

Apologetics 101

How do you know God exists?

- Good question...there are several theories that prove in a lengthy fashion this issue. A couple of ideas to say to quickly answer this question, if that's possible are:
- "well, you could look at it as "can someone prove that He doesn't exist? That may be the harder of the two! So, does that mean that you have faith that God doesn't exist? Interesting thing to chew on."
- "From every culture everywhere in the world, there is a common belief in some kind of God."
- "The universe is a very complex place. Living things are very sophisticated. The human brain is a very, very complex organ (much more so than any computer). Potentially, It is obvious that all of this couldn't have happened by chance. The universe has design to it. I believe God is the designer."
- The Watch analogy (which refers to when you look at a watch, you know that it didn't just become a watch from itself, there was a maker, design, thought, creativity, understanding of its complexity, etc..)
- Examples from your personal life where you clearly know when you had an encounter with God and can attest to that yourself! Ie: changes in you that you couldn't possibly do, clear answers to prayer, fruits of the spirit changes in you that you didn't have before Christ, etc....these are pretty powerful to our generation because they want to know what God means to YOU. ☺

Why does God allow evil and suffering to exist?

- ONE way to respond to that would be: "I admit that evil is a problem and if God created the world this way then He would be an evil God. But the Scriptures actually are clear that God did not create evil. We did, and Satan who is an angel against God. Evil came as a result of man's selfishness. Our enemy, the devil also contributes to tempt us to believe lies that aren't true about us each other and God. God desires a love relationship between us and Him. But true love cannot be forced. It must be a choice. When people first chose to go against God, they brought evil into the world." Remember that evil is only temporary. It will eventually be destroyed. *(the part about satan may or may not be appropriate to those who don't buy into that whole issue. The main point is to come across in a non-know it all manner and humbly explain how Christianity briefly explains one of the hardest things to deal with for most people on this earth!!)*
- "I can choose to love you or kill you. If I choose to kill you that doesn't mean God is evil. It just means that I chose to kill you and you will suffer from my free choice."
- Great question! It is one that I regularly chew on and sometimes come up with no quick and easy answers for why bad things happen to good people. (Ie...people dying, terrorism, diseases, etc....)
- When I face and go through suffering/trials my faith is tested and deepened. My relationship with Christ is stronger and I am changed as a person. I can be more able to connect and understand those who have experienced pain in life because of having gone through junk myself.

Is the Bible reliable?

- There are three criteria. These are: (1) the bibliographical test; (2) the internal evidence test; (3) the external evidence test. For the sake of time, let's just look at the bibliographical test. This tells us that we pretty much have an exact copy of what was originally written.
 - For example, up to 1947, the oldest copy of the Old Testament was dated around 900 A.D. and called the Masoretic Text. But in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered which included much of the Old Testament. They were dated around 100 B.C. (that's 1,000 years earlier). They are almost exactly the same! (See Isaiah 53 in the Bible)
- This question is really a big one for people and there are tons of good, even better stuff than this one test. See below for resources. One thing is looking at the Gospels, and how they show the weaknesses and embarrassing sins of the Apostles...if I was writing that about myself...as a follower of Christ (without any guidance by / inspiration from the Holy Spirit) I wouldn't put anything in there that incriminates me....instead I would be wanting to paint myself more holy and not so ignorant and selfish! It is interesting how the disciples are real/human and also change dramatically when they see the risen Lord after His resurrection (which is the issue for Christianity...and where our faith rests for its validity as well.

That's true for you but not for me.

- I admit that this statement applies to some things like, "My favorite color is purple," or "Math is easy." But in the area of religion it is totally bogus. Some things are true for everybody in all places at all times.
- For example, what if I take a loaded gun and point it at your head and say, "If I pull the trigger you'll die." Would it be valid for you to say, "That's true for you but not for me?"
- The law of non-contradiction states that two mutually exclusive things cannot both be true in the same way at the same time. If I say that this is a pen and you say it's a space ship. One of us is just wrong.

For further study:

Evangelism Outside the Box, Rick Richardson
Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult, Nick Pollard
Out of the Saltshaker, Becky Pippert
More Than A Carpenter, Josh McDowell
A Ready Defense, Josh McDowell
The Case for Christ, Lee Strobel
The Case for Faith, Lee Strobel