



Dear Friend,

In my first six months of working with Justice For All full-time, I have had hundreds of conversations. This month I want to share with you about my brief time with Luke, the most memorable of all my conversations this year, and the one that had the greatest impact on me. It wasn't a dramatic scene in front of a large exhibit on a college campus. It was just a friendly conversation at a restaurant called Beefy's on the Green. As far as I know, no souls were hanging in the balance. It didn't have profound philosophical complexity. But God has a way of using what is foolish in the world to shame the wise (or perhaps in my case, to shame the young twenty-something-year-old punks that think they're wise). My colleague John Michener shares the details of the encounter in his newsletter. Please take a few minutes to read his letter (linked [here](#)) before continuing to read mine.



I was quiet for a while as we left the restaurant. I remembered years of theological conversations where someone pointed out, "This is fine to talk about, as long as we don't forget what really matters: loving Jesus and sharing the gospel with others." I always responded by affirming that, "Of course that's what matters the most," and sometimes thinking arrogantly to myself, "How simplistic and obvious." In one way, that's true: It's easy to affirm that the gospel is more important to people's lives than theology. But knowing how to put that into practice is neither simplistic nor obvious, at least for me.

Our conversation with Luke was something of a success story for Steve and John, but not for me. Steve recognized that we needed to do something other than debate theology, and John took that challenge and struck up a conversation with a group of strangers. I wandered into the discussion a little way through and participated, but if it had not been for my colleagues, I'd have sat on that patio, accusing them of theological insanity, all night long.

Would you treat the people around you differently if you knew they were on a path to spend eternity separated from God?

Don't misunderstand me, I think theology matters a great deal. I even think God designed me to be fascinated by it. I don't think it's a mistake to love theology, study it, or even to debate it. As I confessed in the car as we were driving away from Beefy's, the mistake is to treat theology like a game, or a puzzle to be solved, especially when there are hurting, confused, and lost people all around us. I think it's worth spending hours trying to understand the nature of God, but it isn't worth missing the chance to talk to someone who doesn't know God at all.

We challenged Luke with the question of whether or not he would treat the situation with his friend differently if she were considering killing her one-year-old. I'd like to challenge you to consider whether you would treat the people around you differently if you knew they were on a path to spend eternity separated from God.

I wrote the first draft of this letter the day before I flew to Tucson. I do not like talking to people next to me on a plane, but as I went through security, I (slightly grumpily) told my colleague Joanna that I was going to have to tell someone on the plane about Jesus because I just wrote this newsletter. Shortly after our plane left the ground, Joanna pulled cards out of her bag so we could play a game. Sitting on the other side of me was a man in his late twenties named Carl, whom I had already briefly greeted. In the absence of any better ideas for a way to start a conversation, I invited Carl to join us in our game. He pleasantly accepted.



We talked briefly about each other's work. He was pro-life, and he seemed to have a positive attitude toward my description of Justice for All, but it didn't naturally evolve into much of a conversation. He made a comment about not being very religious, but I hesitated. In the moment, I couldn't think of a non-awkward way to pursue that subject.

As I was in the midst of losing a card game to this total stranger, I asked myself, "Would I treat this man differently if I really believed he was on a path to spend an eternity separated from God? Would I care so much about him thinking I was weird?" I prayed for wisdom and for the right words. I couldn't think of a natural way to bring the topic back to religion, so finally I just went for broke and said, "So I know this may sound kind of weird, and some people wouldn't want to talk about it, so if you don't, just say so; I have a thick skin. What do you think about Jesus?" To my surprise, he was happy to have a conversation about Jesus. His wife had recently bought a Bible and they were reading through it.

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Joanna and I talked with him for the rest of the flight about Jesus, shared the case for the Resurrection, and tried to explain some of the confusing aspects of Christianity. I gave him my contact information, and I hope I hear from him.

If you're anything like me, the thought of starting a conversation with strangers is terrifying. Don't assume I'm full of courage; usually I have an exhibit or a poll table to help me start conversations. Maybe you'd like to do what I'm suggesting, but you don't know where to start. Here's a simple option: *just once this month*, go into a Starbucks, spend five bucks on a cup of coffee, and ask God if He wants you to talk to someone. Consider walking up to a stranger and asking, "Hey, a friend of mine had a conversation recently about God and I was wondering if you could take a minute to share your opinion. Do you think God exists? If so, what is he like?"

What do you have to lose? What do *they* have to gain?

In Christ,
Tim

P.S. In his latest newsletter, Steve shares his own reflection on what he learned through this experience. Read it here: www.ifaweb.org/Beefy

Recent Projects and Updates

- **Support-Raising Update:** I am currently at 85% of my support-raising goal! Thank you so much for generously supporting me and making conversations with people like Luke possible. If you haven't already, please prayerfully consider joining my regular [support](#) team.
- **Appearances on Pro-Life Podcast:** *Life Report* is the best pro-life podcast out there, and I'm not just saying that because my brother, Josh Brahm, is the host. It's an excellent resource and a great way to keep your mind engaged for a half hour at a time while you do laundry (at least, that's what I usually do when I listen to it). Last February, I had the pleasure of recording four episodes with Josh, all of which are now available (episodes 168-171). You can listen to them on iTunes by searching for "Life Report," or go directly to <http://www.prolifepodcast.net> to watch the videos.
- **JFA Philosophy Team VS The Toughest Pro-Choice Argument:** One of the many aspects of my job that I love is working with smart and passionate people to solve hard problems. In the last two years, we have invested a great deal of time into trying to respond to what we consider to be the most difficult pro-choice argument: "Even if the unborn is human, a woman can have an abortion because she has the right to refuse the use of her body to anyone that needs to use it, and especially in the case of rape."

Steve Wagner recently posted his essay online, titled "De Facto Guardian," representing the JFA team. It is an excellent piece of work, in my opinion the best response to this argument currently available. You can read it at www.ifaweb.org/DFG.



This is a picture of me in studio with my brother Josh and Gabi Vehrs of Right to Life of Central California, recording four episodes of *Life Report*. Check them out at www.prolifepodcast.net!