

Is a hammer your only tool?



I'm pretty sure it's never happened, but I don't think anyone has ever called me a "handyman," with good reason. God has gifted different people with different skills. Being handy around the house isn't exactly my strong suit. If you want me to write a computer program to manage the logistics of your business, that I could do. But don't put a hammer in my hand or someone's gonna get hurt, and it might not just be me!

I'm exaggerating, but only slightly—a quick funny story. I was in my men's Bible study one day, and the guys were talking about what they did over the weekend. "I knocked down a wall in the dining room and rewired all the electrical," one said. Another guy said, "Sounds fun. I plumbed our basement for an additional bathroom and bought all the fixtures." Then I said, "I put two self-adhesive hooks in the drawer in our bathroom, so I would have somewhere to put my toothbrush." They laughed, but what's even funnier is a few days later, the hooks fell off! (Actually, to help make myself not look too bad, sometime after my brother-in-law built our current home, I helped finish drywalling the unfinished basement without a single trip to the emergency room!)

You may have heard the saying, "If the only tool you have is a hammer, everything around you looks like a nail!" If you haven't heard that before, you have now. The meaning is self-evident. You try to solve every problem or challenge using the same approach or tactic—kind of a "one-size-fits-all" mentality.

I think I went through that phase during college, early in my apologetics pursuit. As a Christian studying physics at a state university, my professors forcefully challenged my faith. At the time, I was generally unable to defend my beliefs, especially those pertaining to the Genesis creation account. God put it on my heart to start researching, and I did so with every fiber of my being. The more I discovered, the more fired-up I was about my faith. The more fired-up I was, the more I researched, which led to being even more fired-up. And so on, and so on.

However, I was not only lacking maturity, but I was also quite naive when it came to being truly effective in sharing my faith. I had learned a lot of very powerful scientific evidence for the validity of the Genesis creation account, and that was my "hammer." What were my "nails?" Well, just about everyone that came my way! I always turned the conversation towards the creation vs. evolution controversy. What's interesting is that as sincere as I was and as strong as my case had been, the conversations were often not very effective. That didn't stop me, however. I kept charging forward, learning more and more and sharing more and more. Undoubtedly, there were times when what I shared was extremely effective in defending the biblical narrative regarding origins and exposing holes in the secular views. But even in those cases, it generally ended in the other person simply starting to question the whole idea of evolution. But that's as far as it went.

Question of the Month

What I failed to recognize was that for many of the people I interacted with, their problem wasn't a "nail," so my hammer, while intriguing and mentally stimulating, was virtually useless. It's somewhat like meeting someone who is dying of thirst, and you start showing them the latest and greatest iPhone. It may be very impressive, and they can clearly see the advantages it has, but it's not what they really need right now. In fact, there's a good chance that the more you share, the more annoyed they might get. And it's not because there's anything wrong with your argument; it's just missing the mark.

Many of the people I interact with certainly reject the Genesis creation account, but that's not ultimately the cause of their skepticism. Very often, they have had some fairly traumatic experiences that led them to reject God or religion in general. When we come along and, directly or indirectly, try to tell them the Bible is true because we can "prove" the Genesis creation account, it is irrelevant to them. They are not looking for logical reasons to trust the Bible. They generally don't want the Bible to be true and are uncomfortable when presented with powerful evidence of its Divine inspiration.

Overall, we are dealing with a spiritual issue, not an academic argument. I've stated it many times before, but Romans 1:18-25 tells us God has put so much evidence for His existence in nature itself that man is without excuse. There's not a lack of evidence; it's a spiritual issue. Many people have chosen to reject this evidence, not because of their superior intellect but because of their sinful nature. They don't want to live by God's standards. They are much more comfortable creating their own worldview, complete with standards they can fairly easily achieve.

I believe sharing evidence for the validity of the Genesis creation account is very important, and I spend a fair amount of time doing just that. However, we must keep a balance and, more importantly, get to know people to determine the exact cause of their skepticism. Then, with grace and compassion, we can walk alongside them, sharing biblically-based answers and the love of Christ.

You might have to put the "hammer" away for a while and reach for a different tool, realizing you're not always dealing with a "nail!"

If you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don't hesitate to [contact us!](#)