

Atheism & Agnosticism

QUICK REFERENCE COUNSELING KEYS Excerpt

Today's "World War" . . .

In August of 1939, Hitler—with a master plan for world dominance and a disregard for sanctity of life—invaded his eastern neighbor Poland. Germany's hostility raised the curtain on World War II. Today, another "world war" has taken center stage in the battle for beliefs. It's called "The Great Debate—Is There a God or Not?" This war has nothing to do with a supreme military leader, but everything to do with the Supreme Spiritual Commander. This war is fought with briefcases instead of bullets, three-piece suits instead of fatigues, academic arguments instead of artillery. Is human life a divine creation or, as Hitler thought, dispensable? Does an intelligent, personal God who literally intervenes in life exist? Simply put, does God exist? How leaders answer this one short question determines the major moral decisions of our day. In Psalm 2:1 the Bible poses the question, "*Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?*" Its own answer is revealing . . .

*"The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his anointed."
(Psalm 2:2)*

Q: "How can a logical person believe in the existence of God?"

A logical person would not make such illogical statements.

- To state, "I know there is no God" communicates, "I know all there is to know—nothing exists beyond my knowledge." However, no one knows everything. Therefore, if something is not known, that something might be God.
- To state, "God does not exist" communicates, "I have been everywhere in the universe." No one has literally been everywhere. Because you haven't been everywhere, you can't say God doesn't exist here.

*"Can a man hide himself in secret places
so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD.
Do I not fill heaven and earth?
declares the LORD."
(Jeremiah 23:24)*

Q: "How can I believe something I can't see and have never seen?"

No one has ever seen gravity, yet everyone lives by gravity. The law of gravity pulls all objects toward the center of the earth; therefore, without gravity we would continuously float in the air.

*"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for,
the conviction of things not seen."
(Hebrews 11:1)*

Defending the Faith

If something exists, we must draw one of the following three conclusions:¹

- It is eternal.
- It is created by something eternal.
- It is self-created.

During the Age of Enlightenment (eighteenth century), skeptics claimed that the “God hypothesis” was no longer necessary . . . that the universe came into being by spontaneous generation. Scientists believed that bacteria appeared on bread because of “spontaneous generation.” However, after microscopes became more powerful, spontaneous generation was rejected because the sources of bacteria were discovered. Today the scientific community recognizes that something cannot come from nothing. Therefore, for something to create itself, it would first have to exist. Yet, for something to be and not be at the same time is an impossibility! Ultimately, the only explanation for the existence of the universe is the eternal God. God is what we call self-existent—He has always been, and He will always be.

*“You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth
in the beginning, and the heavens
are the work of your hands.”
(Hebrews 1:10)*

Atheism and Agnosticism . . . Begins with Doubts

Damaged emotions . . . rejection, trauma, or lack of love in early life

Obliterated trust . . . no confidence in authority figures

Unrealistic expectations . . . faulty thinking about God and religion

Buried belief . . . no all-powerful God of love

Twisted truth . . . significance comes from what I do

Seared consciences . . . calloused to the touch of God

. . . and Ends with Denial!

Key Verse to Memorize

*“You will seek me and find me.
When you seek me with all your heart.”
(Jeremiah 29:13)*

Key Passage to Read and Reread

Romans 1:18–2:29

Arguments for the Existence of God

The Argument from Being

All cultures have an awareness of God that includes a system of worship and even atonement for sin. The fact that every person has thought about a Supreme Being in one way or another presupposes that such a being exists.

The Argument from First Cause

Since, scientifically, something cannot come from nothing, our world has to have been created. Therefore, a Creator must have originally caused its creation.

The Argument from Man

Because human beings are mentally and morally unique, in contrast to all other life forms, God must have placed within us our mental and moral capabilities.

The Argument from Design

Just as an intricate, workable watch is made by a watchmaker, the design of the world is intricate and workable. Therefore, an Intelligent Designer must have planned it.

*“Thus says the LORD, who created
the heavens (he is God!), who formed
the earth and made it (he established it;
he did not create it empty, he formed it
to be inhabited!): ‘I am the LORD,
and there is no other.’”
(Isaiah 45:18)*

“What Kind of God Exists?”

Based on the four classic lines of argument:²

The Argument from Being

Because everyone has the idea of God within, God is essential.

The Argument from First Cause

Because the Creator created something out of nothing, God is all-powerful.

The Argument from Man

Because human beings exhibit moral, self-sacrificial choices for the highest and best of others, God is moral.

The Argument from Design

Because God designed an intricate world (for example, balancing heat and cold, changing gases that alternate between plants and humans), God is vastly intelligent.

*“The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice.
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,
just and upright is he.”
(Deuteronomy 32:4)*

Related Topics . . .

- Assurance of Salvation:
Safe, Sealed, and Secure
- The Bible: Is It Reliable?
Truth on Trial
- Child Evangelism:
Sharing the Savior with a Child
- God: Who Is He?
Who Do You Say That He Is?
- Salvation:
Sharing the Savior with Confidence
- Unbelieving Mate:
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Atheism & Agnosticism:
The Great Debate.

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1. For this section see R. C. Sproul, *Reason to Believe* (Grand Rapids: Lamplighter, 1982), 105–11.
2. For this section see Geisler and Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask*, 26–28.



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