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DISCUSSION GUIDE – Based on the 3-minute video at OverflowToday.com titled:

Rick James: Blend story + facts. (Makes a gospel smoothie)

Featuring Rick James, author of the book JESUS WITHOUT RELIGION. <http://rickjameshome.com/>

Section 1

Discuss what you applied in the past seven days from the last OverflowToday show.

Read Acts 13:38-39. What is the basic, factual message that Paul is proclaiming here?

Now, scan quickly over Acts 13:15-39.

Discussion: Imagine that this is the first time you have ever heard this. Describe how verses 38-39 might initially strike your heart differently if presented after hearing the story of verses 15-37 first, versus just hearing verses 38-39 alone, as we did a few moments ago.

Section 2

Watch the podcast titled Rick James: Blend story + facts. (Makes a gospel smoothie)

at <http://OverflowToday.com>

Section 3

What did you think? What stood out to you as you watched this?

Do any of you have favorite books by authors that you like to give to a non-Christian friend? What are they and why?

Do you ever feel the tension of thinking that if you give them a book by a contemporary author, that they might not spend time reading scripture that you'd recommend for them, such as the book of John or Romans, for example? Let's compare our opinions on this.

What does Rick James say is the primary advantage to merging story and facts, be they propositional truth claims or apologetics?

How did the author contrast his enjoyment of *MERE CHRISTIANITY*, by C.S. Lewis, with the format of other good apologetic books?

Rick James used contrasted merely stating that "Jesus claimed to be God" with making the same statement in the context of discussing a passage featuring Jesus walking on water. Assuming that you have at least five minutes with a friend, discuss the pros and cons of the author's conviction about this.

What was his point regarding sharing Peter's denial of Jesus as an apologetic positive? (If needed: Why do scriptural instances of believers' spiritual failure make a statement for scripture's authenticity or reliability?)

Have any of you been able to share instances of personal failure or weakness with a non-Christian friend? If so, how did this affect your relationship with him or her?

What would you say is the author's main point that he wants readers to apply moving forward?

Section 4

Discuss and plan a way that group members can apply these principles this week in others' lives.

One suggestion, if needed:

Let's each approach a friend or two this week, saying: "In my Wednesday night discussion group we are contrasting the effectiveness of merely stating convictions to someone versus presenting convictions in the context of story. Could I get your opinion on 3 quick comparisons?"

1) Compare a public service announcement on TV proclaiming: "Wear a helmet when riding motorcycles because it's safer," vs. a severe head-injury survivor telling the story of his current struggles. How would the two impact you differently?

2) Compare a school teacher's sincere plea to her students of "Don't do drugs, it can hurt your life" with her having a guest speaker in class who is a 25-year old ex addict who had previously lost his wife and job due to drug use that he could not control. How would the two impact you differently?

3) Compare a television evangelist preaching to you, "Jesus is the answer to your struggles" with you personally reading or having a friend read you a quote from Jesus like:

"At that time Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'" (Matthew 11:25, 28-30)

Write down their responses on a pad as they share them with you. Thank them for giving their opinion and let them know that you will all be comparing responses at your next group meeting. If they ask you what kind of group it is, explain to them the Christian and biblical foundation of the group. Then ask them about their spiritual background, and if they had ever heard about the possibility of how one can know for sure they are going to heaven even though they are not perfect. If they have interest in hearing about that, share the gospel with them.

Meet back next week and discuss what happened.

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