

A. Faith

1. Definition: commit, trust, rely.
2. Wise believers commit to what they know, not to what they don't.

B. Belief vs. belief

1. Weak use of belief: "I think so"

**belief** + true + justified warranted = **knowledge**

2. Strong use of Belief: "I wholeheartedly commit"

**knowledge** ← **Belief**  
*notitia, assensus*      *fiducia*

C. Doubt

1. **Not necessary** for faith.
  - a. Misunderstood by our culture.

Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love*: faith in God requires "a mighty jump from the rational over to the unknowable." "If faith were rational, it wouldn't be—by definition—faith. Faith is belief in what you cannot see or prove or touch. Faith is walking face-first and full-speed into the dark."

- b. Misunderstood by Christians.

- 1) We need doubt to believe?
- 2) We need doubt to choose freely?
- 3) We need doubt for relationship—to love and be loved?

2. **Not the opposite** of faith.

- a. We can believe even when we don't know for sure (Luke 23:46).
- b. Doubt is normal for life's large commitments.
- c. Take your distress as a sign that you do believe (Mark 9:24).
- d. The object of faith is much more important than the strength of faith (Matthew 17:20).
- e. Use doubt to inoculate your faith.
- f. Disobedience rather than doubt is the opposite of faith (John 7:17)

D. **How** everyone knows something about God

1. Nature: World & Design (Romans 1:18-20)

2. Providence (Acts 17:24-28)

3. Image of God: sense of deity, conscience (Rom. 2:14-15). Calvin, *Institutes* I.3.1: "There is within the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, an awareness of divinity."

a. **Rationality**. What reason do you have to trust your reason?

b. **Morality**. See Doug Wilson vs. Christopher Hitchens, "Is Christianity Good for the World?", at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/mayweb-only/119-12.0.html>

E. **What** everyone knows about God (Romans 1:18-32)

F. God and the Problem of Evil

1. Theism trumps atheism. **Significance & Security/Sovereignty.**

2. Christianity trumps all other theisms. **Suffering/Sympathy** (Heb. 4:15) and **Success** (Col. 2:13-15).

G. How do we know the Bible is God’s Word?

1. There is **evidence** that Scripture is a special book. Calvin says that Scripture’s superior wisdom, antiquity, painful honesty, miracles, fulfilled prophecy, manuscript tradition, consent of the church, and martyrs who died for their belief in Scripture are all “very useful aids” (*Institutes* 1.8.1)

2. Scripture is **self-authenticating**. “Indeed, Scripture exhibits fully as clear evidence of its own truth as white and black things do of their color, or sweet and bitter things do of their taste” (1.7.2). Scripture “carries with itself its own credibility in order to be received without contradiction, and is not to be submitted to proofs or arguments” (1.9.3).

3. The **witness of the Spirit** enables us to see what we should have known all along. “...imprint upon their hearts that certainty which piety requires.... But I reply: the testimony of the Spirit is more excellent than all reason. For as God alone is a fit witness of himself in his Word, so also the Word will not find acceptance in men’s hearts before it is sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit. The same Spirit, therefore, who has spoken through the mouths of the prophets must penetrate into our hearts to persuade us that they faithfully proclaimed what had been divinely commanded” (1.7.4).

H. Doubt and Disobedience

