary science and that no account needs to be taken of supernatural or spiritual forces.

fossil record. A record of the fossilized remains of various organisms, arranged in a “geological column” in a manner that—conventional science asserts—broadly reflects the evolution of species. Creationist critics of conventional science claim that the fossil record is inconsistent and not complete enough to warrant this conclusion.

hypothesis. A provisional explanation for a natural

phenomenon. For a hypothesis to have scientific value, it must account for most of the relevant data, and—at least in theory—it must be subject to disproof.

macroevolution. Evolutionary change that involves large and complex steps (such as the transformation of one species into another).

microevolution. Limited genetic changes at the species or subspecies level.

natural selection. According to evolutionary theory, the process by which organisms with traits that better enable them to adapt to environmental factors (such as predators or scarcity of food) will survive and reproduce in greater numbers.

On Your Own

1. Read Genesis 1:1–2:25. Why do you think non-Christian scientists reject this biblical account of creation?
2. Jot down things about the story of creation that are hard to accept. Where does faith fit in?
3. Think about how amazing your body is. Next think about the world, then the universe. Now focus on the Creator. Read Isaiah 40:26 and spend a few minutes jotting down all the mind-boggling things that God created.
4. Read Isaiah 45:18; Romans 1:25; and Ephesians 2:10; then complete the following:
 - What do these verses say about God?
 - What do they communicate about the human race?
 - Name one reason God created people.

5. Read Psalm 148. Make a list of the things you are thankful that God created.

With a Group

1. Has the theory of evolution poked holes in the biblical account of creation? Why or why not?
2. Why does it take just as much faith to buy the evolution theory as it does to believe in creationism? Is evolutionism actually just a religion?
3. How do dinosaurs fit into the picture?
4. If you were asked to give proof of creationism, how would you respond?
5. Give three reasons people say creationism should be taught in public school and three reasons others say it should not be taught in public schools.

Should:

-
-
-

Should not:

-
-
-