



DOES SIX SESSIONS ON THE TOUGHEST
OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY

**CHRISTIANITY
STILL MAKE SENSE?**

STUDY GUIDE

Bobby Conway

**DOES
CHRISTIANITY
STILL MAKE SENSE?**

STUDY GUIDE

DOES SIX SESSIONS ON THE TOUGHEST
OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY

CHRISTIANITY

STILL MAKE SENSE?

STUDY GUIDE

Bobby Conway



TYNDALE
elevate[™]

ask. seek. find.

Visit Tyndale online at tyndale.com.

Tyndale and Tyndale's quill logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Ministries. Tyndale Elevate and the Tyndale Elevate logo are trademarks of Tyndale House Ministries. Tyndale Elevate is a nonfiction imprint of Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois.

Does Christianity Still Make Sense? Study Guide: Six Sessions on the Toughest Objections to Christianity

Copyright © 2024 by Bobby Conway. All rights reserved.

Cover and interior illustration of bust of Christ, public domain image from The MET on Rawpixel.com.

Author photograph copyright © 2022 by Tim Hull. All rights reserved.

Cover design by Libby Dykstra

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked ESV are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Published in association with the literary agency of Mark Sweeney & Associates, Carol Stream, Illinois.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Tyndale House Publishers at csresponse@tyndale.com, or call 1-855-277-9400.

ISBN 978-1-4964-7647-0

Printed in the United States of America

30	29	28	27	26	25	24
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

CONTENTS

Introduction	I
SESSION 1: When Christianity Didn't Make Sense <i>Bobby's Story of Nearly Falling Away</i>	5
SESSION 2: What's Wrong with the Church? <i>Scandals, Schisms, and So Much More!</i>	19
SESSION 3: What's Wrong with God? <i>If God Is Good, Why Is the World So Jacked Up?</i>	31
SESSION 4: Why Is Christianity So Exclusive? <i>Those Narrow-Minded Christians</i>	41
SESSION 5: Hasn't Science Buried God? <i>Christianity and Its Compatibility with Science</i>	51
SESSION 6: Where Do We Go from Here? <i>A Call for a New Reformation</i>	65
Notes	79
About the Author	81

INTRODUCTION

It has been several years now since God walked me out of an agonizing and extended season of doubt. To say those were some hard times would be an understatement. My anguishing dark night of the soul was marked by deep despair—the kind that can make you think about an exit strategy for life. To make matters worse, while I was feeling emotionally and spiritually flayed, I couldn't figure out how to resolve my doubts. My brain was producing questions faster than it could process them. My Christian walk began to feel like a long, drawn out Q&A session.

That's not good for anybody, and it certainly wasn't good for me. As I struggled along, one thing became increasingly clear: This side of heaven, I was never going to discover the airtight certainty I was looking for. Absolute assurance is beyond our reach. Nobody has all the answers in life—regardless of their belief system. Given the right circumstances, everyone is susceptible to a season of doubt. As hard as I pursued certainty, in the end it was a fool's errand.

What was I to do? Consumed with angst, I was struggling to make sense of Christianity. I was confused. Double-minded.

Intellectually twisted up. The solution had to be something other than discovering more answers—because there will always be more questions. What I needed, besides regaining the faith of a child, was to discover how to live with unanswered questions, while also rejoicing in the many answers I had already received through years of study. As I reflected on other worldviews, I came to see that each one had its own set of unanswered questions. After years of agonizing and thinking my way through various world religions, cults, secularism, and other life philosophies, I concluded that Christianity *still* makes sense. Pound for pound, it makes the best sense of all the options.

Remember when Jesus described himself as the Bread of Life?¹ That sermon marked a great departure for many of his would-be disciples. Jesus didn't make sense to them, so they left. But not all of them. Without adjusting his words to make them more palatable for his remaining followers, Jesus stuck to his message. Addressing the Twelve, he said, "Are you also going to leave?"² In other words, "Is *everyone* going to abandon me?"

In typical fashion, Simon Peter answered on behalf of the others: "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life."³ I love that. Peter was saying, "I'm not sure where those other folks are headed, but *we're* sticking with *you*, Jesus." Similarly, after I thought my way through various other belief options, I discovered there was nowhere else for me to go but home. So I did. In childlike faith, I surrendered my ignorance to God and trusted in his wisdom. And Christianity finally made sense again.

Perhaps you can relate. You're torn up with doubt. You find your faith wavering. Could you use some extra hope? Though this series aims to respond to some of the toughest objections to

Christianity, my purpose is bigger than simply finding answers to a bunch of questions. As important as it is to do our homework, making sense of Christianity ultimately comes by seeking the heart of God. If you are utterly lost in a maze of doubt, you need to know God more than you need the answer to another question.

As Christians, we have solid evidence to validate our trust in God. Our faith is not a shot in the dark. There is a wealth of compelling evidence in favor of Christianity that's worth unpacking. There are solid answers to life's toughest questions, and over the next six weeks we're going to make some sense of these together. As we turn our attention to the journey ahead, here's some guidance to get you started.

With only six weeks of discussions, we can barely scratch the surface of Christian apologetics. However, my hope is to whet your appetite for more.

Here's how the flow will go:

Each week, you'll start by watching, and discussing, a brief video that corresponds to a section in *Does Christianity Still Make Sense?*

Next, you will *read* a section composed of Bible verses and other information related to the topic of the session, and you will *respond* to several discussion questions.

The next section is designed to help you *prepare to act* on what you sense God is leading you to do in response.

Finally, the session will conclude with a time to *pray* together, inviting God to work through your group.



SESSION 1

WHEN CHRISTIANITY DIDN'T MAKE SENSE

BOBBY'S STORY OF NEARLY FALLING AWAY

There was . . . a castle called Doubting Castle,
the owner whereof was Giant Despair.

JOHN BUNYAN, THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS



Before you meet for session 1,
read the introduction and chapters 1-4 in
Does Christianity Still Make Sense?

Does Christianity still make sense? This question haunts many Christians during seasons of doubt, when it seems as if their entire belief structure is being systematically dismantled. That was certainly my story. And the doubts were all the worse because I was the pastor of a large, thriving church and had developed a national reputation as a Christian apologist through my YouTube videos as the *One Minute Apologist* (now called *Christianity Still Makes Sense*). Yet there I was, a pastor, an author, and, yes, a Christian apologist, wondering whether Christianity still made sense. Had I been duped? For that agonizing season, it certainly felt that way.


Perhaps you can relate. Maybe you find yourself questioning a faith that once made sense to you. If so, be encouraged. There is a way forward. The purpose of this session is for us to get real with one another. The church should be a safe space. A place for believers to be able to doubt out loud in order to find a way to doubt toward faith once again. In Jude's epistle we read, "You must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering."¹ Let's aim to show that kind of mercy to anyone among us who is doubting.



Video

Before you open up your group time for discussion, watch the video for session 1.

3. Why do you think it is often hard for Christians to talk about their doubts?



Read and Respond

The Bible is replete with stories about doubters—starting with Adam and Eve and continuing through Sarah and Abraham, Gideon, various prophets and psalmists, and on into the New Testament, including John the Baptist and some of Jesus’ closest followers.

Here is a sampling of some folks in Scripture who grappled with their doubts. As you read the following passages, try to identify the various causes of doubt.

John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, “Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?”

Jesus told them, “Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen—the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.” And he added, “God blesses those who do not fall away because of me.”

As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began talking about him to the crowds. “What kind of man did you go into the wilderness to see? Was he a weak reed, swayed by every breath of wind? Or were you expecting to see a man dressed in expensive clothes? No, people with expensive clothes live in palaces. Were you looking for a prophet? Yes, and he is more than a prophet. John is the man to whom the Scriptures refer when they say,

‘Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
and he will prepare your way before you.’

“I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist.”²

1. How did someone like John the Baptist end up going through a season of doubt?

DOES CHRISTIANITY STILL MAKE SENSE? STUDY GUIDE

2. What does it tell you that he shared his doubts with his disciples?

3. In the final line of this excerpt, Jesus pays John quite the compliment, in spite of his doubt. What does that tell you about how Jesus regards our doubts?

One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. They told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”

Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”

“My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.

Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”³

4. It wasn’t enough for Thomas to hear the eyewitness testimony of his fellow disciples. He wanted to see proof of Christ’s resurrection for himself. Why do you think Thomas struggled to believe what he had heard?

DOES CHRISTIANITY STILL MAKE SENSE? STUDY GUIDE

5. Have you ever found yourself thinking like Thomas: *It'd be a whole lot easier to believe if I could just see?* Can you think of any examples in the Bible where seeing didn't necessarily equate to believing?

6. Sadly, Thomas became branded as "Doubting Thomas." What can Christians do to avoid labeling people based on something those people have said or done? How *should* we respond to people who express their doubts?

So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth.

“How long has this been happening?” Jesus asked the boy’s father.

He replied, “Since he was a little boy. The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and help us, if you can.”

“What do you mean, ‘If I can?’” Jesus asked.
“Anything is possible if a person believes.”

The father instantly cried out, “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!”⁴

7. The father seems to have lost all hope because his child had suffered this way since he was a little boy. What is it about prolonged trials that can strip away our hope and faith?

DOES CHRISTIANITY STILL MAKE SENSE? STUDY GUIDE

8. What do you think the father meant when he said, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!"? How can faith and unbelief exist together?

9. The father received what he asked for. Have you ever prayed and felt ignored? How do you not lose heart when God remains silent or your prayers are not answered in the way that you want?



Prepare to Act

1. What are some of the biggest doubts that people struggle with in our culture today?

2. How do you think the church handles people's doubts overall? Is the church partly to blame for the doubts people are struggling with today? Why or why not?

DOES CHRISTIANITY STILL MAKE SENSE? STUDY GUIDE

3. What can the church do to better equip believers to navigate their way through their own doubts and the doubts expressed by others?



Pray

Pray together as a group, and especially for anyone in the group whose faith is wavering. Pray for the church at large, that God would awaken the body of Christ to a renewed vision for the kind of discipleship that will equip believers to confidently navigate the rough seas of doubt.

