

Breaking Down Barriers That Prevent Muslim Friends From Knowing God – A Case Study in Muslim Evangelism

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When sharing the gospel with Muslim friends in the United States, there are both traditional difficulties and special difficulties — and of course, unique advantages as well.

The traditional difficulties are those commonly encountered in Muslim communities around the world:

they believe Jesus was merely an outdated prophet who neither died nor rose again;

Muhammad is the greatest;

the Bible has been altered and corrupted;

the Qur'an is pure and perfect;

the Trinity is idolatry;

leaving Islam is betrayal and may even bring danger to one's life, etc.

The unique difficulties in the United States may also be seen in Europe.

Difficulty 1: They come from different countries, with different cultures and mother tongues, so one must cross multiple cultural barriers to reach out to them.

Difficulty 2: When facing the loss of identity caused by leaving their mother-tongue environment, they often do not choose to adapt positively to the new environment. Instead, they cling more tightly together and hold more firmly to Islam in order to maintain their sense of identity and preserve a psychological sense of superiority.

Difficulty 3: They receive support from international Islamic organizations that promote expansion, which gives Muslim friends a strong sense of mission.

The unique advantage is that they generally speak English, so we are spared the burden of learning multiple languages.

Among the various ethnic and religious groups I have shared the gospel with in the United States, Muslim friends have been the most challenging for me personally. Immigrants from other ethnic and religious backgrounds, when facing a new culture, language, political system, and economic environment, often sincerely appreciate Christian expressions of love. They tend to hold Christianity in high regard and are willing to listen and learn.

Muslim friends, though they welcome expressions of love, because of the difficulties listed above, often remain unmoved even after I build relationships with them and explain Jesus and the gospel to them. Instead, they invite me to convert to Islam.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:5:

“We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

How should we apply Paul's teaching?

Especially: how do we “destroy every argument and every lofty thing that blocks people from knowing God”?

In my view, Christians not only need to love, not only do apologetics — explaining why the Bible is not corrupted, why Jesus is the Son of God who died and rose again, and why the Trinity is understandable, but meanwhile need to expose the various errors of Muhammad and the Qur'an also.

Below is an example. Recently, I used a short video clip of the testimony of Dr. Nabeel Qureshi (1983–2017) to initiate conversations that help Muslim friends recognize Muhammad’s poor character and the violent tendencies within Islam. Nabeel grew up in the United States in a devout Muslim family, received rigorous training from childhood to defend Islam, and was extremely loyal to his faith — but later converted to Jesus.

On the “We Serve Jesus” website’s video recommendation page, there are links to his YouTube testimony and a Facebook short video, all in English. Those interested may click to watch:

<https://shifengyesu.org/shipintuijian/>

I first ask three of my Muslim friends whether they have heard of Nabeel. Regardless of their answer, I send them the link to Nabeel’s Facebook short video and ask what they think.

So far, three Muslim friends have watched the video:

The first said he would go to the Qur’an and look up the verses Nabeel mentioned.

The second said Nabeel took things out of context. I asked him, “What is the context?” He fell silent.

The third offered the strongest resistance. In the end, he said he needed more time to think carefully about how to respond.

I am still maintaining relationships with them and have been inviting the third friend to meals and activities.

Below is the original English conversation through text messages. As for the grammar errors in the third friend’s messages, I will keep them intact. I will use A for this friend who was from Sudan and who claims to be an engineer working in the USA.

Next, how should I deepen the conversations with these three Muslim friends?

Welcome to leave comments with suggestions.

Also, please pray for these three Muslim friends to come to the Lord."

Conversation

Me: By the way, have you ever heard about a person named Nabeel Qureshi who was a New Yorker?

A: No.

Me: Here is a video clip of Nabeel Qureshi. He quoted the Quran and the history of Mohamed. How would you think about it?
<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1130980445834314>

A: Ok let me see.

(After a while)

A: A boy was playing and threw his ball then the window broken

A: So the guy what he talking about not in chapter 29

A: And there there no vers call 9

A: And what he said if u read what before and after it will make sense just like my window story above.

A: But he cut and said what make people agree.

(After a while)

Me: I went to the Quran and found all the verses he quoted. They are below. Please check if I mistook anything.

Surah

9:5 فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرْمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصِرُواهُمْ وَأَقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ ۚ فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and give zakah, let them [go] on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَن يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ 9:29

Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture - [fight] until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ 9:33

It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although they who associate others with Allah dislike it.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعَدًّا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ 9:111

Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah , so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah ? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۗ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي ۗ وَرَبَّكُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ مَن يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ ۗ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ 5:72

They have certainly disbelieved who say, " Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary" while the Messiah has said, "O Children of Israel, worship Allah , my Lord and your Lord." Indeed, he who associates others with Allah - Allah has forbidden him Paradise, and his refuge is the Fire. And there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers.

A: Yea there no problem in this just small problem of understanding from ur side.

The 9:5 and 9:29 the god talking when it permission to Muslim to start defending thier self against the unbelievers of Mecca that time. That's why Quran if u read only one verse it will make questions u have to read what before and after the verses to fully understand.

A: And the 9:111 it said that's what in bible and turaa (A means Torah). So it's same what in Christian.

A: And 5:72 I think it's for u more than me.

(After one day, he continued)

A: I'm sorry for late reply sometimes because I'm at work and not all the time with phone. 😊

Me: Sure. No problem. I am sorry for interrupting you and thankful for your exchange.

A: Most welcome my friend

Me: Thank you so much for bearing with me and allowing me to share the existing controversies with you. I really appreciate you for your patient, calm, and open-minded attitude.

I know such controversies are very sensitive. And they are easy to hurt feelings. As you can see, I try to avoid such hurts between us as much as possible because I value your friendship.

However, true friendship cannot last without honest and respectful communication. Moreover, both of us are truth seekers. In order to honor these two points, I guess a heart-to-heart communication is a must.

Whenever you don't want to carry on such conversations, please tell me directly. I will fully understand and will stop with respect immediately.

I know such video clips may have faulty understanding of Islam. Your correction could help me to reach a more correct and balanced understanding. Thank you so much for your help.

A: My pleasure anytime coz this is or duty to deliver the message

A: And answer for the video u send check this in Quran.

AL-BAGARAH. (208)

AL-MUMTAHINAH (8)

AL-ANFAL (61)

(After a long time)

Me: Thank you for pointing me to the Qur'an verses. I've read them carefully.

I understand that:

a. Qur'an 2:208 (Al-Baqarah) calls Muslims to submit fully to Islam.

b. Qur'an 60:8 (Al-Mumtahanah) allows kindness and justice toward non-Muslims who are not fighting Muslims.

c. Qur'an 8:61 (Al-Anfal) encourages peace when the other side seeks peace.

These verses do show that Islam contains teachings about peace and peaceful coexistence under certain conditions, and I respect that many Muslims emphasize these passages.

However, what Nabeel Qureshi was addressing in the video is not only selected verses, but the full historical and textual picture of Islam—including

Muhammad's own life, later Qur'anic revelations, Hadith, and early Islamic history. This is where a serious tension appears.

1. Muhammad's own history.

According to Islamic sources themselves (Sirah and Sahih Hadith), Muhammad:

- a. Personally participated in or ordered numerous military campaigns.
- b. Approved executions (e.g., Banu Qurayza).
- c. Sanctioned warfare in the later Medinan period.

These are not hostile Christian claims; they come from authoritative Islamic tradition.

2. Later Qur'anic teaching.

While early Meccan verses emphasize patience, later Medinan verses, especially in Surah 9, command fighting against unbelievers until submission.

Classical Islamic jurisprudence recognizes chronological development, where later revelations can override earlier peaceful ones.

So verses like 60:8 and 8:61 cannot be read in isolation from the broader Qur'anic framework and legal tradition.

3. Historical expansion of Islam.

Historically, after Muhammad's death:

- a. Islam expanded rapidly through military conquest across the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond.
- b. Non-Muslims were given limited options: political submission, payment of jizya, or conflict.

c. Conversion was often connected to imperial rule, not merely personal persuasion.

d. (Do you happen to know how Islam first came into your family?)

This is widely acknowledged by secular historians and Muslim historians alike.

4. Why Nabeel Qureshi found this significant?

Nabeel's point is not that Muslims today are violent—he explicitly rejects that idea.

His argument is that the idealized claim “Islam spread only by peace” cannot be reconciled with:

- a. Muhammad's documented actions.
- b. Later Qur'anic commands.
- c. Early Islamic conquests.

In contrast, Christianity's founder, Jesus, never led armies, never killed, and explicitly taught:

- a. “Love your enemies”.
- b. “Turn the other cheek”.
- c. “My kingdom is not of this world”.

The early Christian movement spread without political or military power, often under persecution.

5. The core issue.

So the real question is not whether Islam contains peaceful verses—it clearly does.

The question is whether those verses accurately explain Islam's historical development and Muhammad's example.

Nabeel Qureshi concluded that they do not fully reconcile with the historical record, and that this difference between Jesus and Muhammad is theologically and morally significant.

I raise this not to attack, but because truth requires honesty with both texts and history. I'm open to continuing the discussion with mutual respect.

A: Ok I will read u message carefully when I have the time so my answer will be complete. But for the first section. Quran in Mecca that the first year of message so it focuses in fill the hears with faith first

A: Coz u will not start with head stuff without faith. This what we have today no faith in hearts and we expect people to to be straight.

Me: You are right.

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

But who is the founder and perfecter of our faith?

Hebrews 12:1-2 1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

A: True

Other articles concerning Islam published by We Serve Jesus website:

[与一位美国穆斯林的对话 A Conversation with An American Muslim](#)

[采访穆斯林 Interviews with Muslims](#)

[《古兰经》中的耶稣 – 穆斯林被灌输了错误的观点 Jesus in the Qur'an – Muslims Receive a False View](#)

[从基督徒的视角看古兰经 The Qur'an From a Christian Perspective](#)

《遇见伊斯兰教》(Encountering Islam)

[历史 History \(1\)](#) 和 [历史 History \(2\)](#) 部分; 和 [教义 Doctrines \(1\)](#) 和 [教义 Doctrines \(2\)](#) 部分