

Why Believe in God (Part 2)

Dr. Henry Schorr

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THE MAIN THING: God exists. How can we say that? Firstly, within us is an inner sense of 'oughtness', or conscience, which speaks of right and wrong that is in all of us. Secondly, centuries of personal testimony regarding how God has stepped into peoples' lives in profound, powerful, and personal ways speaks volumes of how God is alive and active in people and the world today.

PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: *Connect and pray as a group*

1. What impact did science and humanism have on your education experience? How did it affect your Christian faith? How did you respond?

PURSUE GOD: *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

Observation and Reflection

1. Cultures throughout human history have all appealed to a belief of right and wrong. Why is this?
2. If we are products of chance, why do people appeal to a standard of 'ought to ...'?
3. Recall the two arguments for the existence of God. Read Romans 1:18-22; 2:14-15 to support these arguments.
4. How has God revealed His existence to you personally?

Application.

1. Pastor Henry closed with, 'May whatever will be most important to you moments after you die, be most important to you now.' What does this mean to you? What steps do you need to take this week to make this prayer vital for your life?
2. What is the power of personal experience (testimony) of God's work in one's life? What is yours?

Supplemental Question:

Your next door neighbor makes a snide remark about your belief in God. "My parents never believed in God. They always said that no one should ever believe in anything that couldn't be seen, tasted or felt. It's not reasonable to believe in a 'great power.'"

What answers can you give your neighbor? Review Pastor Henry's sermons and choose the information you now know to tell your neighbor about God and why you believe in Him.

Bibliography

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THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 1:18-22

¹⁸The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. ²¹For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools...

Romans 2:14-15

¹⁴(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.)

1 Peter 3:15

¹⁵But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

2 Peter 3:3-5

³Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." ⁵But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water.

WHY BELIEVE IN GOD II

Dr. Henry Schorr

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Many within the educational system adopt the viewpoint of Richard Dawkins regarding Christianity. They suggest that 'religious belief is infantile – a childish delusion – that should have disappeared long ago as the human race has matured.' This infers that people of faith have stopped thinking and have lost touch with reality in their blind trust despite 'clear opposing evidence'. However, when Dr. Allister McGrath, a former atheist, examined this statement, he found that Dawkins' intellectual case against God did not stand up. McGrath indicated that everyone has a belief in things that are not grounded in evidence. This being said, it is wise to examine our beliefs for it is what we believe that impacts our values and very direction of our lives.

Previously, in Part I, the Cosmological Argument (Cause and Effect) told us that if the world and universe came to be (Effect) it had to have had a beginning, or reason for its existence (Cause). This is best seen through the lens of the 2nd law of Thermodynamics, and postulated by Dr. Stephen Hawking, when he said, "It would be very difficult to explain why the universe would have begun in just this way except as the act of a God who intended to create beings like us." As well, we have the Teleological Argument (Order and Design). It says that where you see the order and complexity of the universe in its vast array it simply cannot be the product of mere chance. When we see something complex, such as an iPhone, we know it was designed and built by someone. So it is with the universe, our world, living creatures and mankind, right down to the DNA in a single celled organism. Random, impersonal chance will never produce complexity and organization – only greater chaos.

Now we will look at the Moral Argument for the existence of God. It addresses the question, "How does one account for the fact that in human beings everywhere, there is a kind of moral code that provides us with an inner sense of moral oughtness." Globally people appeal to some innate sense of right and wrong no matter their culture, occupation or age. Christians believe that this innate sense of moral values (sometimes called 'moral compass') is placed there by God (Rom 2:14-15). We each have a conscience that lets us know what is right and wrong, that it is right to forgive, to be unselfish, and be truthful and fair – as well as that it is wrong to murder or abuse another, to lie or steal.

Those who do not believe in God deny that objective (God-ordained) moral values exist. They suggest that such moral impulses are only a product of blind evolutionary process that enhances survival and reproduction of the species. Yet, what evidence is there that says these moral codes were generated by chance through evolution? However, even if such may have been so, the implications are staggering. If our moral impulses are the product of blind evolutionary process . . .

- I. We have no real basis for holding people accountable. Blind chance created us hence we are not truly responsible for our actions.
- II. Our morality really can't be trusted. "If our morals have been developed from the mind of lower animals we cannot be sure if they are true or of value – which means they can't be trusted." – Charles Darwin
- III. All morality is subjective, or is relative to individuals and cultures. Yet we do not live like that. We all appeal to some absolute standard. Everyone believes that some things are just wrong. Christians and atheists alike speak out toward noble causes inferring that human life is special and that we should be investing our lives to help others.
- IV. We have no basis for human dignity or human rights. While it could be that it is in the interest of societies to create human rights to honor human dignity so everyone is better off – what if the majority says it is not in their 'best interests'? There is no absolute to appeal to to say one action is moral and another immoral; we only indicate our preferences. We all say there is such a thing as evil. But, says who? Moral values exist but without God we cannot justify them.

A fourth argument is the 'Power of Personal Experience'. Millions of trustworthy people have claimed to have some experience with God in some way (His leading, presence or strength etc.) over the span of thousands of years of history. One may explain away some deluded individuals however the weight of such testimony overwhelms any of the questionable ones. Testimony is powerful, and all the more when placed alongside the other arguments. If there is no God we are nothing more than a fluke of nature with no purpose or meaning in life and stumbling through life with no clear sense of direction. Then it ends. This is the hopelessness a life without God offers you.

Do you know Him? Have you experienced His reality? God has and is revealing Himself to us through His creation. Are you open to Him? Every person knows in their heart there is a God (Romans 1). Are you avoiding God? (2 Peter 3:3-5). Ask Him to reveal Himself to you, because if you are really open – He will. May whatever will be most important to you moments after you die be most important to you now.