

Kirk Cameron's Comments: Read this atheist group's questionnaire. It is really insightful and wonderful material to have ready for your next encounter with an atheist.

Memory Verse

"The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent: because he has appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness . . ."

ACTS 17:30,31

QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

"Man is the master of his own destiny!"

If man is in total control of his future, then he should at least be in control of his own body. Instead, he is subject to involuntary yawning, sneezing, breathing, swallowing, sleeping, salivating, dreaming, blinking, and thinking. He can't even control hair and nail growth. He automatically does these things, irrespective of his will. God has set his body in motion and there is little he can do about it. He also has minimal control over his daily bodily functions. His kidneys, bladder, intestines, heart, liver, lungs, etc., work independently of his will. It is ludicrous to say that man controls his future when he has trouble predicting the stock market, political outcomes, earthquakes, and even the weather, let alone having control over these things.

The following questions are taken from the web site of a Hollywood atheist organization. As they have stated, this information is useful for those who "haven't thought much about religion since childhood and want to test their faith with adult questions...These questions are worthwhile only to those who think reason is the most valid tool in forming opinions."

I have given answers to their difficulties. Perhaps you can share these answers with others who have questions about Christianity.

1) How would you define God, and why are you so convinced that there is one?

God is the Creator, Upholder, and the Sustainer of the universe. He revealed Himself to Moses as the one and only true God.

2) If everything needs a creator, then who or what created God?

No person or thing created God. He created “time,” and because we dwell in the dimension of time, reason demands that all things have a beginning and an end. God, however, dwells outside of the dimension of time. He moves through time as we flip through the pages of a history book; this can be proved by simple study of the prophecies of Matthew 24, Luke 21, and 2 Timothy 3. He dwells in “eternity,” having no beginning or end. This is a dimension in which all humanity will dwell when God withdraws time.

3) How can something that cannot be described be said to exist?

The color blue cannot be accurately described to a man who was born blind. Just because it cannot be described doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. There is plant life on the bottom of the deepest oceans that has never been seen by man, let alone described by him. Despite this, it still exists. Does the (unseen) far side of a planet fail to exist merely because man cannot describe it?

4) Since countless religions in the world today claim to be the one true religion, why do you think yours is truer than theirs?

No religion is “truer” than another. “Religion” is man's futile effort to try to find peace with God. The Christian doesn't strive to have peace with his Creator. It was given to him in the person of the Savior. The uniqueness of Jesus of Nazareth is His statement, “The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.” No religion of man can do that. Christianity is not a manmade “religion,” but a personal relationship with the one true God.

5) Can more than one of these religions be right?

In one sweeping statement, Jesus discards all other religions as a means of finding forgiveness of sins. Jesus, who claimed to be God, said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). The Bible says about Jesus, “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5) and, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). See also Answer #4.

6) If you feel in your heart that your religion is the right one, how do you answer those of other faiths who claim the same thing?

Christians don't base their faith on feelings; their feelings are irrelevant to truth. If I am flying from Los Angeles to New York, my feelings about whether I am going in the right direction

have nothing to do with that fact. We can know with our intellect that Christianity is true, regardless of our feelings. The Bible's thousands of fulfilled prophecies, historical accuracy, and many infallible proofs attest to its reliability.

7) How do you settle the debate and find out which of these religions, if any, is the right one?

Jesus promises that He and the Father will reveal themselves to all who love and obey Him. This is the ultimate challenge to any skeptic. If you repent and place your faith in Jesus Christ, He will give you eternal life and you can know that your eternity is secure.

8) Why does God allow all these false religions to exist?

Because God wants mankind to worship and love Him, He gave Adam and Eve the free will to choose whether to obey or disobey Him. People have chosen to reject God's way and instead seek to establish their own righteousness through works-based religions.

God allows these false religions and atheism to exist for the same reason He allows sinful humans to exist. The Bible tells us that God is not willing that any should perish (regardless of whether they are religious or profess atheism), but that they all come to repentance.

9) Is the bloody history of Christianity consistent with what is supposed to be a religion of love, or does it simply illustrate the consequences of abandoning reason for faith?

The Bible commands Christians to love their enemies and do good to those who spitefully use them. The terrorists in the World Trade Center tragedy carried out their agenda in the name of Allah (their god). This is nothing new. The Crusaders and others who have committed atrocities in the name of Christianity were also evil men who were carrying out their depraved agendas. A thinking person can distinguish between those who use the Christian faith for their own political or "religious" ends and those who are true followers of Jesus. In other words, just because someone claims to be a Christian doesn't mean that he is. He could be what is commonly known as a hypocrite, or an impostor.

10) If everything is the product of a "grand design" by an omniscient, benevolent designer, why is the history of life a record of horrible suffering, blundering waste, and miserable failures?

Why does this God go through billions of years of such carnage without yet arriving at His

goal? God's original creation was "good," but because of mankind's sin we now live in a "fallen" creation. Before sin entered the world there was no suffering, disease, decay, or death. The Bible's explanation of suffering actually substantiates the truth of Scripture.

11) Why did God intervene so many times in human affairs during antiquity (according to the Bible) and yet not do anything during the Holocaust of the Second World War?

No human can claim to know whether or not God intervened in the affairs of humanity at any time between 1939 and 1945. However, the Old Testament makes it very clear that there were times when God didn't intervene in the affairs of His people. He purposefully allowed their enemies to overpower them so that they would turn back to Him.

12) Why should one's inner convictions about the existence of God indicate that He/She/They/It exists outside of that person's mind?

The Bible says that God has placed eternity in the hearts of men and given all people everywhere an awareness of Him so that they are without excuse. He created us to know Him. Throughout history and throughout the world, all cultures acknowledge the existence of God. Besides, why should one's inner convictions about the non-existence of God indicate that He doesn't exist outside of that person's mind? Our personal convictions and beliefs do not affect reality. God simply is.

13) Can a God who would abandon His children when they needed Him the most still be considered "all good"?

One of humanity's great errors is to misunderstand the meaning of "good." A "good" judge will pronounce a stiff sentence on a vicious murderer. A "loving" judge who dismisses a case against a vicious killer because he loves him is not a good judge. Justice and goodness are inseparable. Many times God chastened Israel (gave them their just dessert) because of His goodness. He wanted them to turn back to Him for their own good.

14) If the God of the Bible is "all good," why does He Himself say that He created evil (Isaiah 45:7)?

The word translated "evil" in that verse ("I make peace, and create evil") means "calamity" or "suffering"—God uses both good and bad events in our lives to bring us into a right relationship with Him. However, because God is sovereign over all events, He did allow evil to come into being.

God gave mankind a choice to have a loving relationship with Him. The original sin was when Adam and Eve chose to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Once man knew both good and evil, he had to choose between the two. Because God wants people to worship Him freely out of love and enjoy His incredible blessings, He tells each one of us: “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil..., therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30:15,19).

15) If something is not rational, should it be believed anyway?

At one time, the concept of a thousand-ton aircraft flying through the air seemed irrational and absurd. But after man studied the laws of physics, it was discovered to be quite rational and believable. If one studies God’s Word and understands His Law, Christianity is seen to be infinitely rational and believable. Atheism, on the other hand, rejects logic and evidence and is the epitome of irrationalism. It should be abandoned by any rational person as being foolishness.

16) Is there a better way than reason to acquire knowledge and truth?

No. That’s why the Bible says, “‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the LORD.” That’s why when the apostle Paul spoke “the words of truth and reason,” King Agrippa said, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian.” That’s why Paul “reasoned” with Felix (the governor) about “righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come.” And that’s why Felix “was afraid.”

17) If you would answer #16 with “faith,” then why are there so many contradictory faiths in the world?

There are many faiths because all nations recognize that there is a Creator. However, in their ignorance they worship the moon, the sun, or an idol. No one has ever found an atheistic tribe, because people are not that ignorant. God has given light to every man.

18) Is comfort more important to you than intellectual integrity?

No, it’s not. That’s why I am a Christian.

Kirk's Comment: Atheism may seem intellectual, but intelligent people should also be reasonable and honest about the facts. If you've ever felt nervous about discussing the facts for the existence of God, don't be. The evidences on the side of God. After reading this lesson, you'll be better equipped to talk with skeptics.

QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

"When you're dead, you're dead."

What if you are wrong? What if God, Jesus, the prophets, the Jews, and Christians are right and you are wrong? If there is no afterlife, no Judgment Day, no heaven, and no hell, then God is unjust and each of the above is guilty of being a false witness. It means that Almighty God couldn't care less about the fact that a man rapes a woman, then cuts her throat and is never brought to justice. If you are right, and there is no ultimate justice, you won't even have the joy of saying, "I told you so." However, if you are wrong, you will lose your soul and end up eternally damned. You are playing Russian roulette with a fully loaded gun.

This lesson is a continuation of the list of questions from a Hollywood atheist organization web site, along with my answers. These answers are not definitive, but will help you think through each question so you'll be ready with your own answers as you witness.

19) If you believe, as many do, that all religions worship the same God under different names, how do you explain the existence of religions which have more than one god, or Buddhism, which, in its pure form, has no god?

All religions do not worship the same God. People who reject the one true God of the Bible can find any number of gods, of any type, to suit their tastes. They may choose to worship a small wooden god that asks only for shelf space, one that promises paradise in exchange for a certain number of daily prayers, or one that demands specific offerings or good deeds. People who reject the one true God have always been able to devise a replacement.

20) What would it take to convince you that you are wrong?

I have already been convinced that I was wrong. I was wrong for my 22 years of unconverted life. Conversion to Christianity is when a fallible human being admits that he is wrong and that the infallible Creator is right.

21) If nothing can convince you that you are wrong, then why should your faith be considered anything other than a cult?

A cult is defined as “a system of religious worship and ritual,” which would seem to describe every manmade religion. Christianity, on the other hand, is not a strict adherence to ritual, but a personal relationship with a living God. When a person repents of his sin and places his trust in Jesus, God fills him with His Spirit—the person becomes spiritually alive. He has moved out of the realm of belief into the realm of experience. Once he knows the truth, nothing can convince him otherwise.

Besides, why should adherence to the truth be a determining factor in whether a belief is valid? I believe in gravity and nothing can convince me that I am wrong—but my belief is still true.

22) If an atheist lives a decent, moral life, why should a loving, compassionate God care whether or not we believe in Him/Her/It?

No matter how decent and moral we think we are, we have all sinned by violating God’s holy Laws. To see how you fare against God’s standard, review the Ten Commandments (given in Exodus chapter 20). God’s concern isn’t whether or not we believe in Him; the Bible says that even the demons believe—and tremble. God commands that we repent of our sins and trust Jesus Christ alone for our salvation. If we refuse do that, we will be given justice on the Day of Judgment and we will perish.

23) Should any religion that demands we elevate faith over reason be trusted?

Never elevate faith over reason. Exercise faith because of reason. A man who has to jump 25,000 feet out of a plane exercises faith in a parachute because he reasons that he will perish without it.

24) How can the same God who, according to the Old Testament, killed everybody on Earth except for eight people be considered as anything other than evil?

Look at the lifestyle of those people—they deserved death because of their evil actions. That’s what happens when men reject God. We will all die because God, the Judge of the universe, has pronounced the death sentence upon us: “The soul who sins shall die.” Criminals rarely speak well of the judge. To them, he is “evil.”

25) Must we hate our families and ourselves in order to be good Christians (Luke 14:26)?

No. Luke 14:26 is what is known as “hyperbole” —a statement of extremes, contrasting love with hate for the sake of emphasis. Jesus tells us that the first and greatest Commandment is to love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37,38). As much as we treasure our spouse and family, and even our own life, there should be no one whom we love and value more than God, no one who takes precedence in our life. To place love for another (including oneself) above God is idolatry.

26) Since the ancient world abounded with tales of resurrected Savior-Gods that were supposed to have returned from the dead to save humanity, why is the Jesus myth any more reliable than all the others?

I have never heard of any such “tales of resurrected Savior-Gods.” Any myths there have been have died out for lack of proof. The “Jesus myth,” however, has endured through the ages in cultures all around the world because it is true and provable. Simply read John 14:21 and then try it ...if you dare. If you place your trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation, He will come into your life and reveal Himself to you.

27) If the Bible is the inerrant word of God, why does it contain so many factual errors, such as the two contradictory accounts of creation in Genesis?

There are not two accounts of creation in Genesis. Chapter 1 gives the account of creation; chapter 2 gives details of the same creation. I have been reading the Bible every day for thirty years (without fail) and I am not aware of any “factual errors.”

28) Why isn't the Bible written in a straightforward way that leaves no doubt about what it means?

The Bible is very clear to those who obey God. It says of itself that it is spiritually understood, and that the “natural” man cannot receive the things of God. To someone who hasn't been born spiritually, “they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). However, we can all understand enough to realize that we have sinned against a holy God and need to repent. Once we do that, God gives us the ability to understand His Word.

29) The last time Christianity attained total power, it resulted in the Dark Ages, so why should we expect anything different from Christian fundamentalists today?

It was not Christianity but the Roman Catholic church that had power during the Dark Ages. The doctrines of the Roman Catholic church and the Bible are opposed to one another. It was the Roman Catholic church that opposed Galileo, was responsible for the Inquisition, and refused the common people access to the Bible during the Dark Ages. The Christian Church isn't seeking "total power." Its agenda is not political.

30) Has anyone ever been killed in the name of atheism?

Yes. Atheistic Communist regimes have slaughtered 100 million people. In China an incredible 72 million were murdered, in the Soviet Union 20 million, Cambodia 2.3 million, North Korea 2 million, Africa 1.7 million, Afghanistan 1.5 million, Vietnam 1 million, Eastern Europe 1 million, Latin America 150,000.

However, the full implications of atheism won't be seen until the Day of Judgment, when those who profess to be atheists and therefore ignore God's mercy will lose their most precious possession, their very life.

Memory Verse

"He that has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me: and he that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

JOHN 14:21

Some more questions and answers.

1. Why is Christianity the one true religion? (See #4.)

Christianity is not a manmade "religion" in which man futilely tries to find peace with God; it is a personal relationship with the one true God. The Christian doesn't strive to have peace with his Creator, but received it in the Savior who forgave his sins.

2. According to the Bible, can more than one religion be true? (See #5.)

According to Jesus, who is God, no other religion provides forgiveness of sins. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John

14:6). The Bible says about Jesus, “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5) and, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

3. How can we know that Christianity is true? (See #6 & #7.)

We can know with our intellect that Christianity is true, regardless of our feelings, because the Bible’s thousands of fulfilled prophecies, historical accuracy, and many infallible proofs attest to its reliability. In addition, if we repent and place our faith in Jesus Christ, Jesus promises that He and the Father will reveal themselves to all who love and obey Him.

4. Why does God allow other religions to exist? (See #8.)

God gave mankind the free will to choose whether to love and obey Him. He allows false religions and atheism to exist for the same reason He allows sinful humans to exist. God is not willing that any should perish, but wants all to come to repentance.

5. How do you account for Christianity’s bloody history? (See #9.)

Since the Bible commands Christians to love their enemies and do good to those who spitefully use them, those who use Christianity for their own ends are not true followers of Jesus.

6. Isn’t Christianity irrational? (See #15 & #16.)

If one studies God’s Word and understands His Law, Christianity is seen to be infinitely rational and believable, whereas atheism rejects logic and evidence. That’s why God invites us, “Come now, and let us reason together,” and why Paul spoke “words of truth and reason” when trying to persuade others to become Christians.

1. What would it take to convince a Christian that he’s wrong? (See #20 & 21.)

A Christian has already been convinced that he was wrong, before his conversion. Conversion to Christianity is when a fallible human being admits that he is wrong and that the infallible Creator is right. When a person repents of his sin and places his trust in Jesus, he becomes spiritually alive; he has moved out of the realm of belief into the realm of experience. Once he knows the truth, nothing can convince him otherwise.

2. Why is Christianity not a cult? (See #21.)

A cult is “a system of religious worship and ritual,” which describes every manmade religion. Christianity, on the other hand, is not a strict adherence to ritual, but a personal relationship with a living God.

3.If an atheist lives a moral life, why would God care whether the person believes in Him? (See #22.)

God's concern isn't whether people believe in Him; even the demons believe—and tremble. Even “moral” people have sinned by violating God's holy Laws, and must repent and trust Jesus Christ for their salvation. All who refuse to do so will be given justice on Judgment Day.

4.With other tales of resurrected Savior-Gods, why is the story of Jesus' resurrection reliable? (See #26.)

If there were any such myths, they have died out for lack of proof. The story of Jesus' resurrection has endured through the ages in cultures all around the world because it is true and provable.

5. Why isn't the Bible written clearly? (See #28.)Although the “natural” man cannot understand the things of God, the Bible is very clear to those who obey Him. We can all understand enough to realize that we have sinned against a holy God and need to repent. Once we do that, God gives us the ability to understand His