



# Talking Points

Meaningful conversations with non-believers



# How I define a non-believer

An individual who has no affiliation with an organized religion, whether they are fully atheist, agnostic, or simply “non-religious.”



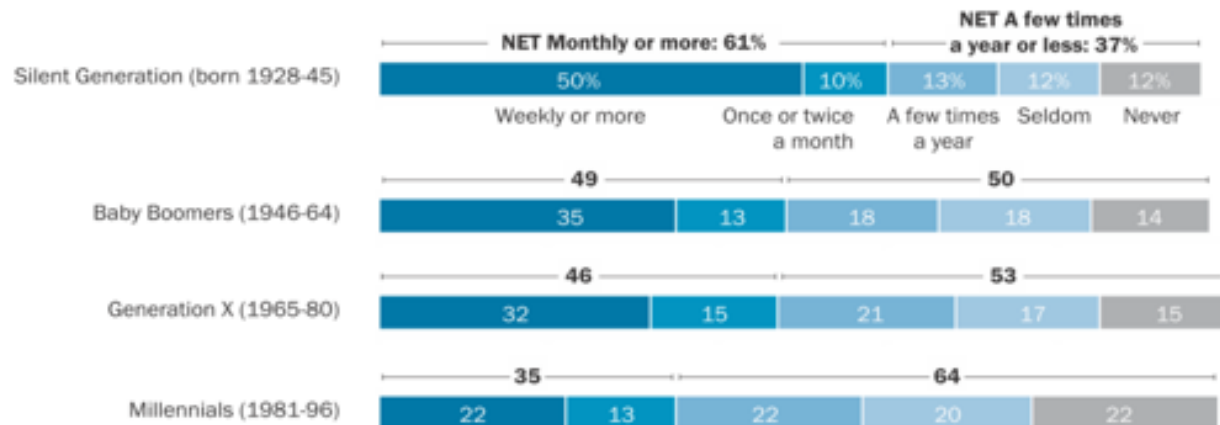
# A few things to know

- 4% describe themselves as atheist
- 5% describe themselves as agnostic
- 26% say they have no religion in particular

*In 2018/2019, % of U.S. adults who identify as ...*



*In 2018/2019, % of U.S. adults who say they attend religious services ...*



Note: Don't know/refused not shown.

Source: Aggregated Pew Research Center political surveys conducted January 2018-July 2019 on the telephone.

"In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace"



# Consider this



- We do not understand the nature of the universe the same way non-believers do
- Non-believers cannot understand the Word of God as we do



# 1 Corinthians 1:18-23 (NLT)

18 The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God. 19 As the Scriptures say,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise  
and discard the intelligence of the intelligent.”

20 So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world’s brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish.

# 1 Corinthians 1:18-23 (NLT)

21 Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe. 22 It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom. 23 So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense.



A background image showing two white birds, possibly herons or egrets, in flight. They are positioned vertically, with one bird above the other. Their wings are spread wide, and they appear to be in a dynamic, perhaps confrontational, pose. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be overlaid clearly.

# Where we run into trouble

- We try to debate.



DEBATE

AT THE  
CREATION  
MUSEUM.



# 1 Timothy 2:24-26 (NLT)

23 Again I say, don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. 24 A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. 25 Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth. 26 Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.

# In your talks...

- Find common ground
- Know what you're talking about
- **Don't try to win**

# Acts 17:16-34 (NLT)

18 He also had a debate with some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. When he told them about Jesus and his resurrection, they said, “What’s this babbler trying to say with these strange ideas he’s picked up?” Others said, “He seems to be preaching about some foreign gods.”

19 Then they took him to the high council of the city. “Come and tell us about this new teaching,” they said. 20 “You are saying some rather strange things, and we want to know what it’s all about.” 21 (It should be explained that all the Athenians as well as the foreigners in Athens seemed to spend all their time discussing the latest ideas.)

# Acts 17:16-34 (NLT)

22 So Paul, standing before the council, addressed them as follows: “Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious in every way, 23 for as I was walking along I saw your many shrines. And one of your altars had this inscription on it: ‘To an Unknown God.’ This God, whom you worship without knowing, is the one I’m telling you about.

24 “He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn’t live in man-made temples, 25 and human hands can’t serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need. 26 From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries.



# Acts 17:16-34 (NLT)

27 “His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us.  
28 For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your[d] own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ 29 And since this is true, we shouldn’t think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone.

30 “God overlooked people’s ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him. 31 For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead.”

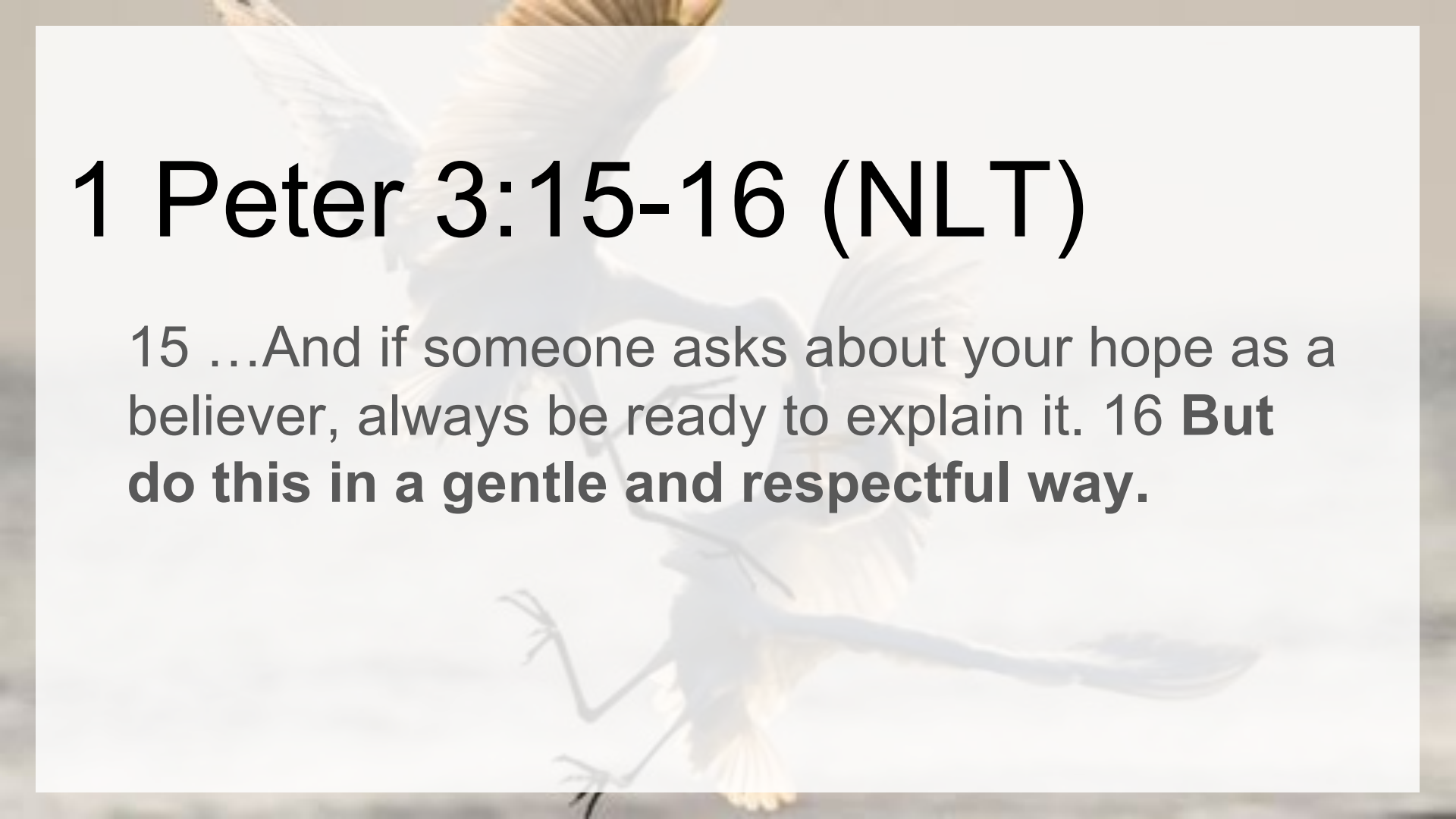
# Acts 17:16-34 (NLT)

32 When they heard Paul speak about the resurrection of the dead, some laughed in contempt, but others said, “We want to hear more about this later.” 33 That ended Paul’s discussion with them, 34 but some joined him and became believers.

# Where we run into trouble



- We try to debate
- We try to force the conversation



# 1 Peter 3:15-16 (NLT)

15 ...And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. 16 **But do this in a gentle and respectful way.**

# Witnessing in Acts



- God sends the witness
- The witness does what God requires
- Someone approaches the witness



# Where we run into trouble

- We try to debate
- We try to force the conversation
- We don't walk our talk



# Romans 2:19-24 (NLT)

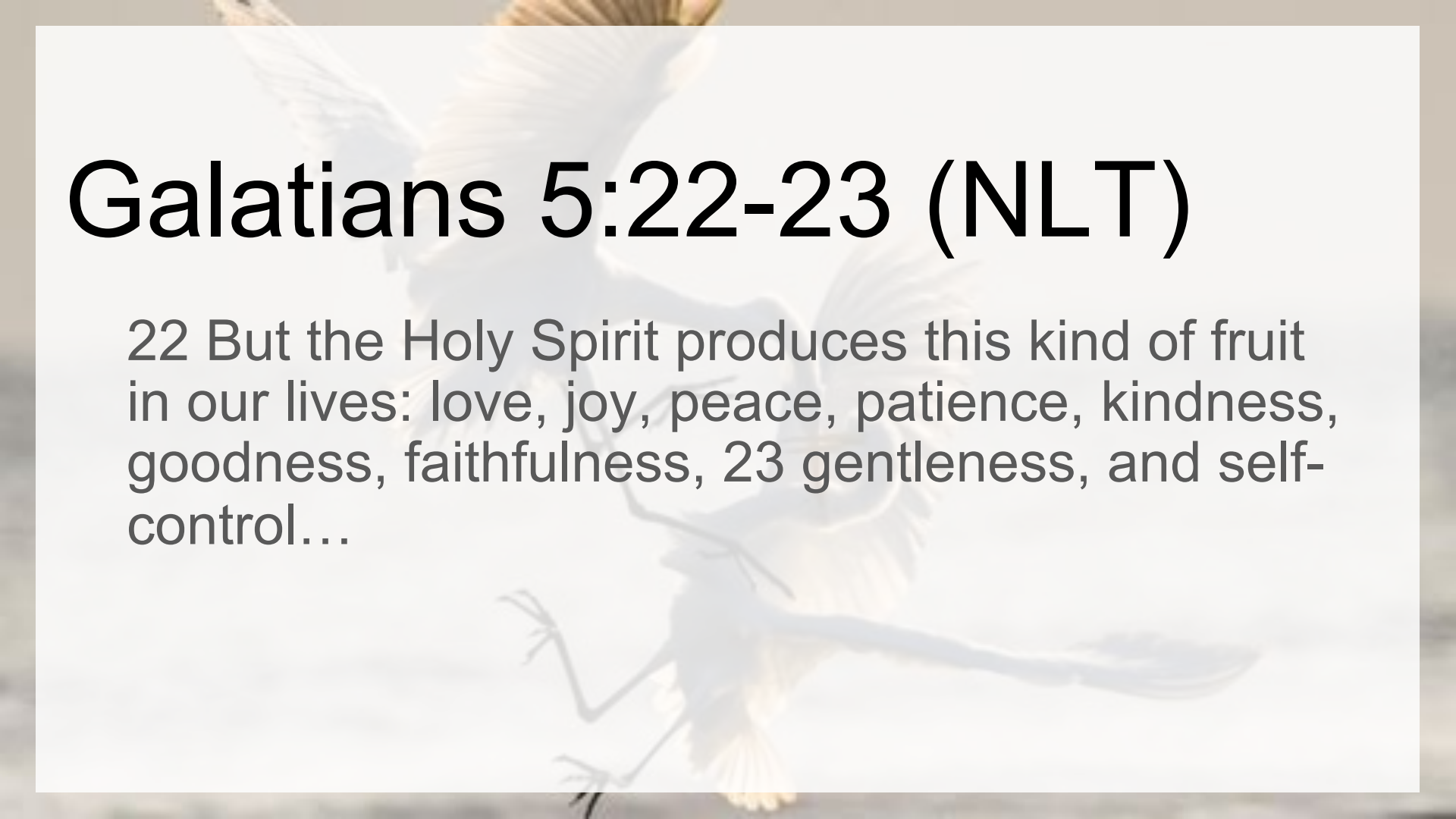
19 You are convinced that you are a guide for the blind and a light for people who are lost in darkness. 20 You think you can instruct the ignorant and teach children the ways of God. For you are certain that God's law gives you complete knowledge and truth.

# Romans 2:19-24 (NLT)

21 Well then, if you teach others, why don't you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but do you steal? 22 You say it is wrong to commit adultery, but do you commit adultery? You condemn idolatry, but do you use items stolen from pagan temples? 23 You are so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonor God by breaking it.

**24 No wonder the Scriptures say, "The Gentiles blaspheme the name of God because of you."**

# Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)



22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control...

# What to do?

- Focus on your own walk
  - Are you in the Word?
  - Do you have a quiet time?
  - Are you following Christ's example?

# What to do?

- Pray for the opportunity
  - Who is in your life? Your “one”?
  - If they came up to you right now and told you they wanted to speak about Christ, would you be ready?

# What to do?



- Have a **conversation**
  - Don't argue
  - Don't focus on winning or being "right"
  - LISTEN



The background of the image shows two birds, possibly herons or egrets, in flight. They are positioned diagonally, with one bird higher and further to the left than the other. Their wings are spread wide, showing the intricate structure of the feathers. The birds are rendered in a semi-transparent, light grey color, allowing the white background to show through. The overall composition is clean and minimalist, focusing on the shapes and movement of the birds.

**Let it go when it's not time**

**Be there when it is**