

Thanks But No Thanks

You called today to talk about your beliefs and to try to share your religion with me. Perhaps you sought to teach me the 'right' way to find God, or Jesus, or Heaven. However, I do not share your beliefs and I do not wish to talk about religion, *any* religion, with you. I am an atheist. I have no belief in your god, or any other god. Thanks, but no thanks.

While I respect your right to worship and pray in any way you believe is appropriate, I also ask that you respect my right to live my life as an atheist. This is the only real difference between us. We are all atheists when it comes to the many, many gods believed to exist throughout history. I simply believe in one less god than you.

If you respect my right to freedom of religion, you will also know that I have the right to freedom *from* religion. For this reason I ask that you do not try to talk to me about your religion again. Most importantly of all, please do not try to convert me to your religion, or tell me that you are right and I am wrong. Equally, I will not make any attempt to discuss atheism with you. I will not tell you that I am right and you, and your religion, are wrong. Such a conversation would be pointless and would not change anyone's mind.

If you called at my house, please do not do so again. In return, I will not visit the houses of Christians, or those of other religions, with messages about the benefits of atheism. If you imagine how unwelcome such an approach would be at your household, this is how unwelcome your approach has been today.

There is no need to pray for me. Of course if you wish to do so there is nothing I can do, or would wish to do, to stop you, but prayer is not something which will ever be a part of my life, and I can assure you that my atheism is not open to influence from a supernatural being which I personally do not believe in.

I believe that you presented information about your beliefs to me with the best of intentions, but I wish to politely decline your offer to share your faith with me. I have no need for religion. I live a good, productive, moral life, without need of guidance from ancient texts or modern-day preaching. I am happy living this way, and do not wish to take part in any religious service, prayer or discussion.

Please do not think that I dismiss your religion lightly. I have read the Bible and it does not convince me that God exists, or indeed ever existed. Similarly, other religions do not persuade me that any supernatural being, or personal god, exists and influences my life, or indeed anyone else's life.

I hope you do not take offence at my words, or seek to condemn me because I do not share your beliefs. I certainly am not offended that you are a person of faith, and that you believe in a deity while I do not. We should simply agree to disagree and not raise the subject of religion again. Please do not contact me again, or ask anyone else to bring me similar religious messages. I ask you to respect my wishes in this. As an atheist, I do not wish to talk to you, or to anyone you know, about religion.

Thanks, but no thanks.