

## The Case for Christ - Lee Strobel

*Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are bearing witness about Yourself; Your testimony is not true." Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, My judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent Me. John 8:12-15 ESV*

*So Jesus said to those who had believed in Him, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32 ESV*

Lee Strobel, a reporter for the Chicago Tribune, was an avowed atheist. Lee was antagonistic towards God. His wife said she was confused about faith. When they were dating and got married Lee said there was no room for God in their relationship. When Leslie started attending church Lee told her that this wasn't what he had signed up for. He thought nothing good could come of it, but in the following months he saw positive changes in her character. Why do you think some people fight against faith in God?

Leslie said she came to know God with her heart. Lee needed to investigate and believe in God with his mind. When Leslie invited Lee to church he attended with his reporter's notebook confident that he'd be able to explain to her that she was involved in a cult. Lee thought it was going to be easy to expose the wrong thinking of Christianity but instead it took him two years to investigate the issues. He said it was the most exciting story he ever investigated. What is something that you have investigated?

Lee knew that the Gospels were ancient historical documents. He went to experts to study the accuracy of the documents and to learn how they were verified as part of the Bible. Lee began his quest believing that the Bible was full of contradictions but when he actually studied it he found that wasn't true. As Lee tried to disprove the Bible he found himself fascinated with it. He said he started out as a hard-hearted atheist and found himself so intrigued by the Bible that he was willing to follow wherever the evidence led him.

How would you describe your beliefs? What has led you to believe the way you do?

Lee learned that there is much better verification for the books of the Bible than any of the other ancient documents. Homer's Iliad is documented with 600 copies, the oldest dated about a thousand years after it was written. There are about 5,000 ancient copies of the Greek New Testament as well as documents that contain portions of the NT writings. Although Lee wanted to disprove the Bible, the Bible was disproving his beliefs. Have you ever known you were right about something and found out you were wrong?

Lee decided to see if there was any evidence outside of the New Testament that corroborated what the NT says about Jesus. Josephus wrote, "Now there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man for He was a doer of wonderful works. A teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles." Not only does the Bible write about Jesus, but other historical records tell of Him, also. Why is this important?

Lee found that historical evidence led him to believe that the Bible is true. Although he began his quest to prove the Bible wrong, when he compiled his lists of the pros and cons he realized that it would take more faith for him to believe atheism than Christianity. Lee studied the prophecies of the Old Testament and realized that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies. Lee said that the Bible challenged his world-view on a very deep level. He said he did not want there to be a God because he didn't want to be held accountable for his life. The more his wife's values were changing, the more scared he was that he was losing her. After God changed Lee they were closer as a couple than ever before.

*Dear Lord, Your existence doesn't depend on whether or not we believe in You. Your might and goodness surpasses anything that our minds can ever fathom. Come into our lives and change us. Help us to love You with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Take away our doubts and misconceptions and fill us with Your goodness, grace, and mercy, in Jesus' name, Amen.*