

So What if it's True?

There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.'

— C. S. LEWIS

MEMORY VERSE

If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself. (John 7:17).

REVIEW

1. Does Truth Exist? Yes, it's self defeating to say it doesn't.
2. Does God Exist? Yes, as evidenced by the:
 - a. Beginning of the universe (Cosmological Argument)
 - b. Design of the universe (Teleological Argument/Anthropic Principle)
 - c. Design of life (Teleological Argument)
 - d. Moral Law (Moral Argument)
3. Are Miracles Possible? Yes, since God exists miracles are possible. In fact, the greatest miracle—the creation of the universe out of nothing—has already occurred.
4. Is the New Testament True? Yes, we have an accurate copy of the New Testament documents and several reasons to conclude that those documents are telling the truth. Those documents show that Jesus claimed and proved to be God.

SO WHAT IF IT'S TRUE?

Finding Fulfillment

Where are most people looking for fulfillment in life? What are their most important questions about life? Where will they find the answers?

While many people have a legitimate need for medicine, many others volunteer to be walking pharmacies—full of drugs to ease their frustration, confusion, and depression because they see no real meaning to life. TV "reality" shows portray the mixed up lives of people trying to deal with the complexities of everyday life. Books line the shelves of bookstores written to provide "self help." Sports teams provide people with artificial victories and projected meaning in life. People lash out at others around them because of their sense of inadequacy, loneliness and the meaningless of life.

Can you help them? What can you do to change their hopelessness into fulfillment? Since Christianity is true, you have the only true answer to their despair.

1. According to Mark 10:45, why did Jesus come?

2. In the presentation, Frank illustrates how we tend to compare ourselves morally to one another. To whom SHOULD we be comparing ourselves?

3. How does this illustration explain why Christ came?

GOD'S JUSTICE (THE JUDGE)

There is a "dilemma" between God's justice and His love. Think of a set of scales (for weighing things) that were used years ago. They had two containers, one on either end with a long horizontal arm connecting them. In the middle there was a vertical pole with the horizontal arm balanced. To determine an honest payment, standardized weights were placed in the container on one side and items of value used for payment (like gold) were placed in the container on the other side until the weights were equal.

Now imagine that you could weigh God's love and justice (metaphorically speaking because love and justice are immaterial). On one side put the word "Love." On the other side of the scale put the word "Justice." Which side weighs more? Is God's justice greater than His love, or is His love greater than His justice?

Neither. God is infinite in every attribute including justice and love. In fact, the attributes are coexistent and incomplete alone. Love without justice will not punish sin, and justice without love will not offer forgiveness. The results of one without the other would be devastating.

As we saw in a previous lesson, the ultimate moral standard must be unchanging otherwise morality would change. What is considered "just" today could be considered unjust tomorrow. And without an unchanging reference point, all moral measurement would be impossible. God is that unchanging standard of righteousness. It is impossible for God to overlook sin. If what we call "God" could overlook sin, then there would have to be an unchanging standard of righteousness or justice beyond Him (which means that "god" wouldn't be the true God).

We see that God, being infinite Love and infinite Justice, is caught in somewhat of a dilemma. Since we've all sinned at one time in our lives, God's infinite justice demands that He punish that sin. Because of His infinite love, God wants to find a way to avoid punishing us. He does that by punishing His own perfect Son in our place. Thus, he remains just while he justifies sinners (Rom. 3:26).

4. Dr. Turek explained that good works cannot cancel bad works. What are the implications of this regarding our ability to save ourselves from eternal punishment?

5. Why is Christ the only way to eternal salvation?

IS HELL UNJUST?

The following is a short article by Frank Turek adapted from a book titled, *Is God a Human Invention?* by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow.

Why Hell is Loving and Necessary

By Frank Turek

I have often doubted the existence of Hell. The concept of eternal punishment bothers me. But upon reflection, Hell, like many other Christian doctrines, seems not only fair, but also necessary. How so? Let me ask you a couple of questions:

Have you ever been abused, exploited, or dissed? Have you ever been mistreated, lied to, or victimized in any way?

We all have to some degree. It feels horrible enough, but how much worse do you feel when the culprits get away with it—when the guilty escape justice? I don't know about you, but that makes my blood boil. I want justice! In fact, I demand it.

If there is no afterlife, then there is no ultimate justice. People who have committed some of the most horrific acts in history go to their grave without ever getting punished for their deeds. After murdering at least six million people, Hitler died in the comforting arms of his mistress and experienced nothing else. After murdering more than twice that many, Stalin died in bed after shaking his fist one last time at God. And millions of unknown murderers, rapists, and child abusers throughout history never got their just desserts during their lives on earth.

If there is a God—and there is much convincing evidence that there is—then Hell is necessary for people like this. But what about your average non-believers. Why Hell for them?

I've debated the late atheist Christopher Hitchens a couple of times (you can see both debates at www.CrossExamined.org). I can tell you that He wasn't a Hitler or Stalin. He was a sinner just like you and me. But Hitchens admitted that he doesn't want to go to Heaven even if it exists. Why not? Because Heaven would be "Hell" to him. He didn't want to be in God's presence here on earth, so why would he want to be with God in eternity? He wanted to be separated from God, and separation from God is ultimately what Hell is.

*God gives us the free will to reject Him and His offer of forgiveness. Free will means even God can't force us to love Him. Love, by definition, must be freely given, it cannot be coerced. So God doesn't send people to Hell—people send themselves there. A loving God certainly will not force people into **Heaven** against their will. He respects our choices and separates Himself forever from those who don't want Him.*

But why forever? First, it wouldn't be right of God to annihilate unbelievers. Hitchens was made in the image of God just like all of us. God cannot annihilate His own image. That would be an attack on Himself. So He quarantines those who reject Him. Second, a crime can take only seconds to commit, but the punishment is typically much longer (especially a crime against an eternal being). Third, it may be that those in Hell go on sinning in the next life, thereby continuing their rebellion against an eternal God. Finally, since God is perfectly just, everyone will receive the perfect degree of punishment in Hell or reward in Heaven.

So despite my doubts, since God is just and loving, Hell is necessary. In fact, Hell is the main reason Christ came (see Mark 10:45). If there is no Hell, what is He saving us from? If there is no Hell, an innocent Christ died a brutal death for nothing. Guess I ought to start doubting my doubts and let everyone know about what Christ has done! How about you?

** For a much more in depth treatment of the subject of Hell, including common objections, get the DVD set by Frank Turek, "Hell? The Truth about Eternity" at www.ImpactApologetics.com.*

*“God will not force you into Heaven
against your will.”*

6. With regard to faith in Christ, what’s the difference between belief that and belief in?

7. Why won’t God just annihilate unbelievers after death?

8. Why can’t God just save everybody?

WHAT CAN I DO WITH WHAT I KNOW?

This study has provided strong evidence that the Bible is true and Jesus is God. Many people around you are searching desperately for the answers you have found. They are so hungry for answers that they have made up their own answers—their own god. They combine philosophy, religion, opinion, and whatever else to create a god that

suits their needs. Sadly, their false gods have no power to forgive sins, answer prayer, or secure eternal life.

You now have the ability—the ability few have—to make an articulate case that Christianity is true. It is now your opportunity to tactfully present that case. But you will experience resistance. That’s promised in scripture:

- *If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. (John 15:20)*
- *In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)*
- *Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (2 Tim. 3:12)*
- *If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. (1 Pet. 4:16)*
- *Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. (Heb. 12:7)*

In our culture, the only religious name that may be mocked and taken in vain is the name of Jesus. Jesus is a very touchy subject to many people. So you may encounter serious resistance or even ridicule if you begin sharing your new understanding about Jesus being God.

This propensity may increase as the United States continues to attract people from all nationalities and religions. Each one comes with their own particular view of who God is and some believe very strongly. You will need to be sensitive to first understand what they believe about God, why they chose to believe that, and how they came to believe in their god. Learn to ask questions and listen first before offering evidence. Jesus doesn’t want you to win arguments and lose people. Provide evidence but do so respectfully.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Read the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4-15). In this parable, you are the farmer. Your job is to scatter the seed. The seed is the Word of God. Be faithful to what God has called you to do and remember that even when Christ was on earth sowing seed, He didn’t reap a perfect harvest!

THE FINAL CONCLUSION:

The Bible is true. Could we be wrong? Of course -- we are not omniscient beings. But in light of the evidence, we think that critics, skeptics, and those of other faiths need to have a lot more faith than we do.

9. Do you still have doubts about Christianity? Are they intellectual, emotional, or volitional?

10. What are the issues you have questions or doubts about? Share them with your group.

11. We'll never have all the answers. But in light of the overall evidence, is it more reasonable to doubt the Bible or to doubt your doubts? Explain your answer.

IMPORTANT POINT!

In the end, there are only two kinds of people: Those that accept Jesus and those that reject Him. Dr. Tony Evans advises those who reject Jesus to enjoy life now because this is the only heaven they're ever going to experience. He also comforts those who have accepted Jesus by telling them to hang in there, because this is the only hell they're ever going to experience!

TOOLBOX

- Despite the evidence, people will still have doubts and questions. In fact, doubts can be good because they compel you to look for answers. However, they can be difficult to overcome for some people. Go to www.GaryHabermas.com and look up articles on doubt. Also, please watch Gary's five-minute video on losing his wife to stomach cancer and the meaning of the resurrection. It's called "The Resurrection of Debbie," and you can watch it here <http://www.crossexamined.org/blog/?p=167>.

- In addition to his books on the Resurrection, Gary has written two books on doubt. There is also a good Q&A section on doubts and other topics here: http://www.garyhabermas.com/qa/qa_index.htm#rel1).
- An Ohio State student asked Dr. Turek if she was going to Hell. Watch the exchange here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJFig3n1N9s>.
- Go to <http://www.apologetics315.com/> for several great apologetic resources.
- Get *Hard Questions, Real Answers* by William Lane Craig.
- If you want to go even deeper, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist Curriculum*, By Frank Turek and Chuck Winter. Available at www.ImpactApologetics.com.

Once you complete your study of "Why I Still Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist", we think you'll be hungry to continue your studies. You can find Frank Turek's books, CDs, PowerPoint Presentations, DVDs, as well as hundreds of those from other Christian apologists, at ImpactApologetics.com.

Please download the CrossExamined App for free at: www.CrossExamined.org and click on "media". One of the most helpful sections is a tab that says "Quick Answers." In the App you will also find informative podcasts, our CrossExamined blog with articles, and much more aimed at helping equip you to defend the Faith.