



## The Power of Prayer: Good News for Hindus

by J. Brennan<sup>1</sup>

Anyone who's shared the gospel with a follower of Hinduism will likely be familiar with a common refrain going something like this: "Yes, what you are sharing is very much like what I believe. I also believe in Jesus. You see, all religions are different paths to the same God."

Our knee-jerk reaction to a response like this—at least mine has often been—is to promptly set about showing how it's just not true. We display our Western logic to prove that the gods are not the same and that Christ is supreme. We engage in debate knowing we are the stronger party.

Indians love to argue religion, and the Hindu worldview imparts to its children a penchant for obscurity, a suspicion of exclusivity, and a way of reasoning that inverts our normal rules of logic. The upside is that Hindus have a built-in, spiritual tuning fork that resonates easily with any talk of the divine.

It's much easier to broach the subject of religion with a Hindu than with a secular Westerner. The question, then, is how to turn those conversations to a good dialogue, not an exasperating and pointless conversation. As a fellow traveler among Hindus, I'd like to offer a few basic principles for fruitful interaction.

### The Power of Prayer

For all their philosophical pretensions, Hindus are religious pragmatists at heart. They patronize certain gods because they, or someone they know, can attest to some benefit they've received from them. Now, obviously, we don't pander to mercenary motives in prayer. We do, however, have a heavenly Father who loves to give good gifts to his children.

So be open with your Hindu friends about the power of prayer in Jesus's name and about the God who hears and answers prayer. Ask early on how you can pray for them, and then let them hear you praying for them—for their requests, for their salvation, for spiritual blessing. Most importantly, persist in prayer for them and expect God to answer. Ask them about the things you are praying for and affirm the power of Christ as he answers.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.imb.org/2016/10/11/good-news-for-hindus/>

## **The Plain Bible**

When talking with a Hindu friend, open your Bible. Hindus are naturally drawn to religious scriptures. Hinduism is chock full of half-truths and outright lies about reality and the nature of God. Instead of confronting these through debate, let God's Word do your arguing for you. The more they read or hear, the more opportunity there is for the Spirit to imprint the truth on their hearts.

There are a few key topics that Hinduism is particularly fuzzy on. Here are some passages that can shed light where it's needed: the story of creation (Gen. 1–2); the fall of humankind (Gen. 3); God's Law (Ex. 20:1–21); true uncleanness (Mark 7:14–23).

Do all you can to get them hearing or reading the Word for themselves. Bring up the Bible as you talk with them. Ask questions about what they've read, listen to their responses, and direct them back to the Word.

## **The Person of Christ**

Hindus who have heard of Jesus often hold him in high esteem as a religious teacher. To turn that fascination to true adoration, however, we need to be clear about who Christ is and what he has done. As you open the Bible with your Hindu friends, let them see Christ's power over sin, Satan, and death. The powerful person of Christ speaks for himself among our Hindu friends as you point to the basic truths of the gospel.

Here is a roadmap to walk a Hindu friend along that gospel path: the healing of the lame man (Mark 2:1–12); Jesus defeats Satan (Luke 4:1–13); Jesus's death (Mark 15); his resurrection (Matt. 28).

## **A Proper Response**

For Hindus, the afterlife is a world of second chances. Their belief in reincarnation tends to insulate them from any sense of urgency regarding their eternity. Therefore, as we present the gospel, we need to bring the implications of the gospel—depravity, judgment, lostness—to bear on the person we are talking to.

Ask probing questions to help them place themselves in the midst of the biblical world they've been learning about: "Do you think your sin separates you from God (Rom. 3:23)? Do you think your spirit could be 'dead' because of sin (Eph. 2:1)? What makes someone clean before God? Are you?"

Building on the foundation laid through the gospel truths, we can guide our Hindu friends to the proper response: to repent and believe. A few passages that may help to bring that point home: the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31); the Pharisee and the sinful woman (Luke 7:36–50); Peter's hearers repent (Acts 2:37–41); count the cost of belief in Jesus (Matt. 10:26–39); salvation through faith (Eph. 2:1–10).

