

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist

Session 1

1. Introduction: Finding the Box Top to the Puzzle of Life.
 - a. What does the completed puzzle of life look like (womb to tomb, eternal life, the origin and end of the universe)?
 - b. Is there a method of discovering what that puzzle of life actually looks like? What best corresponds to reality or truth?
 - c. Five most consequential questions in life (pg. 20):
 - i. **Origin:** Where did we come from?
 - ii. **Identity:** Who are we?
 - iii. **Meaning:** Why are we here?
 - iv. **Morality:** How should we live?
 - v. **Destiny:** Where are we going?
 - d. Where can we go to seek and discover the answers to something as complex as the meaning and purpose of human life?
 - i. Universities (unity in diversity) or “pluraversities” (pg. 19)?
 - ii. Religious teachings and holy books?
 - iii. Wisdom of others (professors, pastors, family).
 - e. We can only answer these five consequential questions in life by first answering the question about the existence of God.
 - i. If God exists, then we must seek to discover His divine responses to the above questions. If God exists there is a correct and moral way to live, and our choices have eternal consequences.
 - ii. If God does not exist, then we need to find another means of answering these questions (or determining that the questions have no objective answer other than your life has no meaning or purpose which means our destiny is dust).
 - f. Is there truth in religion, or is that an oxymoron (pg. 21)?
 - g. Are religious beliefs just a matter of taste or personal opinion (pg. 21)?
 - h. Does science alone, based on that which can be tested in a laboratory, yield truth (pg. 21)?
 - i. Can faith or trust in God be supported by facts (pg. 22)? The authors believe that there can be real truths discovered about God that far surpass any “reasonable doubt” threshold (pg. 22).
 - j. Three Major Religious Worldviews (pg. 23, Fig. 1.2).
 - i. Theism: God made all.
 - ii. Pantheism: God is all.
 - iii. Atheism: No God at all.
 - k. Faith and Religion

- i. All worldviews require faith; nevertheless, facts are central to all religious views (including atheism) because all worldviews make truth claims which should be evaluated (pg. 23).
 - ii. Truth claims can be evaluated through established scientific and historical investigation procedures (pg. 23).
 - iii. Science and religion often address, or attempt to answer, the same questions. Therefore, science and religion are not mutually exclusive studies (pg. 24).
 - iv. While not all religious claims are verifiable with logical methods. However, many truth claims advanced by a worldview can be proven or disproven with a high degree of certainty (pg. 24).
- I. Perceived problems with Christianity (pg. 24).
- i. The existence of evil (if God is good, why does evil exist?).
 - ii. Intellectual/scientific objections.
 - iii. Emotional obstacles.
 - 1. Exclusivity
 - 2. Hell
 - 3. Christian hypocrisy
 - iv. Morality restrictions.
 - v. Yet, considering the evidence to presented throughout the book, the authors will show that it requires significantly more faith to believe any other worldview. The preponderance of the evidence clearly supports the Christian worldview such as:
 - 1. The universe had a beginning, which thus requires a Beginner.
 - 2. Even “simple” life forms have structures that require intelligent design. Chance and probability do not explain the incredible complexities of any living organism.
 - 3. The life of Christ was foretold long before He was born. Reliable historical accounts clearly show that Jesus was the fulfilment of specific, historically documented prophesies well before His birth.
- m. Twelve Points that Show Christianity is True (pg. 28).
- i. Truth about reality is knowable.
 - ii. The opposite of true is false.
 - iii. God must exist, as evidenced by:
 - 1. Big Bang: Cosmological argument.
 - 2. Design of the universe: Teleological argument / Anthropic Principle.
 - 3. Design of life: Teleological argument
 - 4. Moral Law: Moral argument.
 - iv. Miracles are possible (because God exists).
 - v. Miracles are used to confirm God’s message (the Bible).
 - vi. The New Testament is historically reliable.
 - 1. Early testimony.
 - 2. Eyewitness testimony.

- 3. Uninvented/authentic testimony.
- 4. Eyewitnesses were not deceived.
- vii. New Testament shows that Jesus claims to be God.
- viii. Jesus' claim to be God was confirmed by:
 - 1. Fulfillment of prophecy about Him.
 - 2. His sinless life and miraculous deeds.
 - 3. His prediction and accomplishment of the resurrection.
- ix. Therefore, Jesus is God.
- x. Whatever Jesus teaches is true.
- xi. Jesus taught that the Bible is the Word of God.
- xii. God is the Author of Scripture; anything that opposes it is demonstrably false.
- n. The twelve points are not true by definition (such as "water is wet"). Each of these claims will be demonstrated by powerful and verifiable evidence, along with good inductive reasoning (pg. 28).
- o. These topics will be explored from a viewpoint of complete skepticism – including that even truth itself cannot be known or discovered (pg. 29).
- p. Once the Bible is demonstrated to be God's word, any religion or worldview that contradicts the Bible is by extension a false worldview (pg. 29).
- q. Christians are commanded to know what they believe and why so that they can give a reasoned response to anyone who questions their hope in Jesus Christ in 1 Peter 3:15 (Pg. 29).
- r. No amount of evidence, logic or reasoning will convince someone to believe if they choose not to do so (pg. 30).
- s. By God's design, every person has been given a freewill choice to accept or reject Christ; God will honor that choice even if the choice was not His in accordance with His will (pg. 31).

2. Chapter 1: Can We Handle the Truth?

- a. Humans demand truth in virtually every area of life (pg. 35).
 - i. We expect truth from loved ones.
 - ii. We expect truth from doctors and medical providers.
 - iii. We expect truth from people who we entrust to handle our money.
 - iv. We expect truth from courts and judges.
 - v. We expect truth from employers and in our paychecks.
 - vi. We expect truth from airlines regarding safety and schedules.
 - vii. We expect truth from reference materials and works of non-fiction.
- b. When it comes to morality or religion, many are not interested in the truth, or they decide, with few facts, that the truth about God is unknowable (pg. 36).
- c. Four questions concerning truth (pg. 36):
 - i. What is truth?
 - ii. Can truth be known?
 - iii. Can truth about God be known?
 - iv. So what? Who cares about truth?

- d. Truth is that which corresponds to its object, or describes an actual state of affairs (pg. 37).
- e. Truth is absolute. If something is true, it is true for all people, at all times and in all places (pg. 37).
- f. All truth claims are absolute, narrow, and exclusive (pg. 37).
- g. All truths exclude their opposites such as, if water is wet, then water cannot be dry (pg. 37).
- h. Truths about truth.
 - i. Truth is discovered, not invented (gravity existed before Newton; relativity before Einstein, pg. 37).
 - ii. Truth is transcultural. It is the same for everyone at all times (pg. 38).
 - iii. Truth is unchanging (beliefs can change, but truth cannot change, pg. 38).
 - iv. Beliefs cannot change truth. The sincerity of a belief has no impact on truth (pg. 38).
 - v. Truth is not affected by the attitude or character of the person professing it (pg. 38).
 - vi. All truths are absolute truths (pg. 38).
 - vii. Contrary truths are not possible, but contrary beliefs about truth are common (pg. 38).
- i. Roadrunner Tactic.
 - i. Many worldviews and philosophical systems make “self-defeating” claims to support their views (pg. 38)
 - 1. Self-defeating claims fail to meet their own standards (pg. 39).
 - 2. “There’s no such thing as truth” – but is *that* true? (pg. 39).
 - 3. “All truth is relative” – is that a relative or an absolute truth?
 - 4. “There are no absolutes” – is that absolutely true, or is it relative?
 - 5. “That might be true for you, but it’s not true for me” – “Is that true just for you or is it true for everyone?”
 - ii. Ideas, including bad ones, have consequences (pg. 40).
 - 1. If there is no morality (right vs. wrong), why is anyone upset by mass murder, robbery, medical malpractice, racism or hate crimes?
 - 2. We send a disastrous message to society when we marginalize or demonize moral values using false philosophies.
 - iii. Can truth be known? Evangelism Explosion example (pg. 41-44).
 - 1. Yes, truth can be discovered and therefore known (pg. 44)
 - a. $2+2=4$
 - b. Boiling point of water a sea level.
 - c. Laws of Thermodynamics.
 - d. $E=MC^2$
 - 2. The law of noncontradiction precludes the possibility that all religions can be true, or that any two contradictory claims can both be true at the same time and in the same sense.
 - iv. Truth vs. Tolerance.

1. Tolerance assumes that we are supposed to accept every belief as true – religious pluralism (pg. 46).
2. Mutually exclusive beliefs cannot both be true; attempting to accept or homogenize contradictory claims about God has eternal consequences (pg. 47).
3. Pluralists who assert that people's religious view should not be questioned are just as closed-minded and dogmatic as those they oppose when they question a religious view that opposes theirs. Ultimately, they just want everyone to agree with them (pg. 47).
4. It is not immoral to question religious beliefs. How is it tolerant to tell someone else not to question truth claims about God?
5. The Bible commands Christian believers to question religious beliefs.
6. Jesus did not prohibit judging, only judging hypocritically (Matt. 7:1-5).
7. The issue is not whether we make judgments, but whether we make the right judgments that are in line with God's standards (pg. 48).
8. What cannot determine what is wrong or untrue if we have no standard by which to judge truth or what is right or wrong – a response to the blind men and elephant parable (pg. 49). We need to discover objective, unchanging standards to determine right and wrong or truth vs. lie.