

C¹ onechurch

bigIdea



A *Christian Atheist* is someone who believes in God but lives as if He does not exist. A lot of people say they believe in God—94% in a recent Gallup poll. But our actions always speak louder than our words. Our actions tell us what we *really* believe and who we really worship.

Have you ever believed in God, but your life didn't turn out the way you thought? Ever believed in God, but your circumstances was riddled with conflict, problems, and tension? Think of the struggles and conflicts in your life and ask, "What would I do or say in those difficult moments if I were absolutely confident that God was with me?"

BIG IDEA: Tension is good—He's making your story into something that will give God glory.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What's your favorite movie? Why do you like this movie? Does the protagonist (main character) have it easy? Is there any conflict or tension in his/her life? Who is the antagonist (the villain who oppose the main character)? When you first saw the movie, was it predictable or unpredictable? Any unexpected plot turns?
2. Do you think you would have paid to see the movie if it was predictable, with no plot turns, no antagonist and no tension? Why or why not?
3. What was your childhood dream growing up? Who did you want to become? How have those dreams changed from your childhood to your teenage years? From being a teenager to college age? From college age to now?
4. Are you okay that your plans and dreams have changed? Is your current life better or worse than you planned it? Name one thing that hasn't developed according to your plan.
5. *Read Genesis 37:1-11.* It is evident that God gave Joseph these dreams and the ability to interpret dreams (Genesis 40:8, 41:13, 25). Since we know that these dreams came from God, what kind of life could we expect Joseph to live—an easy or a difficult one? How did his brothers respond to his dreams? Would you have responded the same way?
6. *Break the group into three groups, and have them read Genesis 37:12- 36; 39:1-23; 40:1-8, 20-23.* List all of the bad things that happened to Joseph.
7. Where was God when all of these bad things were happening to Joseph? Why do you think God allowed these things to happen?
8. Do you ever question where God is and what God is doing when difficulties arise in your life?
9. Have you ever been disappointed in God? Ever doubted His goodness? Tell about that time.
10. *Read Genesis 41:39-45; 42:6-9.* How does Joseph's story end?

Tension is good. Tension creates a good story. Tension makes music beautiful! What seems like random intervals and happenings in your life is really God creating a symphony out of your life. He is the master painter, painting your story into a masterpiece. But for that to happen, He has to use some dark colors so the light colors will stand out.

11. *Read Ephesians 2:10.* The Greek word for masterpiece is *poiema*, which we get our word *poem* from. God wants your life to be a work of art—a good story—a beautiful symphony. But for that to happen, there must be tension and deceptive cadences. Knowing that God is with you and wants to use these times for His plan for your life, how does that change your perspective of difficult times?

THINK ABOUT IT

Your pain and your past aren't just detours or side roads to God's plan for you—they can be on ramps for God to take you to a greater place of influence. God wants to use your story to give Him glory—but that means He has to put you into some impossible situations where only God can rescue and so that He gets the credit.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

What are some situations doing south in your life that God can use for His glory? Write those down, share that with the group, and regularly go back to that written piece of paper. One day, you'll see God using that piece of your story to give Him glory. But now, are we willing to praise God that He is in control despite the circumstances in your life?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.
Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)