

Witnessing to 7th Day Adventists

Don't assume that your Adventist friend is saved because he says he has accepted Jesus as his Savior, or because he says he believes in "righteousness by faith alone." Adventists generally don't understand what it means to be born again or that Jesus finished the atonement on the cross. To them, Jesus is a down payment on salvation, and "righteousness by faith" means believing that Jesus will help them keep the law.

Do assume that the Adventist needs to understand the gospel. First, ask him to tell his story of coming to know Jesus. If he doesn't have a story, tell your own --- emphasizing that because you know Jesus, he has forgiven all your past and future sins through his finished work at the cross.

Don't assume you understand what Adventists believe based only on what they share with you in conversation. They will seldom admit their true beliefs on the Sabbath, the nature of man or Jesus, the great controversy worldview, or the central role of Ellen White.

Do study the Bible with them, using no outside study aids. Start with Galatians; 2 Corinthians 3; and Romans 1-8 (referring to John 3:16-18; 5:24; Ephesians 2:1-10). Studying together is the only way to begin to understand their unique interpretations of Scripture and for them to start recognizing -- - and abandoning --- their own extra-biblical understanding of God's Word.

Don't ask Adventists if they need to keep the seventh-day Sabbath to be saved; most will deny that it is required, even though that is their church's teaching.

Do ask Adventists if they would endanger their salvation if they abandoned the seventh-day Sabbath. This question tends to reveal their fear that "leaving Sabbath" means they will be lost. Explain how Jesus fulfilled the law, and show that the new covenant is not based on the law but on Jesus and the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:7-18; Hebrews 8-10).

Don't assume that an Adventist sees you as a brother or sister in Christ. Their “great controversy” worldview defines Jesus as depending on them to keep the law to help vindicate God and win the battle with Satan. This belief creates a closed community in which one can be born, educated, employed, retired, and buried without engaging with mainstream society or Christianity. They have a mandate to proselytize you.

Do concentrate on who Jesus really is and what qualified him to be Savior. Ask: Could he have failed in his mission? Did he know he would be successful? Can they be sure that they will be with him when they die? If so, how so? If not, why not? Discuss the new birth, showing from the Bible what it is and emphasizing that they are born spiritually dead until the Holy Spirit brings their spirits to life.

Do pray for them and don't give up! It can take years of holding conflicting beliefs in tension, creating questions they can't ignore, before they risk leaving their Adventist identity to embrace Jesus alone.



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