



Top Ten Questions College Students Ask About God and the Christian Faith

1) How do you know there is a God?

- a. **Moral argument:** Theory of morality- We have a natural law within us (Romans 2:15), our conscience, and this inner sense of what is right and wrong necessitates that there is a higher standard of what is good and evil that governs and put that nature there. (The very nature of arguing proves absolutes because you are appealing to a right and a wrong.) If there is no God, morality has no meaning and certainly no foundation.
- b. **Cosmological argument:** Theory of existence- The very nature of anything that exists necessitates there is a Creator. (Garden/Gardener argument) There are 2 types of existence:
 - (1) Necessary/Ultimate
 - (2) Unnecessary/Subordinate. (ex. Humans)
You can't have an infinite succession of subordinate existences, there must be a beginning, first or ultimate existence.
- c. **Teleological argument:** Theory of design- We have a universe full of intricate details that points to a Creator with a plan. How are we to arrive at such complexity without a wise and creative creator? (ex. the sun/moon/earth, the complexity found within a newborn baby)
- d. **Ontological argument:** Theory of knowing- The very existence of knowledge necessitates that there is an outside force from which the knowledge comes: an all-knowing God. Otherwise, how do you know that what you know is true? How do we know that we are not a result of an error in the process of random chance? How do we know that we have not come to exist with an illusion of "knowing" when we are actually not "knowers" of anything?
- e. **Personal Experience:** Your testimony is an irrefutable proof of the existence of God. He has and does work miracles that believers experience first hand. In some ways, this is the most significant apologetic in our culture today. People want to know how it works, not just that you can prove it.
- f. **Additional Resources:** Mere Christianity (C.S. Lewis), How Should We Then Live (Francis A. Schaeffer), Darwin on Trial (Phillip E. Johnson), More Than a Carpenter (Josh McDowell), Case for Christ (Lee Strobel), Scaling the Secular City, The Universe Next Door (James Sire)

2) How can there be a good God when there is so much evil and suffering in the world?

- a. It is possible that an all-good, all-knowing, all-powerful God created the world that exists and that it is the best possible world. (Philosophically, that is actually all that is needed to answer this argument). Sometimes it is hard to realize or believe, but it is not necessarily a contradiction that a good, knowing, and all powerful God created a world with contains evil and suffering. Perhaps the world in which we live in is the best possible world. In God's ultimate wisdom, he created a world with the possibility of great good, and all the possibility of terrible evil and there is no better possibility.
- b. God didn't *create* evil, he created the possibility for us to *choose* evil- we actualized that possibility ourselves.

- c. The glory of God and our need for a Savior can not be fully understood without seeing what the world looks like without God's grace. (black cannot be understood apart from the knowledge of white...also darkness and light/good and evil etc.).
- d. God is love and wants us to know the most perfect love possible. True love involves choice, and there cannot be real love without some type of choice. (Holding gun to someone's head asking "Do you love me?" will not force someone to truly love you). So the perfect world that God did create allows the possibility of the greatest love and greatest existence. However, in that same possibility, the opposite of love is also possible, resulting in evil and hatred.

3) How can the belief in God be reconciled with science- especially evolution?

- a. It must be made known that Evolution is a theory of existence, not a fact. Evolution, like religion, is a faith system based on what is believed to be true. However, evolution, like religion is not a question that science can fully explore. Science can add support and weight to an argument, but ultimately we are left to a belief based on the weight of evidence. Therefore, religion is not in opposition to science, nor is science on the side of evolution.
- b. Evolution does not fully explain how the evolution process has worked over billions of years and significant suspicion results from gaps in the sequence. These gaps include the fossil record, transitional species and the jump to punctuated equilibrium.
- c. Creationists hold that modifications within a certain species, (micro-evolution) is possible. However adaptations *between* species (macro-evolution), is rejected. Creationists also ask the question, 'where did the first/necessary cause come from in the evolution equation?'
- d. Even Darwin himself had his own doubts. In his book Origin of Species, he stated, "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, then my theory would absolutely break down." At the end of his life, he verbally admitted that he was not sure if his theories were true.

4) How can the Bible be trusted?

- a. **External Evidence:** Do other sources seem to corroborate what we find in the Biblical text?
 - 1. archaeological findings: evidence of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah has been found, evidence of the Hittites- which had been previously doubted, evidence of a great flood has been found, and the site of Solomon's temple is now being excavated.
 - 2. other sources: many other sources written during the same time period validate the historical accuracy of the New Testament accounts.
- b. **Internal Evidence:**
 - 1. Sixty-six books written by forty different authors over 1500 years. Yet, they somehow intertwined, revealing one central message adding credibility to inspired creation.
 - 2. There are approximately 190 prophecies of the birth and life of Christ in the Old Testament written at least 500 years before the time of Christ. All have come true in the New Testament account. There are over 300 prophecies from the O.T. in all that are confirmed in the New Testament.
 - 3. Eleven out of twelve of his disciples died for Christ (they could have lived had they denounced their faith) which shows that they were convinced of who He was after living intimately with him for 3 years.
 - 4. Although the canonization of scripture (putting the Bible together) was done much later than the books themselves were written, God gave the Church wisdom to discern which books should be included. (If God has the ability to raise someone from the dead, He can put together a book of Scripture that is His intent).

5. The resurrection- If the resurrection took place and we can adequately prove that...then Christ was God and the Bible is true.

5) How can a loving God send people to hell?

- a. God's character is perfection and He is fully just and fully holy. His perfect, holy nature demands that He cannot be in the presence of evil. Therefore he can't allow those who are not perfect and holy as He to come into His eternal presence. The question is, "How can a holy God not send people to hell"?
- b. God does not want anyone to perish but desires that all come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9). Sin breaks our relationship with God. Only through a repairing of that relationship by abolishing what stands between us can a right standing before God be re-established. Since we have no ability on our own to abolish the division, only Christ's payment on the cross of the debt that we owe will be an adequate substitutionary payment. (A payment is always required to fix anything that is broken- ex. paying to fix a broken watch or bike, someone has to pay if it is to be restored, simply saying "I forgive you", is of no redeeming consequence.)

6) How can Christians say their religion is the only true one?

- a. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." –John 14:6
- b. If in the beginning there was man and God (assuming the Bible is true). There was no "religion," simply man relating with God in a personal way. Death and separation from God entered the world as Adam and Eve in their pride sought knowledge such that they would not need God any longer. Every other religion today follows the same system. They all consistently try to reach the level of relating right to God on their own. The nature of perfection and holiness in God preclude this possibility of connecting with Him on our own merit. Therefore Christianity stands alone in that it does not provide a set of rules or system that must be followed in order to obtain salvation; instead it relies totally on the concept of God's grace. Jesus is the only one who can restore true fellowship between man and God. Christianity does not come in a prideful way saying that its followers are better than others, but rather in a humble way that says its followers recognized their inability and need of help to get to God.
- c. Christianity isn't an exclusive religion; anyone from any background can accept Christ as their Savior. It is often thought Christianity is a Western religion, but it began in the Middle East and spread from there all over the world. Currently, the largest Christian church in the world is in South Korea. There are more Christians in China than any other nation.

7) Don't all religions lead to the same God?

- a. Hindus worship an 'infinite oneness' made up of over 300,000 gods and goddesses, and work to be free from Karma by meditating on Brahman (oneness), venerating their gods and goddesses, or practicing various ceremonies.
- b. Most Buddhists do not believe in any god or supernatural power. They follow the teachings of Buddha; they believe the way to avoid reincarnation into an evil world is to practice meditation and other disciplines until all selfish desires are abandoned on their own.
- c. Muslims believe in one supreme god named Allah who is powerful, just, and distant. He is merciful to his followers depending on their good works and obedience to laws such as the Five Pillars of Islam.
- d. New Age followers refer to God as a higher consciousness within themselves; it draws from many ancient spiritual traditions, but also believes that the self is the originator and the ultimate reality, or God.
- e. Christianity is a faith in a transcendent yet immanent God who sent his one and only son as a savior who lived and died here on earth as a man. Jesus claimed to be God himself, not a prophet or other

religious sage. He leaves no other options but that; He was indeed God, He was deluded and crazy, or He was simply lying....but He gives us no other options. If Christianity is true, then it is also mutually exclusive. It introduces us to God's triune character revealed as God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and a way to relate to God and come into his presence that is totally other to any other religious system.

8) What about those who have never heard?

This is a tough question. Why have some people never heard? The sin of generations previous has lead people away from the truth so that a testimony for Christ does not exist within a people group. Therefore, though God wishes everyone come to a saving knowledge of Himself, man, in his rebellion has kept that from happening. Is God powerless in such people groups? No, of course not. Today we hear of miracles as we have seen throughout all history where God reveals Himself to people in un-reached people groups so that they can have an adequate saving knowledge of His son. Yet, we see in the Bible that the sins of generations previous will have an effect on future generations, not that it is God's desire, but in his divine wisdom, he has allowed man to make such choices and have such an impact in generations to follow. Will God hold man responsible for his sin? He certainly will and must. Does He desire all to come to a knowledge of Himself? This is also certainly true. How do the two exist in a culture where there is no effective testimony for Christ?

Fairness is not a quality of God's character. Justice, mercy, grace, holiness, these are all qualities of God. Were He fair...none of us would enter the paradise of Heaven....none of us deserve entrance and so fairness would preclude such. Thank God that He is not fair.

9) What's the difference between Protestant and Catholics?

- a. Catholics require an intercessor to communicate with God- priests or saints to pray through for forgiveness of sins. Protestants believe that Christ himself is the great high priest and you can communicate directly with Him.
- b. Catholicism put an emphasis on Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary is thought of as a mediator between God and man. They elevate her to sinless perfection status.
- c. Catholicism suggests that good works or sacraments might decrease the time spent in purgatory, paying for their sins before they can enter into heaven. Protestants believe Jesus paid the price for all sin and that people are seen as blameless before the Lord when they profess faith in Christ.
- d. At the Vatican Two, the Pope was given authority as a mouthpiece for God, his words are considered revelation on the same lines as Biblical scripture.

10) Can you be sure if you are going to Heaven?

- a. Yes. "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you *will* be saved." (Romans 10:9) God's Word is Truth, so if you truly believe Christ is Lord, then you can truly believe He has saved you.
- b. Our relationship with Christ is based firstly on fact, followed by faith and then feeling. As the 4-Spiritual Laws book says, "We as Christians do not depend on feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promises of His Word."
- c. "I write these things to those of you that believe in the name of the son of God, in order that you may *know* that you have eternal life." 1 John 5:11
- d. If it were up to us...no, there would be no certainty. However, Christianity is not based on our work, but the work of a savior who brought redemption between man and God. If it were up to us, we could never make it, but if it's up to Him, we can be sure!