Dinner Table Debates*

★ **Main Point:** To help your teen better grasp and be able to defend what they believe.

★ **Preparation:** You'll need to determine what issue you want to debate and assign family members different sides of that issue. Give everyone several days to a week to prepare their arguments. Everyone will want to bring their notes and probably a Bible to the debate.

★ **Suggested Age:** Teen  ★ **Estimated Time:** At least 1 hour

A great way to help our children better grasp and defend what they believe is to create “dinner table debates.” Set the day you plan to hold your debate during dinner, assigning different sides of the issue to individuals or teams. (For example, Mom and son defend the existence of God while Dad and daughter oppose it.) Give the teams several days of weeks to prepare for the debate. When the big day arrives, remind everyone to bring his or her notes and be prepared to begin the debate immediately after asking the blessing. It is wise to assign a moderator or to clearly establish rules for the debate in order to keep everything fair and in control.

Here are a few important points to consider:

- You may be concerned about seriously entertaining arguments that oppose your beliefs. However, it is better for your children to struggle with these issues in the safety and spirit of a believing home than to be exposed to these ideas in a less supportive context.

- This requires some work on the part of the parents. You must be willing to learn along with your kids, including taking the time to read and prepare. It may do more harm than good to organize a debate in which you can’t engage.

Possible topics to debate include:

- The existence of God. You might want to use these resources to prepare for this debate:
  - **Know What You Believe** by Paul Little. A popular, introductory level book on systematic theology. Covers such topics as the Bible, God, Jesus Christ, man and sin, etc.
  - **Know Why You Believe** by Paul Little. A popular, introductory level text on apologetics. Covers such questions as “Is Christianity rational?” “Did Christ rise from the dead?” etc.

- The reliability of the Bible. Resources include the two above by Paul Little and **Why Believe the Bible** by John MacArthur.

- Also consider 1) Is Jesus the only way? 2) Are heaven and hell real places? and 3) Why does God allow suffering?


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