

CHARLIE'S TACTICS: 13 WAYS TO WIN THE WORLD

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HOW TO LIVE AN ATTRACTIVE LIFE IN AN ANTAGONISTIC WORLD

1 Peter 3

Big Idea:

If you want to be an effective witness for Jesus in an insane world, you must build a life that is faithful, hopeful, prepared, gentle, courageous, and deeply grounded in the lordship of Christ over all of life.

1. Resolve to do good with your life no matter what

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:13–14*

- “Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?”
- “But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed.”

Key Emphasis

- Peter is writing to a church being actively persecuted by a hostile culture.
- The point is not:
 - do good and life will be easy
 - do bad and life will be hard
- The point is:



- all paths in this broken world include suffering
- so you might as well suffer for doing good and be blessed for it

Supporting argument

- Peter did good, and they crucified him.
- Many in the church did good, and they were persecuted.
- Charlie did good, and they shot him for it.

Key Emphasis

- There is no path without suffering.
- The question is:
 - will you suffer and get a reward?
 - or suffer and not be blessed?

Illustration

- “We might as well embrace the suffering on the path of doing good so that we can be blessed.”

Key Emphasis

- We tend to think only about harm to the body.
- Peter is pushing us to think about who can actually judge the soul.
- Jesus said:
 - do not fear the one who can kill the body



- fear the one who can judge the soul

Big takeaway

- You must have eyes past the short-term temporal existence to eternity on the other side of death.
-

2. Resolve to fear God over man

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:14*

- “Do not fear their threats.”
- “Do not be frightened.”

Key Emphasis

- If you fear man:
 - you cannot love them
 - you will fail to serve God
- If you fear God:
 - you can love man
 - you can serve God

Supporting argument

- You are going to fear something.
- What you fear reveals what you have submitted to.



Illustration

Dad and discipline

- Were you ever afraid of your dad giving you a spanking?
- Love and fear can simultaneously exist.
- In fact, they must, if love is to be genuine.
- You cannot love something you do not respect.

Key Emphasis

- A good father:
 - sets standards
 - gives clear instructions
 - gives real consequences
- That did not diminish love or respect.
- It increased love and respect.

Supporting argument

- Fearing God is not the fear of an abused child.
- It is the reverent fear of a good God who has given you the moral responsibility and dignity of making choices that affect eternity.

Key Emphasis

- If you fear God, you are submitted to Him.
- If you fear man, you are submitted to them.



Practical application in the flow

If you fear man, and man says:

- say this
- do not say this
- put this in your body
- act this way at work
- do this so HR will not come after you

Then fear of man has made you a servant of man.

Big takeaway

- If you fear man, you cannot serve God. Full stop.
-

3. Love Jesus more than anything else

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:15*

- “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.”

Key Emphasis

- Revere means:
 - adore
 - admire

Supporting argument



- Peter's solution to a hostile world is not first:
 - read more books
 - get better at verbal jiu-jitsu
 - become better at apologetics
- Peter's first solution is:
 - stoke a holy fire for reverence and adoration of Jesus Christ

Key Emphasis

- We all talk about what we admire.
- We all brag about what we adore.

Questions in the flow

- What do you talk about all the time?
- What team?
- What player?
- What product?
- What brand?

Key Emphasis

- If you love Jesus more than anything, talking about Him becomes natural.
- The problem is not that we are incapable of love.
- The problem is that our loves are often disordered.



Illustration

Pork chops, applesauce, mashed potatoes, gravy, apple pie

- Loving other things is not the issue.
- Misplacing loves is the issue.

Supporting argument

- We are wired in the image of God to love deeply and widely.
- But unless Jesus is loved most, all other loves get misplaced and misleading.
- When love is rightly ordered, everything else falls into place.

Key Emphasis

- Loving Jesus more than the accolades of man is freedom.
- If you live for the affirmation of man, you are not free.
- You are a slave.

Big takeaway

- Revering Christ frees you:
 - from the tyranny of others' approval
 - to love people no matter how they treat you

Application in the flow

- That is why we:
 - come to church



- sing songs
- live in city group
- open our hearts to the Word of God

Because our passions must be stirred for Jesus more than they currently are.

Charlie connection

- Charlie was driven to do good.
- He feared God more than man.
- He acted with a great love for Jesus everywhere he went.

Key Emphasis

- He was not going to stand before Christ and say:
 - “The cost seemed high.”
 - “I wasn’t sure I could trust your promises.”
 - “So I took the easy road.”

Illustration

Erica Kirk and grief

- There is real short-term pain.
- The widow’s experience is real:
 - shock
 - adrenaline



- memorial
 - family gathered
 - everyone goes home
 - adrenaline dumps
 - then the weight settles in
- The short-term pain is real.
 - It may last a long time.
 - But there is a weight of glory waiting.

Big takeaway

- Do you love Jesus more than life itself?
-

4. Connect everything to Christ

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:15*

- “But in your hearts, revere Christ as Lord.”

Key Emphasis

- Christ is Lord over all.
- Either Christ is Lord of everything, or He is Lord of nothing.

Supporting argument

- The church is having strange conversations about what Christ is and is not Lord over.



- The issue often gets framed as:
 - what pastors should say
 - what churches should address
 - whether churches should engage politics

But the real question underneath it is

- Is Christ really Lord over everything?

Answer

- Yes.
- He is Lord over:
 - education
 - sexuality
 - family structures
 - morality
 - politics
 - everything

Key Emphasis

- If Jesus talked about it, pastors should talk about it.
- If it exists in the world God made, the church has the freedom and the obligation to address it from a Christian perspective.

Strong line



- It boggles the mind to think there are large categories of life affecting millions that pastors think they should not say anything about.

Key Emphasis

- People live in the real world.
- They need to know what Jesus says about the world they actually live in.

Illustration

King of kings

- It is in His name.
- He is the big K King over little kings.
- That means Jesus is king over:
 - parliaments
 - congresses
 - senators
 - monarchies
 - kings
 - queens
 - presidents
 - governors
 - governments

Supporting argument



- When people say, “You can’t legislate morality,” what they mean is:
 - “I can argue for my morality in public”
 - “you cannot argue for yours”
- But all legislation is fundamentally moral.
- The question is never whether morality will be legislated.
- The question is always:
 - **whose morality will we legislate?**

Key Emphasis

- The church has been gaslit into silence in the public square.
- Meanwhile, the enemy has not stopped advocating its morality.
- It is time for the church to find her voice again.
- It is time for the pulpit to come alive again.
- It is time for the Word of God to be opened again over the culture.

Charlie connection

- Charlie connected all of life to the fundamental principles of God’s Word.
- He worked from ultimate realities.
- He tied every issue back to:
 - the lordship of Jesus
 - the kingship of Christ
 - the immutable truths of the Word of God



Key Emphasis

- That made him unbeatable in debate.
- And when they could not beat him in ideas, they resorted to violence.

Big takeaway

- Charlie's voice is gone.
 - But you still have a voice.
 - Are you using it?
-

5. Put in the work to know what you believe

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:15*

- "Always be prepared to give an answer."

Key Emphasis

- Do not brush off Charlie's effectiveness as "he was just brilliant."
- Charlie was effective because he had a work ethic.

Illustration

Frank Turek's line at the memorial

- The only thing that exceeded Charlie's brilliance was his humility.

Supporting argument



- Always asking questions
- Always learning
- Always reading

Illustration

Pastor Mark and the whiteboard session

- Charlie asked for help with theology.
- Wanted to be accurate.
- Wanted a four-hour whiteboard session on major doctrines because people were asking him theological questions.
- He wanted to answer from a theologically sound place.

Key Emphasis

- Do not say:
 - “I could never do that.”
- Say:
 - “Am I willing to put in the work?”

Illustration

- Charlie did not roll out of bed ready for college campuses.
- He read a hundred books a year.
- He read three hours a day.
- He was a voracious reader and learner.



Key Emphasis

- Yes, he had a unique mind.
- Yes, he had a unique calling.
- But do not miss the work ethic that got him there.

Practical application in the flow

This is why we have:

- Vector College
- Life Track University
- city groups
- podcasts
- church resources

Big takeaway

- When the moment comes, will you be ready to give an answer?
- The verb tense is ongoing:
 - always be preparing

Practical discipleship note

- Open Bible
- Notebook out
- Take notes



- Learn how to learn
 - Hear and write
 - Process what you are hearing
-

6. Listen before you “look cute”

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:15*

- “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you...”

Key Emphasis

- This assumes you are listening to their question before answering it.

Preacher note in flow

- “Look cute” is just a preacher’s alliteration line.
- The point is:
 - do less talking
 - do more listening

Key Emphasis

- You do not have to have all the perfect verbal jiu-jitsu.
- You probably need to do less talking and more listening to actually be helpful.

Illustration

Charlie’s long-form videos



- In the 60- or 90-second clips, you see the answer.
- But in the full videos, you see that before the answer he often spent 15 minutes:
 - asking questions
 - listening
 - drawing people out

Illustration

- “Bro, cut them off. Tell them they’re idiots and move on.”
- But he kept listening.

Key Emphasis

- He wanted to win:
 - the argument
 - and the man

Supporting argument

- If you win the man but not the argument, you have won nothing.
- If you win the argument but not the man, you may still help those who listened.
- Better to work at winning both.

Key Emphasis

- You cannot win an argument you do not understand.
- Good missionaries are not talking bobbleheads.



- They are careful observers.

What listening reveals

- lack of faith
- stubbornness
- false thinking
- the idol they cling to
- the functional savior they look to
- the story they are telling themselves about the world

Key Emphasis

- Then you can connect Jesus to their story.
- Jesus is the better Lord.
- Jesus is the better Savior.

Big takeaway

- The key may not be better answers.
- The key may be better questions.

Illustration

- Charlie would ask questions until they realized:
 - “I haven’t thought that through.”
 - “I don’t have an answer for that.”



- He was not browbeating them into submission.
 - He was gently facilitating discovery of the inadequacy of their own worldview.
-

7. Ground your answer in logic

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:15*

- “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason...”

Key Emphasis

- Christianity is not fairy-tale feelings and emotions.
- Christianity is not:
 - checking your brain at the door
 - abandoning reason
 - walking away from logic
 - giving up common sense

Key Emphasis

- Christianity is anchored in:
 - logic
 - reason
 - words

Supporting argument



- Paul gave a sophisticated, coherent, airtight logical argument for Christianity.
- To follow Christ, you must engage your mind.

Key Emphasis

- We do not abandon reason to talk about Jesus.
- We stand on reason and logic.

Illustration

Good-faith debate

- You must be able to articulate your opponent's view in a way they would agree with.
- Until then, you are not having a real conversation.
- Otherwise you are just dealing in:
 - red herrings
 - straw men
 - logical fallacies

Illustration

- Charlie would restate their worldview better than they could.
- Then he would begin exposing holes in it.

Key Emphasis

- Christianity is not continual fallacy.
- Christianity is rugged common sense, logic, and reason.



Big takeaway

- Christianity is not checking your brain at the door.
 - Christianity may be, for the first time, honestly engaging your mind in the world you live in.
-

8. Live like you actually have hope

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:15*

- “Always be prepared to give an answer... for the hope that you have.”

Key Emphasis

- Christianity is both:
 - intellectually coherent
 - existentially satisfying

Supporting argument

- It appeals to:
 - reason
 - emotion
- It gives:
 - intellectual grounding
 - actual hope in horrific circumstances

Illustration



Erica Kirk

- She can call for justice through the magistrate.
- She can forgive as a Christian citizen.
- She can still demonstrate hope.
- That only makes sense if there is reward and blessing on the other side of death.

Key Emphasis

- Without Christ:
 - it is all over
 - the plans are done
 - the family nights are done
 - the future is done
- Hope only exists if there is a Savior beyond the grave.

Strong line

- The grave is the great hope robber of all of us.
- Scientific studies prove one in one people die.

Illustration

Man in the atrium

- He spent years resisting Christ.
- Watched his wife grow in Christ.



- Thought Christianity was fake, emotional, pretend, a crutch.
- Then he got saved.
- He realized Christ was more real than the false reality he had been living in.
- He was actually being changed from the inside out.

Key Emphasis

- Nobody will be converted by the answer guy alone.
- A lot of people want to follow the hope guy.

Charlie connection

- Charlie was not just “Bible answer Google guy.”
- He was living a compellingly beautiful life.
- People saw:
 - kindness
 - generosity
 - courage
 - joy
 - dialogue
 - hope

Key Emphasis

- After his death, people ran to churches for answers about why Charlie had hope and they did not.



Illustration

Hope bucket

- Your hope bucket leaks.
- Fear, anxiety, worry, busyness, distraction poke holes in it.
- Coming to church:
 - patches the leaks
 - fills the bucket

Big takeaway

- If we are not people of hope, we have nothing to offer.
-

9. Know your why

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:15*

- “Give an answer... for the hope that **you** have.”

Key Emphasis

- Not merely the answer your pastor gave.
- Not merely the answer someone else gave.
- Not merely the best quote you heard.

Supporting argument

- Pastors and Bible teachers can equip you.



- Charlie can equip you.
- But Peter is calling you to be ready to say:
 - why you follow Jesus
 - why you have hope
 - why Jesus is enough for you

Key Emphasis

- You do not have to be the dissertation guy.
- You do not have to always defend every doctrinal category at once.
- You need to be able to tell:
 - your answer
 - your story
 - your hope in Christ

Illustration

Man in the atrium again

- He had his own story.
- It was not his wife's story.
- It was his story.

Big takeaway

- You do not have to have all the answers.



- You just have to have your answer.
-

10. Presentation is everything

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:15*

- “But do this with gentleness...”

Key Emphasis

- It is not just what you say.
- It is how you say it.

Illustration

Aristotle’s three pillars

- logos
- pathos
- ethos

Supporting argument

- Logos = content
- Pathos = emotional persuasion
- Ethos = credibility of the speaker

Key Emphasis



- If the speaker's life is a wreck, the message rings hollow.
- It is:
 - what you say
 - how you say it
 - who you are

Charlie connection

- He was never belittling.
- He was never demeaning.
- He was gentle.
- With mockers, he met them where they were.
- With sincere questioners, he was:
 - gentle
 - slow
 - kind

Strong line

- Never confuse arguing with answering.
- Arguing creates heat.
- Answering sheds light.

Key Emphasis



- No one gets browbeaten into the kingdom.
- Some situations call for public defense of truth.
- But most people in your life need to be enticed, not crushed.

Strong line

- Christian pit bulls impress their fans but turn everyone else off.

Key Emphasis

- Let people reject what you say if they must.
 - But let them not be able to reject the way you loved them.
-

11. Honor the journey

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:15–16*

- “But do this with gentleness and respect.”

Key Emphasis

- Our own journey was long.
- Then once we arrive, we expect everyone else’s journey to be quick and straight.

Supporting argument

- We were stubborn.
- We rebelled.



- We ignored the obvious.
- We sinned.
- We took a long time.
- Then grace opened our eyes.

Key Emphasis

- So be gracious with people now walking the same road you just came off of.

Charlie connection

- He honored the dignity of those he engaged.
- He did not talk down to them.
- He treated them as image-bearers.

Key Emphasis

- Christianity enables us to extend to others what they refuse to give to us.
- In Christ we have all we need.
- We move toward others not to take, but to give.

12. Live a life of integrity

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:16*

- “Keeping a clear conscience so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”



Key Emphasis

- What made Charlie's death so powerful was that his life was so faithful.

Strong lines

- Words whisper.
- Actions shout.

Key Emphasis

- People who disagreed with Charlie ran into churches after his death because they had seen a beauty in his life they did not understand.

Illustration

Threefold Christian stool

- truth
- goodness
- beauty

Supporting argument

- Truth:
 - something timeless to stand on
- Goodness:
 - something true to give your life for
- Beauty:



- something stunningly better than the world can offer, lived out in real time
-

13. Be resolved and unmovable

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:17*

- “For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.”

Key Emphasis

- Charlie knew the risks.
 - He knew the threats.
 - He concluded:
 - it is better to be faithful to the end
 - than to compromise for a slightly more comfortable life on earth
 - and forfeit reward in heaven
-

THREE BIG ENDING IDEAS

14. Your music is just as important as your lyrics

Scripture: *1 Peter 3:8–9*

- “Be like-minded”
- “Be sympathetic”



- “Love one another”
- “Be compassionate and humble”
- “Do not repay evil with evil or insult for insult”
- “Repay evil with blessing”

Big Idea

- Think of your life like a song.
- A great song needs:
 - good lyrics
 - good music

Key Emphasis

- Music does not just complement lyrics.
- Music interprets lyrics.

Illustration

Santa Claus is Coming to Town

- Same lyrics
- Different tune
- Totally different effect

Illustration

“Jesus loves you” with the wrong tune



- Right lyrics
- wrong music
- wrong effect

Key Emphasis

- The music Christians are called to play is:
 - unity
 - sympathy
 - compassion
 - love
 - humility
 - forgiveness

Charlie connection

- He had the right lyrics.
- He also had the right tune.
- His life had:
 - a loving wife
 - happy kids
 - laughter
 - joy-filled engagement with opponents

Why?



- Because he was not grounded in needing their affection.
 - He already had the affection of Christ.
 - So he was free not to take, but to give.
-

15. There is no impact without contact

Big Idea

- The text implies you are living close enough to unbelievers that they can see your life and ask questions.

Charlie connection

- He could have just stayed behind a microphone.
- He could have just done response videos.
- He could have stayed safer.
- But he said:
 - I cannot impact them unless I am with them

Key Emphasis

- He wanted:
 - to see them
 - talk with them
 - hear them



- meet them
- shake their hand

Big takeaway

- Stop worrying about reaching people you do not know.
- Ask God for a vision to reach those you already know.

Questions in the flow

- Who do you work with tomorrow?
- Who has God given you proximity to?
- Who is your one more?

Application

- Invite them.
- Bring them to:
 - the unseen realm series
 - church
 - dinner
 - city group

16. “Come and see” is a great close

Scripture: *John 1*



- Jesus calls Philip.
- Philip tells Nathanael.
- Nathanael objects:
 - “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”

Key Emphasis

- Philip does not launch into a six-part argument.
- He simply says:
 - **Come and see.**

Supporting argument

- That puts the weight on them, not on you.
- It leaves a little mystery.
- It invites discovery.

Illustration

Woman at the well

- She met Jesus.
- He knew her story.
- She went back and said:
 - come and see

Big takeaway



- Who is your one more?
- Who is God calling you to invite to:
 - your home
 - your table
 - your city group
 - your church

Illustration

Fish jumping in the boat

- If God makes a fish jump in the boat, rejoice.
 - Do not immediately jump on it and start cleaning it.
 - Give it some time.
-

Scripture References in the Flow of the Message

- 1 Peter 3:13–17
- 1 Peter 3:8–9
- John 1
- Jesus' teaching about fearing the one who can judge the soul
- Reference to Christ as **King of kings**



- Reference to **Proverbs**:
 - “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger”
-

Preacher's Summary

Big Idea

To live an attractive life in an antagonistic world, you must root your whole life in Christ as Lord, fear God over man, love Jesus deeply, prepare diligently, answer gently, live hopefully, and move toward people with truth, goodness, and beauty.

13 tactics in order

1. Resolve to do good no matter what
2. Fear God over man
3. Love Jesus more
4. Connect everything to Christ
5. Put in the work to know what you believe
6. Listen before you talk
7. Ground your answer in logic
8. Live like you actually have hope
9. Know your why
10. Presentation is everything
11. Honor the journey



12. Live a life of integrity

13. Be resolved and unmovable

Three closing ideas

- Your music is just as important as your lyrics
- There is no impact without contact
- “Come and see” is a great close

Closing question

Who is your one more, and what is your next step?

