

CBD Q&A with Andy Stanley on *Irresistible*

Pastor Andy Stanley sat down with the team at Christianbook.com to answer questions about his new book, Irresistible, releasing September 18.

Q: Why did you write this book?

A: Christianity appears indefensible and untenable in our scientific digital world. But atheism isn't appealing either. So more and more folks are stepping into what they consider the neutral zone of *"I don't know and don't pressure me to decide."* In *Irresistible*, I argue that the faith they abandoned was a straw man version to begin with. It was the text-based version, not the original, event-based version. When I say that, folks often respond by asking, "But how do we know about the events apart from the text?" That question underscores the need for modern Western Christians to rethink and reconsider what the foundation of the Christian faith originally was and, consequently, still is today . . . whether or not it's recognized and embraced.

Q: What value does the Old Testament have?

A: Old Testament narratives are rich in courage, valor, and sacrifice. Everybody faces a Goliath or two. Most of us can relate to Moses' fear of rejection and Gideon's insecurity regarding his past. Who isn't inspired by Joseph's decision to forgive his wicked brothers or Daniel's decision to face Babylonian lions rather than violate his conscience? Besides, Old Testament stories of faith, fortitude, and grit are the dots that connect to create the storyline of our redemption. While the Old Testament should not be our go-to source for application, it is a fabulous source of inspiration.

Q: How should Jesus's life and death affect our relationships?

A: Jesus commanded us to love others. This was far less complicated than following all the laws in the Old Testament—but it was also far more demanding. Paul said that the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. When in doubt, we should ask, "What would a forgiven child of the light do?" This question is so simple, so beautiful, and so clear. For John, Paul, and Jesus, loving people is loving God—because people are loved by God. Refusing to actively love a brother or sister is paramount to refusing to love God. Under the new covenant Jesus brought, we do not love God and love our neighbors. Under the new covenant, *we love God by loving our neighbors*. We should always ask ourselves, "What does God's love for me require of me?"

Q: Why is saying, "The Bible says..." not a good enough answer for our culture anymore?

A: There was a time when "the Bible says" was reason enough, when our culture still held the Bible in high regard. And while it may still be reason enough for us Christians, it's no reason at all for a significant percentage of the population. Appealing to post-Christian people on the basis of the authority of Scripture has essentially the same effect as a Muslim imam appealing to you on the basis of the authority of the Quran. You may or may not already know what the Quran says. But it doesn't matter. You don't view it as authoritative. It's much better, and more accurate to say, "Jesus taught" or "Paul wrote" or "Peter declares" or "According to the apostle John, who knew Jesus, peered into an empty tomb and had breakfast with him on the beach." I can tell you from years of personal experience, this approach immediately

reduces resistance among post-Christians, non-Christians, and Christians who are struggling to maintain faith.

Q: What should we do to win people back to the church?

A: Un-churched people may not be interested in church, but they certainly want to be loved—especially when things aren't going well. Post-Christians could care less about my new sermon series. But they're still interested in matters of faith and spirituality. And—this is big—most post-Christians still have a crush on Jesus. While modern folks may be hesitant to recognize Jesus as divine, they're not in the least bit hesitant to laud him as someone whose life is worth imitating.