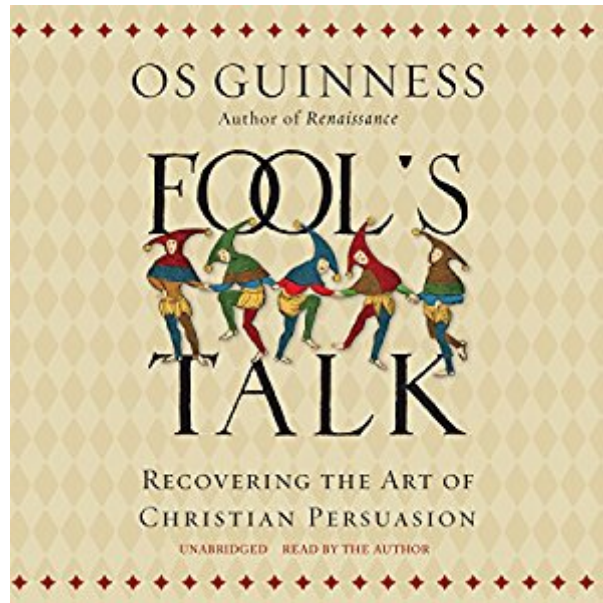


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# Fool's Talk: Recovering The Art Of Christian Persuasion



## Synopsis

In the post-Christian context, public life has become markedly more secular and private life infinitely more diverse. Yet many Christians still rely on cookie-cutter approaches to evangelism and apologetics. Most of these methods assume that people are open to, interested in, and needy for spiritual insight when increasingly most people are not. The urgent need, then, is the capacity to persuade - to make a convincing case for the Gospel to people who are not interested in it. In his magnum opus, Os Guinness offers a comprehensive presentation of the art and power of creative persuasion. Christians have often relied on proclaiming and preaching, protesting and picketing, but are strikingly weak in persuasion - the ability to talk to people who are closed to what is being said. Actual persuasion requires more than a one-size-fits-all approach. Guinness notes, "Jesus never spoke to two people the same way, and neither should we." Following the tradition of Erasmus, Pascal, G. K. Chesterton, C. S. Lewis, Malcolm Muggeridge, and Peter Berger, Guinness demonstrates how apologetic persuasion requires both the rational and the imaginative. Persuasion is subversive, turning the tables on listeners' assumptions to surprise them with signals of transcendence and the credibility of the Gospel. This book is the fruit of 40 years of thinking, honed in countless talks and discussions at many of the leading universities and intellectual centers of the world. Discover afresh the persuasive power of Christian witness from one of the leading apologists and thinkers of the era.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Could a book be more timely? Here is a man who has spent 40 years in the trenches of apologetics in our declining culture and who distills what he has learned and gives it to us in this volume. He sees apologetics in its noblest form "a way to lead others to Christ. I hate to use a trite designation like "an instant classic", but I believe this is the right place to use it. Mr. Guinness had me hooked in the Introduction as he perceptively diagnosed our age as the Age of the Self and the Selfie. We can never engage in this age unless we understand it first. It is the effects of that age that has done a number on what he calls "the art of Christian persuasion." The loss of evangelism has been the greater cost, he rightly explains. He pays tribute to C. S. Lewis, Frances Schaeffer, and Peter Berger as those who have influenced him over the years and this volume is truly worthy to stand beside their works. I am shocked at how many sentences I underlined and how many paragraphs I starred all through this volume. It never lagged, it had no fluff or filler, and was masterful to the last page. I often give more of a summary of content in a book review, but in this case I just want to encourage Christians everywhere to read and interact with this volume. I fear my summary might obscure how good this book really is. I give the highest recommendation possible to this volume that will likely be as important in 30 years as it will be when first released. I received this book free from the publisher. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

Justice Kennedy, writing for the Supreme Court majority ruling that same-sex marriage is a fundamental right according to the US Constitution, concludes with this much-quoted sentence: "Finally, it must be emphasized that religions, and those who adhere to religious doctrines, may continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned." The door to legal coercion is closed, but the avenue to persuasion remains open. The timing for a book on "Recovering the Art of Christian Persuasion" couldn't be better, and there is no better author to rise to the challenge. There is instructive wisdom in every chapter, shaped by Guinness's wide reading and personal experience and delivered with his signature literary excellence. But the key chapter to my mind is "Anatomy of Unbelief" in which Os contrasts "truth twisters" and "truth seekers" and elaborates on the biblical view that "the central core of the anatomy of unbelief stems from its willful abuse of truth." Exactly how that plays out is presented in an illuminating way in a number of concrete instances. As for apologetic strategies are concerned, many are offered derived from a variety of historical figures who contributed creatively to the defense of the faith.

I have been benefited from the work of Os Guinness since 1977 when I read his book, *The Dust of Death*. Since then I have read nearly all of his subsequent books. Guinness rises to the occasion again with *Fool's Talk*. Hardened skeptics and militant unbelievers are often a puzzle to Christian apologists. Yet they need to understand Christianity as much as anyone. Even the best of arguments alone sometimes fail to stick to the souls of these unbelievers. Because of this, we need the rhetorical wisdom of Os Guinness, evangelicalism's greatest living social critic. He speaks from long and broad experience as a Christian statesman. His writing is clear and engaging and his grasp of all the pertinent literature is impressive and edifying. *Fool's Talk* will make its readers wiser and more creative in commending the matchless gospel of Jesus Christ.

This book is evangelism gold! I highly recommend it to all Christians. Evangelism is more than tracks and gimmicks, evangelism is sharing Christ not because we have to but because we love people and it is unkind to not share the life changing truth of the gospel. Often I see people share in awkward ways. Many are unsure of how to share. This book takes evangelism seriously and walks people through the "how to talk" about the gospel by getting to the heart of the person you are addressing. When we share, not everyone will accept it, but it is unkind not to share the truth of the gospel with those who have not heard. This book helps you know how to ask good questions so you can understand the person you are talking to. We must listen first before we can properly share because getting to the person's heart is most important. This book is genius and is the perfect tool for the believer to use to learn the art of persuasion. It is a lost art of talking to people and being moved by them as creations made in the image of Christ that is needed more than ever today. I am very thankful for this book and really encourage you to read it. I have grown in the love of talking with people because of this book. I received a free copy of this book from IVP Press for the purpose of an honest review.

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