



ANSWERING THE **TOUGH QUESTIONS** ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

WHO'S IN CHARGE?

LESSON #
2

THE LESSON AT A GLANCE

Everyone has a worldview, whether they can define it or not. It is the “filter” or “lens” through which a person analyzes events around them and their own experiences so they can make sense of the world. Whether they realize it or not, a person starts to develop a worldview based on how they answer the question, “Who’s in charge?”

People use reasoning daily to make sense of the world around them. An honest appraisal of the world using reasoning provides sufficient evidence for the existence of God.

THINK ABOUT THIS

How can you believe in a god? Isn't faith in a god just a crutch for the ignorant or emotionally immature?

TODAY'S SCRIPTURES

PSALM 14:1-2, PSALM 10:4, GEN 1:1, ROM 2:12-15 PSALMS 42:1-2, ROM 1:20 (All Scripture CSB unless otherwise noted)

THE MAIN IDEA

Questions non-believers may have about Christianity can be grouped into three categories, the first being "Is Christianity true?" Fundamental to the answer to this question is a belief in a god. Four common “reasonable justifications” are provided in this lesson that Christians can use to show both non-believers and maturing believers that it is both logical and reasonable to believe in God.

QUESTION TO EXPLORE

Why should I believe God exists?

SCRIPTURE IN CONTEXT

Psalms 14:1-2. In these verses, the choir director of King David’s court contrasts the main difference between Christians and non-believers: the recognition of who's in charge. The unsaved person believes that “*there is no god.*” According to the psalmist, the wise not only recognize there is a God, but also seek Him.

Psalms 10:4. In Psalm 10, the writer cries out for justice on the wicked from God. The psalmist offers the following description, “*In all his scheming, the wicked person arrogantly thinks, “There’s no accountability, since there’s no God.”* (10:4)

Genesis 1:1. Moses begins the Bible with the most logical and reasonable conclusion about where everything came from – God created.

Romans 2:14-15a. Paul states that both Jews and Gentiles are held accountable to the law (or code of conduct) either provided by God’s laws or placed in their conscience by God.

Psalms 42:1 – 2. The choir director for David expresses the universal desire to know God.

Romans 1:20. Paul states that God’s power and divinity are clearly visible in His creation, so much so that no man has any excuse to claim there is no God or to worship any other God.



START HERE

Like "apologetics," the word "worldview" may suggest deep philosophical discussions reserved for college professors. However, if you have ever had a conversation with someone and thought to yourself, "How can you think that way?" you have experienced a conflict between their worldview and yours. Thus, it is important for Christians to have some understanding of competing worldviews as the society around us becomes more pluralistic and the chances increase that we will encounter someone with a different perspective of the world than our own.

CONVERSATION EXAMPLE

At a family gathering, a nephew tells you he has decided to be an atheist because he sees no evidence for a god.

This lesson provides tools to help communicate to him that belief in God is a worldview that provides more satisfactory answers to the basic questions of life.

START HERE

The word "worldview" is derived from a German word meaning "perspective or outlook on the world." It is defined as "a particular philosophy of life or conception of the world."¹

A worldview should provide reasonable answers to at least four essential questions about life:

- Origin - Where did I come from?
- Purpose - Why am I here?
- Morals – How should I behave while I am here?
- Destination – Where am I going?

Other questions might include:

- What is real?
- What is true?
- What is man?
- Who is Jesus?²

¹ Oxford Languages (2024). Worldview. In [languages.oup.com](https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/). Retrieved November 20, 2024, from <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>.

² Settecase, J. (2019, May 18). 7 Worldview Questions. The Think Institute. Retrieved November 2, 2024, from <https://thethink.institute/articles/seven-worldview-questions>.



A person starts to develop their worldview based on how they answer the fundamental question of life – “Who’s in charge?” If a person decides there is no supernatural being (i.e., no god), their worldview implies that the physical world is all there is, and thus they are “in charge” of their life. Therefore, most of these worldviews hold the individual as the ultimate authority.

There are several popular worldviews (i.e., “...isms”) that deny the existence of a god. Some are built on a foundation of either atheism (i.e., “a” [no], “theos” [god]) or agnosticism (i.e., “a” [no], “gnostos” [knowledge] that a god exists). These worldviews include:

Popular Worldviews That Deny God (Atheistic/Agnostic)

- **Naturalism**-reality is comprised only of the physical world; there is no supernatural; truth is uncovered through individual observation and experimentation.
- **Secular Humanism**-the individual is of ultimate value; truth can be discovered through the progression of science and knowledge.
- **Postmodernism**-the individual is the highest authority; everyone defines truth for themselves.

GOSPEL FOCUS

One of the tough questions you may be asked about your faith is, “Why do you believe God exists?”

We should not be surprised that we encounter people who don’t believe in God because it was true even in the Old Testament:

The fool says in his heart, “There’s no God.” They are corrupt; they do vile deeds. There is no one who does good. (Psalm 14:1)

In all his scheming, the wicked person arrogantly thinks, “There’s no accountability, since there’s no God.” (Psalm 10:4)

Understanding other worldviews can result in what Hank Hanegraaf, the former talk-show host of the “Bible Answer Man” broadcast, calls “springboards for evangelism.” In other words, engaging people in meaningful discussions about how they view the world and how your Christian worldview provides a more satisfying way to make sense of it can open doors to sharing the gospel with them.



We must be sensitive when approaching a person with a different worldview because their worldview is core to their identity. For example, people may describe their search for a worldview as "finding themselves."

For this reason, people may react emotionally and get defensive, frustrated, and angry in these conversations, just as we might if we are unprepared for challenges to our Christian worldview. This is one reason Peter included in his instructions to "*always be prepared*" and that our explanations should be offered "*with gentleness and respect.*" (1Pet 3:15)

When people react poorly, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and recognize that this may be a good time to end the discussion with something like, "It appears we both have some things to think about. " Then, set up a time to resume the conversation in the future.

When talking to people who don't believe in a god, it is not helpful to quote scripture to make a case for God because the Bible has no authority in their worldview. Thus, as Paul did in Athens, we must meet them where they are and base the reasons for our hope (faith) on other sources like logic and reason that appeal to them. (See Acts 17: 16-33)

However, when disciplining believers, it is important to use scripture to show them the biblical basis for our beliefs.

CONVERSATION EXAMPLE

Your child comes home from school and tells you their teacher explained that the variety of life we see around us is evidence of evolution. Using the concepts of "Uncaused Cause" and "Intelligent Design" evidence for God discussed in this lesson, you can talk to them about how evolution fails to explain where the first atoms came from or how non-living elements sprang to life. Only the Creator God is the reasonable and logical cause for both.

DISCUSS

Have you or someone you know had a conversation like this? If so, please share.

WHY IS IT LOGICAL AND REASONABLE TO BELIEVE IN GOD?

There are four classic "reasonable justifications" to believe in God:

1. THE UNCAUSED CAUSE.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Gen 1:1



The material universe consists of all things that have "mass" (i.e., volume and weight) or give the property of mass to some objects (e.g., the elementary particle called the Higgs boson³). Unless someone believes that everything in the material universe is without a beginning, then everything material is finite with a beginning. In other words, everything material from the largest star to the smallest sub-atomic particle must be caused by or formed from something that existed prior to it. If we return to that first finite thing that existed, we reach the beginning of all "caused things." But what caused that first thing?

One way to visualize this concept is to picture the formation of all material around us as dominos in a domino "chain." Each domino is "caused" when the prior domino in the chain topples into it. At the beginning of the chain, however, something outside the chain (or "uncaused") must tip over the first domino to start the process.

What is that "uncaused cause"? The Christian worldview claims that an infinite "uncaused" God created all things (Genesis 1:1).

People who don't believe in a god may claim that this beginning occurred at the Big Bang, but unless this cataclysmic event created something from nothing, matter in some form with no beginning had to exist before the Big Bang. It is as reasonable to believe in an eternal Creator God who is this "uncaused cause" than to think that either all mass came from nothing or all mass is eternal (for both positions, the person would have to accept their choice by faith because science can't provide proof of either position).

DISCUSS

What intrigues you most about the concept of the "uncaused cause"? (Possible answers: Various personal responses)

2. THE PRESENCE OF MORAL LAW.

Almost all humans have a basic understanding of right and wrong behaviors. Generally, we consider a very small percentage of humans who don't have this innate sense of right and wrong "abnormal." In addition, mankind (again, with very few exceptions) has a sense of fairness and a yearning for justice.

³ Michael Cooke. (n.d.) DOE Explains...the Higgs Boson. US DOE Office of Science. Retrieved November 21, 2024 from <https://www.energy.gov/science/doe-explains-the-higgs-boson#:~:text=The%20Higgs%20boson%20is%20the,all%20fundamental%20particles%20have%20mass.>



A word used to describe this common sense of morality, fairness, and justice is our “conscience.” Some people have identified these common concepts of right behaviors as “moral laws,” it follows that if there are universal moral laws, there must be a moral “lawgiver.” In other words, something outside of humanity has determined these “rules of the game.”

Thus, believing in a God who gives us these “moral laws” is logical and reasonable.

As Paul observes in Romans 2:14-15a, *“¹⁴So, when Gentiles, who do not by nature have the law, [instinctively] do what the law demands, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. ^{15a}They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their consciences confirm this.”*

DISCUSS

What are some moral laws that are almost universally accepted as valid? (Possible answers: It is wrong to harm or take advantage of innocent children, being truthful is a virtue, etc.)

3. THE INHERENT NEED FOR GOD.

The famous Christian apologist C.S. Lewis observed, “If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.”⁴

In 398 AD, St. Augustine of Hippo wrote in his “Confessions”: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

In 1670, the famous French mathematician, physicist, and religious philosopher Blaise Pascal published “Pensées,” which was a defense of the Christian religion. In it, he stated:

What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words, by God himself.

- Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* VII (425)

David’s choir director writes in Psalm 42:1-2, *“¹As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God. ²I thirst for God, the living God. When can I come and appear before God?”*

The desire to find something outside ourselves seems universal in humanity. As we look back through history, all great civilizations had gods they worshipped to fill that God-shaped void in

⁴ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1952), 136-37.



their lives. Interestingly, many of those gods "required" actions of the people that they wanted to do anyway (e.g., temple prostitution in sensual Greek and Roman civilizations, human sacrifices who often were their enemies⁵ by cruel Aztec and Mayan civilizations, etc.).

People today who don't believe in a god still try to fill that void with a god of their own making - themselves. Unfortunately, people who choose to be their own god are doomed to discover, just as Solomon concluded in Ecclesiastes, that everything in this world in which they seek to find fulfillment except the true God is worthless.

DISCUSS

How would you explain that everyone has a god in their life? (Possible answers: Whoever makes the decisions in your life is your god, etc.)

4. THE EVIDENCE OF INTELLIGENT DESIGN.

In 1774, the British explorer James Cook visited Easter Island off the coast of what is now Chile and reported finding the now-famous stone busts (moais) scattered about the island. He did not ask the natives how natural forces like erosion had created the head-shaped rocks but immediately assumed that the natives had carved them and asked who they represented.

We all make this natural assumption - if there is evidence of Complex and Specified Information (CSI), people look for a "designer." Examples of ancient objects with CSI include:

- The Egyptian pyramids (shape)
- The moai heads on Easter Island (form)
- Arrowheads and spearpoints (function)
- Cuneiform tablets (information)

Paul writes about this obvious fact in Romans 1:20 ²⁰*For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse.*

The theory of intelligent design holds that certain features of the universe and living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not undirected processes such as erosion or natural

⁵ Dave Roos. (2023, July 11). "Human Sacrifice: Why the Aztecs Practiced This Gory Ritual" The History Channel. Retrieved November 2, 2024, from <https://www.history.com/news/aztec-human-sacrifice-religion>.



selection. It is a legitimate theory that uses the four-step scientific method (*observation, hypothesis, experiments, and conclusion*).

Intelligent design begins with the *observation* that intelligent agents are necessary to produce CSI (e.g., sculptors are required to make sculptures). Design theorists *hypothesize* that if a natural object is designed, it will contain high levels of CSI. Scientists then perform *experiments* on natural objects to determine if they contain CSI.

One easily testable form of CSI in biological structures is "irreducible complexity." This is the observation that a subcellular structure provides no advantage to the organism in more rudimentary forms that don't work. This can be discovered by experimentally reverse engineering these structures to see if they require all their parts to function. When researchers find irreducible complexity, they *conclude* that such structures are designed.

ILLUSTRATION SLIDE One example of such irreducible complexity is the flagella (fluh-JEH-luh) that some one-celled animals use to move around. These amazing whip-like structures are driven by sub-cellular "motors" comprised of numerous "parts" made of proteins. Without all the parts, the motors don't work, and the flagella is a hindrance to, not a mechanism for, motion. Like the stone heads on Easter Island, where it is reasonable to look for a sculptor when you find sculptures, it is also reasonable to look for the motor "designer" when you find a natural "motor."

DISCUSS

What examples come to mind that you might use to explain the concept of irreducible complexity? (Possible answers: A disassembled part of a machine [e.g., the engine of lawn mower, the water pump in a clothes washer, etc.] that doesn't work unless it is properly put together, etc.)

REFLECT ON THE SUBJECT

It may sound odd, but some church members are functional agnostics. Although they won't deny that God might exist, they live their lives as though He doesn't. They show no desire for growth in their fellowship with God through prayer, Bible study, or obedience to the Holy Spirit. They may speak the "sinner's prayer," attend church regularly, and may even serve because they enjoy the traditions and sense of community the church provides.

Jesus refers to such people in Matthew 7:21-23,



*Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day, many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?" Then I will announce to them, "I never knew you (i.e., never had an intimate relationship and fellowship with you). **Depart from me, you lawbreakers!**"* (emphasis added)

Conduct a self-assessment: Is your life characterized by wisely seeking to form a relationship and grow your fellowship with the God of the Bible?

DISCUSS

Briefly share your salvation story with the class. (Have a few class members share their experiences.)

Share how God has grown your fellowship with Him recently. (Possible answers: "I had a problem develop that forced me to seek His wisdom to guide me through the trial."; "My Bible study revealed to me more about who God is, causing me to love Him even more."; etc.)

APPLY

Many times, people offer intellectual reasons for rejecting God. However, when pressed about their journey to this conclusion, some will admit that the actual root cause for their choice of a worldview without God was some trauma in their past. Some examples could include praying for something like the healing of a loved one or an ending to abuse, and God didn't come through; the church hurt or rejected them; they didn't see Christians acting like they should, etc.

We must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit when responding to people who have had such experiences. Rather than immediately presenting the four reasons for believing in a God presented here, the first approach may be to gently ask questions about how they decided there is no God. In other words, get them to tell you about their spiritual journey and listen for hints about the real reason(s) that led them to their conclusions. This may lead to discussions about topics entirely different than proofs about the reasonableness of believing in God.

LOOKING TO NEXT WEEK...

DOESN'T THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL DISPROVE THE EXISTENCE OF GOD?



The existence of evil in the world is a major reason some people choose to reject the existence of God. In other cases, some people choose which god to believe in based on how that religion handles the problem of evil.

GENERAL RESOURCES

N. L. Geisler Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics

John Yeats and John Blase, Worldviews – Think for Yourself about How We See God

Southern Baptists of Texas - Stand Firm Apologetics Course

<https://sbtexas.com/missions-evangelism/stand-firm/>