

DOES GOD EXIST?

BOBBY CONWAY



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*This book is dedicated to my lifelong friend Jonathan Ross,
for entertaining a thousand questions and more.
Thank you for believing in me and helping me live the inquisitive life.*

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Foreword

What book would you recommend for my son? I raised him as a Christian, but he's not a believer any more. Every time we talk, he bombards me with questions. I need better answers. Sometimes I'm not even sure where to begin."

Emails like this one (from the father of a 19-year-old university student) appear regularly in my inbox. I'm not sure which is more discouraging: the growing number of young Christians who are walking away from the Church, or the regular despair I hear from parents who seem ill-equipped to answer their kid's questions. As a youth pastor, I saw the problem with my own eyes. We live in a culture that is less accepting of Christianity than ever before. It's an *aggressive* culture driven by media, technology, and information. If young Christians are to survive in this setting, we, as the Church, need to be ready "to make a defense to everyone who asks [us] to give an account for the hope that is in [us]" (1 Peter 3:15), by leveraging the media, technology, and information age in which we live.

No one is doing this better than the One-Minute Apologist, Bobby Conway. When I first discovered one of Bobby's videos and watched him make the case for Christianity in a brief, powerful, online presentation, I thought, "Dang, why didn't I think of that?" Bobby has been interviewing "the world's leading apologists to provide credible answers to curious questions" for several years now, and he's addressed hundreds of questions, challenges, and objections to the existence of God. He's been sitting across the microphone from the best Christian Case Makers in the land; he's heard every objection and considered every reasonable response.

More importantly, he's learned how to engage the culture.

Bobby's video ministry is a "gateway" ministry, introducing believers and skeptics to experts in the field while presenting brief responses to the objections offered by the culture. These videos have been viewed by thousands of people who are looking for an answer, a starting point, or a word of encouragement. Bobby's visual, targeted, culturally relevant approach has helped many people navigate their doubts and strengthen their faith.

Now Bobby has taken what he's learned sitting alongside the best apologists and crafted another effective resource for those who have questions about God. Like his video ministry, *Does God Exist?* is concise, targeted, and culturally relevant. If you've got a question about God, I bet there's an answer in this book. *Does God Exist?* reflects the diversity of Bobby's One-Minute Apologist videos. You'll find responses to important metaphysical questions, refined theological issues, and timely moral concerns. Bobby will help you address the culture effectively even as you answer your own doubts and concerns. This is a book you'll return to often.

I know the temptation with books like these, however. You will definitely want to give this book to your kids, family members, or friends who have questions about Christianity. It's perfect for the father who emailed me about his son. But let me caution you: *Does God Exist?* is more than a book you can *give away*. It's a book *you* need to read and master. This is an incredibly accessible resource; you can easily train yourself to make the case for Christianity by reading each chapter and watching the associated videos. So take the time to examine its contents, think about what you've learned, consider the questions at the end of each chapter, and research the expert case makers Bobby has introduced. *Does God Exist?* will show you where to begin and help you respond with better answers.

J. Warner Wallace, Cold-Case Detective and Author of
Cold-Case Christianity and *God's Crime Scene*

Introduction

*Who questions much, shall learn
much, and retain much.*

FRANCIS BACON

Are you the inquisitive type? And do you find yourself a little on the curious side? Were you the child always raising your hand in class? If so, that's nothing to be ashamed of. Asking questions is part of the learning process. *Great learners ask great questions.* And there is no such thing as a dumb question—if you're genuinely seeking to learn. Regrettably, many people stunt their learning simply because they're too embarrassed to ask questions. That's unfortunate.

But think about it. The only person who doesn't *need* to ask questions is God. That's because He knows everything. God doesn't need to raise His hand. He doesn't use Google. And He certainly hasn't enrolled in a PhD program. He's all-knowing. Theologians refer to this as God's *omniscience*. Must be nice, huh?

So we think. But would you want to know everything?

The good.

The bad.

And the ugly?

I don't think so. Maybe the good, but certainly not all the ugly. Lord knows there's enough going on in the world that we don't need stuck in our heads. We can be thankful for some good

old-fashioned ignorance—for God’s shrouded grace. It even seems that God wanted Adam and Eve to remain in the dark about the ugly (see Genesis 2:15-17).

Curiosity taken to its extreme can be dangerous. There are some things that we must be content not knowing—things that reach beyond the finite. That should be freeing. But fortunately, there’s a lot that we can know. And should know. While we can’t discover the answers to all our questions, we can find the answers to some of them.

I’m thankful for that.

For many years I’ve been passionate about tracking down the answers not only to other people’s questions but also to my own. I have the privilege of hosting an internationally recognized program called *The One-Minute Apologist* where our motto is “providing credible answers to curious questions.” And that’s what I hope to do in this book. I’m seeking to do in written form what I already do through my weekly videos. My aim is to provide short answers to sincere questions. Also, to help maximize your curiosity quest, I’ve included at the end of each chapter a thought to ponder, a memory verse, a question to consider, and a corresponding video from my *One-Minute Apologist* YouTube program.

It’s my hope that this little book will get you thinking more about God and the Bible.

Before getting started, let me make an important qualification. The answers in this book are by no means exhaustive. Far from it. Rather, they’re pithy and to the point.

In the end, this is simply a Q&A book about God and the Bible. With that in mind, I invite you to use this book in your quiet times, during your family devotions, as a gift for new believers or those interested in what Christians believe, or even with your friends as you journey toward a more thoughtful Christianity.

QUESTION 1

Does God Exist?

On our total evidence theism is more probable than not.

RICHARD SWINBURNE

Some questions carry more weight than others. Such is the case with the question, “Does God exist?” People will often contend that God does exist (theism), or He *may* exist (agnosticism), or He doesn’t exist (atheism). If it can be shown that He does exist, the latter two options are irrelevant.

Think about it. God can’t exist and not exist, right? He either is or He isn’t. Even the agnostic would concede that God either exists or He doesn’t. The agnostic doesn’t refute that point. Rather the agnostic pleads the fifth when it comes to knowing how to settle the answer to the question of God’s existence. What can we say by means of support for theism?

First, the Bible presupposes God’s existence. It’s as if the Scriptures knew God’s existence would be brought into question. Therefore, from the very first verse of the Bible the rumor is dispelled as it opens with the phrase, “In the beginning, *God*” (Genesis 1:1).

Second, to deny God’s existence is to deny the obvious. When we fast-forward to the New Testament we learn that God’s not hiding out. No. He’s not playing hide-and-seek. Rather, He has made Himself known. In Romans 1:19-20 we read, “What can be known about God is *plain* to them, because God has *shown* it to them. For

his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been *clearly perceived*, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So *they are without excuse*.” Paul is stressing that the evidence for God’s existence is clear. It’s as if he’s saying, “No one can play curious in the midst of the obvious.” Creation shouts, “We’re not here by accident!” Even atheists will concede, “Yes, it looks as if the universe is designed, but it’s not.” What are they doing? Rejecting the obvious. Rejecting God’s existence.

Third, it’s foolish to deny God’s existence. So confident is David in the obviousness of God’s existence that he quips, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Psalm 14:1). And yet, note the irony. Today, the mantra has been flipped. Ours is a culture that says, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is a God.’” Well, is there? And if He does exist, are there any hints out there? Indeed. This leads to our final point.

Fourth, to deny God’s existence is to reject the evidence. For starters, the universe had a beginning. And the evidence for such a claim is robust. With Einstein’s universally embraced theory of general relativity and its claim that space, time, and matter all had a starting point, the argument for a beginning is powerfully complementary to scientific theories. Subsequent to Einstein’s discovery, the Hubble Space Telescope enabled us to see that the universe we live in is expanding. If the expansion process could be reversed, the universe would be brought back to a beginning point. Eureka.

So what does all this mean? It means the universe and everything in it had a cause, including you and including me. Something can’t come from nothing, right? But you say, “According to your logic, wouldn’t God need a cause too?” Nope. And that’s because God didn’t *begin* to exist. He is self-existent. He’s a necessary being, the uncreated Creator of all things. He’s in a league of His own. He is...the great I AM. The self-existent One.

Next, consider the intricate design all around us. So much so that, as I said, even the skeptics concede that the universe looks like someone's been tinkering with it. Or better yet, has tailored it. Then there's DNA, a code so information-rich that it's hard to imagine how such intelligence could surface from non-intelligence.

Finally, consider our innate sense of right and wrong. Where does that come from? As humans, we come into this world with God's moral code branded on us. According to Scripture, God's moral law has been inscribed on each of our hearts (Romans 2:14-15). A moral law requires a moral lawgiver, and that giver is God. Sure, some contend that there's no such thing as wrong. But wrong him and he will be the first to say, "Hey, what's up with that? That wasn't right!"

While some maintain that God doesn't exist, they cannot with integrity claim that to believe in God is a mere fantasy and there is no warrant for such belief. The warrant is everywhere.

■ Thought to Ponder

Isn't it ironic that so many people who pride themselves on being mindful believe that the universe is the product of mindlessness?

■ Memory Verse

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God" (Psalm 14:1).

■ Question to Consider

With all of this evidence at believers' disposal, why do atheists still insist that believers are so naïve and ignorant for their so-called illusory belief in God?

■ One-Minute Apologist Video

Ken Boa, "Does God Exist?"

www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2iZHCBMNIY

QUESTION 2

Who Made God?

To ask, “Who made God?” commits a category fallacy: It assumes that God is a contingent (dependent), caused entity. God by definition is uncaused and eternally existent.

PAUL COPAN

Asking the question, “Who made God?” is like asking, “How did Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata taste?” It just doesn’t fit. The question is a classic category mistake. Why? Because God wasn’t made and the Moonlight Sonata can’t be tasted! Adding to this blunder, the famed atheist Bertrand Russell notoriously said, “If everything must have a cause, then God must have a cause.” But it’s not true that everything must have a cause. Only that which *begins* to exist must have a cause. And herein God is perched up in a category of His own.

God is the uncreated Creator. He is the beginning-less Beginner. He is the uncaused Cause of all that exists. Think about it. Everything that had a beginning had a Beginner. Every product has a Producer. And every initiative must have an Initiator. If there is an origin there must be an Originator. And since there is a genesis there is a Generator. That generator is God.

Exclaimed from verse one of the Bible the Scriptures announce, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). Far from being made, God is the Maker of all things. He is

the Cause of all first causes. He is the Producer of all that was originally produced. He's the original Originator. And the Genesis of all that's been generated!

Do you remember what God said to Moses when He appeared to him in the burning bush to appoint him to confront Pharaoh?

Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:13-14).

What was God saying to Moses? He was revealing Himself to Moses as the *self-existent* one. As the one who wasn't made! God was saying, "Moses, go tell them that the One who never began to exist sent you. The unmade One."

Unlike us, God is a necessary being, an independent being. And each of us, unlike God, are contingent beings, therefore, dependent. The universe is also contingent. God spoke it into existence. This means all things that began to exist are dependent on God for existence.

It turns out there is a problem with the question "Who made God?" The word *made* can't be said of God. For God is the unmade Maker.

■ Thought to Ponder

It's been said, "It's a whole lot easier to believe that Something took nothing and made something than it is to believe that nothing took nothing and made something."

■ Memory Verse

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God (Psalm 90:2).

■ Question to Consider

Why are so many people content to believe that everything came from nothing?

■ One-Minute Apologist Video

Frank Turek, “Who Created God?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yY9a2SwNx4>

QUESTION 3

Did God Create the World to Boost His Own Glory?

Let me be clear that of course the Bible says it is our obligation to love, praise, and worship God, but this is a very different matter from the suggestion that God worships himself, is deeply worried about whether he has enough glory or not, and his deepest motivation for doing anything on earth is so that he can up his own glory quotient, or magnify and praise himself.

BEN WITHERINGTON

Some people have a hard time stomaching the idea of a relationship with the Christian God because they think He created the world for a personal glory boost. Sort of like creating a world destined for redemption in order to become your own superhero.

How can we respond to such a view?

First, God didn't create the world with a desire for us to rebel against Him. Rather, the world was created in perfection and declared "good" by God (see Genesis 1:31).

Second, it wasn't God's desire for evil to enter into the world. In fact, He even warned Adam to avoid the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17).

Third, God didn't create the universe and all of humanity

because there was something lacking within Him. He has no deficiency. No need. We weren't created for His emotional fulfillment. The thought in itself is absurd, if not laughable. Nor does God have some deep-rooted insecurity issue whereby He created us so that we could remind Him of how great He is. He's well aware. And not arrogantly so, but obviously so!

Fourth, neither did God create us because He suffered from the horrors of loneliness. God is triune. He has eternally existed in what Alvin Plantinga, the eminent philosopher, refers to as the "Charmed circle of the Trinity."* God is a communal God. One God eternally existing in triune community!

So why did God create us? Not for lack. Rather God created us to share Himself with us. Far from being a selfish megalomaniac, God is a selfless, giving, omnibenevolent God. His greatest act of benevolent love was witnessed at Calvary in the Person of Jesus Christ as He sought to rescue us from the consequences of this macabre, marked world. It was there at Golgotha that Christ shared in our suffering to atone for our sins. And it wasn't out of His need. It was out of ours.

■ Thought to Ponder

God didn't create us to boost His own glory. That would imply He was in need of us. Rather, He created us to share in His glory and to experience His creation and ultimately to know Him as our Creator.

* Alvin Plantinga, *Knowledge and Christian Belief* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 123.

■ Memory Verse

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything (Acts 17:24-25).

■ Question to Consider

What would that say about God if He created the world to boost His own glory?

■ One-Minute Apologist Video

Bobby Conway, “Did God Create the World to Boost His Own Glory?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMUqwjeEbrc>

QUESTION 4

God, Who Are You?

*What comes into our minds when we think about
God is the most important thing about us.*

A. W. TOZER

At the ripe old age of five, the great thirteenth-century philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas asked his teacher, “What is God?” His teacher was stumped. As a result, Thomas became a theologian to find out for himself. Regarding God’s essence, he didn’t think we could answer that question. But he did believe we could know that God exists. Thanks to Aquinas, we are privy to so much great work in the area of natural theology.

As Christians, we believe that God has made Himself known through both **natural and special revelation**. *Natural revelation* refers to knowledge of God that can be obtained through philosophy, human reason, and observation of nature. Arguments from nature such as the cosmological argument, the fine-tuning argument, or even the moral argument (see chapter 1) help us to learn *some* things about the nature of God, even demonstrating that life is not an accident. By studying the philosophical and scientific arguments for God’s existence we can see that God is a necessary, uncaused, timeless, spaceless, and immaterial creator God.

We can be thankful that those arguments provide a compelling case for God’s existence, but these are also arguments that other theists like Jews and Muslims can utilize. Fortunately, God

has made Himself even clearer through *special revelation*—that is, through Scripture and through the person of Jesus Christ. And we need special revelation to answer the question before us.

Namely, *Who is God?*

As we should expect, Scripture confirms through special revelation what we've already learned about God through natural theology. But special revelation seasons things up a bit by supplying more flavorful detail about God. Here's a mere sampling of what we learn about God.

- God is omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-12; Jeremiah 23:24)
- God is omniscient (Psalm 147:4-5)
- God is omnipotent (Jeremiah 32:17; Psalm 135:6)
- God is Spirit (John 4:24)
- God is in a league of His own (Isaiah 46:9)
- God is immortal and invisible (1 Timothy 1:17)
- God is the Creator (Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16)
- God is unchanging (Malachi 3:6)
- God is sovereign (Psalm 115:3)
- God is One, yet He exists in three persons (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)
- God is loving (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8)
- God is gracious and merciful (Jonah 4:2; Deuteronomy 4:31)
- God is righteous (Psalm 11:7)
- God is holy (Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:16)
- God is just (Deuteronomy 32:4; Isaiah 30:18)

- God is forgiving (1 John 1:9)
- God is compassionate (James 5:11)

This is just a snapshot of who God is. I'm guessing you get the picture. We serve a pretty special God—a God who deserves our highest devotion, our deepest love, and our fullest gratitude.

■ Thought to Ponder

God is a God who is to be more than defined. He's to be loved.

■ Memory Verse

Behold, God is great, and we know him not; the number of his years is unsearchable (Job 36:26).

■ Question to Consider

If you had to best summarize who God is based on the biblical data we have at our disposal, what would you say?

■ One-Minute Apologist Video

Bobby Conway, "Who Is God?"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Djn_etbdw7g