

"How could a good God allow so much suffering?"

"Why should I believe heaven and hell exist?"

"Why do you condemn homosexuals?"

THE QUESTIONS CHRISTIANS HOPE NO ONE WILL ASK

(with answers)

"Why trust the Bible? It's full of myths."

Questions
from a Recent
National
Survey

"Why are Christians so judgmental?"

MARK MITTELBERG



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The Questions Christians Hope No One Will Ask (With Answers)

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To Emma Jean and Matthew,
who have grown up in a world that seems
to have more questions than answers,
but who have learned to seek and
to follow the Truth

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>Introduction: Why the Questions Matter So Much</i>	xiii
Chapter 1	1
“What makes you so sure that God exists at all— especially when you can’t see, hear, or touch him?”	
Chapter 2	27
“Didn’t evolution put God out of a job? Why rely on religion in an age of science and knowledge?”	
Chapter 3	61
“Why trust the Bible, a book based on myths and full of contradictions and mistakes?”	
Chapter 4	99
“Everyone knows that Jesus was a good man and a wise teacher—but why try to make him into the Son of God, too?”	
Chapter 5	127
“How could a good God allow so much evil, pain, and suffering—or does he simply not care?”	

Chapter 6	159
“Why is abortion such a line in the sand for Christians—why can’t I be left alone to make my own choices for my own body?”	
Chapter 7	189
“Why do you condemn homosexuality when it’s clear that God made gays and that he loves all people the same?”	
Chapter 8	221
“How can I trust in Christianity when so many Christians are hypocrites?”	
“And why are Christians so judgmental toward everyone who doesn’t agree with them?”	
Chapter 9	249
“Why should I think that heaven really exists—and that God sends people to hell?”	
Chapter 10	289
The questions our friends need <i>us</i> to ask <i>them</i>	
<i>Recommended Resources</i>	307
<i>Notes</i>	312
<i>About the Author</i>	326

FOREWORD

Have you ever experienced “spiritual vertigo”—a queasy sense of disorientation, confusion, and even panic that can overtake us when a critic challenges the core of our faith in a way that we cannot answer?

I first experienced that phenomenon when I was a young Christian and volunteered at our church to respond to questions submitted on cards at our weekend services. One Sunday I got an inquiry from a twelve-year-old girl who said she just wanted to know more about Jesus.

When I called her, she invited Leslie and me to her home to talk with her and her father about Christ. “Aw, isn’t that cute?” I said to Leslie as I hung up the phone. “This is gonna be fun!”

But as her father ushered us into their apartment, I glanced at the coffee table and saw stacks of heavyweight books. It turns out her dad is a scientist who had spent years studying scholarly articles and weighty tomes attacking the foundations of Christianity.

Over a dinner of pizza and soft drinks, he peppered me for hours with tough objections to the reliability of the

New Testament and the divinity of Jesus. While I was able to answer some of his questions, he kept raising issues that I had never even considered. Before long my head was starting to spin—and I began to experience spiritual vertigo.

Here's my prediction: if you've never felt this sort of divine disequilibrium, the chances are you will—and soon, because challenges to the Christian faith are coming fast and furious in best-selling books, popular magazines, college classrooms, television documentaries, and on the Internet. Your family members, friends, neighbors, and colleagues may be influenced by what these skeptics are saying—and they may very well come to you with their doubts and concerns.

Fortunately, there *is* an antidote for spiritual vertigo. In fact, you're holding it in your hands! Mark Mittelberg's excellent new book, *The Questions Christians Hope No One Will Ask*, will equip you to define and defend your faith in the face of a variety of intimidating objections. Reading Mark's insightful and practical guide will heighten your sense of confidence and, as a friend of mine likes to say, "load your lips" with answers to the tricky questions that many Christians fear they'll be asked.

When 1 Peter 3:15 tells us to "always be ready" to defend our faith—well, here is the kind of preparation that all of us need. Mark's topics include such foundational issues as the existence of God, science versus Christianity, and the reliability of the Bible, but they also cover touchy social topics such as abortion and homosexuality. Mark's analysis is always cogent, his answers are always thorough and accurate, and his heart is always inclined toward people sincerely seeking the truth about God.

For more than twenty-three years, Mark and I have been ministry associates and close friends. We've stood together in front of thousands of people, including skeptics, to answer any and all questions. We've staged debates between atheists and Christians. We've trained people on how to share Christ with others and deal with the common objections they're likely to hear. Some say we're "joined at the brain." If that's true, then I'm the one who has benefited more!

Through it all, I've consistently been impressed by Mark's theological acumen, his gift for articulating clear and compelling answers to the toughest of questions, and his authenticity and personal integrity. You won't find a better teacher to help train you to confidently yet humbly engage in conversations with spiritual seekers.

What happened with the scientist who plunged me into spiritual vertigo so many years ago? "You've raised a lot of good issues," I said at the conclusion of the evening. "But I suspect that after two thousand years, you haven't come up with the objection that's finally going to topple Christianity. Let me investigate as honestly as I can and get back to you."

And sure enough, as I probed the thorny issues he had raised that night, I was able to find satisfying answers to each and every one of them. But frankly, that process would have been a whole lot easier if I had had the benefit of this invaluable new resource by Mark Mittelberg!

—Lee Strobel, author
The Case for Christ and *The Case for the Real Jesus*

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INTRODUCTION

WHY THE QUESTIONS MATTER SO MUCH

"I used to be a Christian."

The opening words from the young man on the other end of the telephone line certainly caught my attention.

"What do you mean, you used to be a Christian?" I asked.

As the story unfolded, first on the phone and later when he and his friend met with me in my office, I learned what had happened. These sharp high school students had been asking a variety of spiritual questions at their church youth group meetings, but they had not received helpful answers.

The first time they raised their objections was during a Bible class, but their teacher shut them down. "Those are things that people of faith must accept by faith," he insisted. "You just need to believe and then you'll know that they're true."

To these guys—and I'll have to admit to me, too—that sounded like an admission that there are no good reasons to believe in Christianity.

Later that summer they had gone to their church's youth camp and again asked their questions, but to a different set

of leaders. This time they were told, “You mustn’t raise these issues here—you’ll only confuse the other campers!”

So they held in their questions while their doubts grew and festered, increasingly poisoning what faith they had. Eventually, they abandoned their belief in God altogether. What’s more, they turned a weekly Bible study that had been meeting in a home into what they called a Skeptics Group—a place they now invited their friends from school to come to and hear the evidence against the Bible and Christianity.

“So what made you come and tell me all this?” I asked.

“A friend of ours challenged us to slow down and test our thinking one more time. He gave us your name and said you might be able to help.”

Spiritual questions. When answered, they can bring truth and light, and they can help open a person’s way to spiritual life. Jesus said, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). For us as Christians, our friends’ questions can turn into exciting opportunities to share God’s truth.

When left unanswered, those same questions can lead to doubt, frustration, and ultimately spiritual alienation from God. In a radio interview I once heard, the late apologist Walter Martin declared, “When we fail to answer someone’s questions and objections, we become just one more excuse for them to disbelieve.”

Once we understand what’s at stake, it’s clear that helping our friends find answers to their spiritual questions is one of the most important tasks we could possibly engage in. The writers of Scripture certainly thought so.

As the apostle Paul challenged us, “Live wisely among

those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone” (Col. 4:5-6).

The apostle Peter echoed those thoughts: “If someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way” (1 Pet. 3:15-16).

The Bible is clear, and the crisis in our culture is great: people—of all ages, but especially younger folks—need help sorting out what to believe, and we who are followers of Christ are called to respond to their questions and to point them to the truth of Jesus.

But let’s be honest. Many of us are not ready. When someone looks us in the eye and sincerely asks a challenging spiritual question—such as “Why do you believe the Bible?” or “How can you trust that God is good when he lets so many awful things happen?” or “Why should I join a church that is full of hypocrites?” or “Why are Christians antigay?”—most of us don’t know how to respond.

This problem was underscored when Tyndale House Publishers and I, through the Barna Group, ran a national survey of one thousand self-proclaimed Christians. We asked each person what faith questions they would feel most uncomfortable being asked by a friend or colleague. We then compiled their responses into a list—and the top ten questions formed the outline of this book (with two similar questions combined in chapter 8).

THREE VITAL ELEMENTS

Considering these ten areas of greatest concern, what can we do to make sure we “have the right response for everyone,”

as Paul challenges us in Colossians 4:6? Let me suggest three things: preparation, prayer, and proximity.

Preparation

The verse I quoted earlier said to “always be ready to explain” your Christian faith (1 Pet. 3:15). How? My friend Rickey Bolden, who played professional football in the NFL for six seasons, shared a phrase with me that one of his coaches used to drill into him and his teammates: “Proper preparation prevents poor performance.” It’s true, isn’t it? And on the flip side of the coin, proper preparation provides us with poise and confidence.

Have you ever had to give a lesson or present a talk that you knew you hadn’t adequately prepared for? If so, you remember the nervousness and second-guessing that goes with standing in front of a group—even if it’s a handful of Cub Scouts—to speak on something you’re not ready to talk about.

But turn that around. Have you given a similar presentation when you had done everything necessary to be really ready? What a great feeling it was to stand up and confidently present that information!

The difference? Proper preparation. And there’s no substitute for reading and reflecting on some key spiritual questions before you get into conversations about them. That’s what this book is designed to help you do. So let me urge you to read each chapter slowly and thoroughly. Mark it up; jot down questions to explore further; fold over the corners of pages that address issues you think your friends might ask about. (Or if you’re reading electronically, use the

bookmarks and note-taking features.) Make the most relevant information easy to come back to. This will help you remember the most important ideas for the people you talk to—and it will make the book more useful as a reference tool when you need to look up information later.

Go over and over what you are learning. Prayerfully think of your friends as you read through the “Tips for Talking about This Issue” sections. Also, consider reading this book with some other Christians in a small group or a class at your church, and then together discuss the questions at the end of each chapter. As you do these things, your knowledge, confidence, and overall sense of readiness will grow, making you an increasingly effective conduit of God’s truth and grace.

One more point about preparation. As James 1:19 reminds us, “Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.” It will be tempting, especially as you study and get increasingly ready to answer hard questions, to talk more and more but listen less and less. You must discipline yourself to do the opposite. Before your friends will pay a lot of attention to what you have to say, they’ll want to see that you care enough to really listen to them. This needs to be conversation, not oration; dialogue, not monologue; discussion, not instruction. What’s more, talking less and listening more will enhance your ability to understand your friends’ concerns and to formulate responses that are genuinely helpful and wise.

Prayer

It’s important to remember that when we seek to answer our friends’ questions, we are engaged in more than just the

presentation of information. According to the Bible, we're also in a spiritual struggle. Paul says, "We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4-5). Elsewhere, the Bible explains that we're in hand-to-hand combat with spiritual forces that go beyond the ordinary human realm (see Eph. 6:10-18), and it tells us that people's eyes are blinded to the truth (see Acts 26:17-18).

Therefore, this isn't a battle that we should try to fight—or expect to win—in our own strength alone. Rather, we need to go to God in prayer and ask him to work through us, giving us the knowledge and wisdom we need. We should also pray for the people we're talking to (before, during, and after actual conversations), asking that their eyes would be opened, their minds made receptive, their hearts humbled, and their spirits made sensitive to what the Holy Spirit is saying—even as we seek to give answers and present God's truth.

Korean church leader Billy Kim summed it up well when he said, "Prayer is my first advice. Prayer is my second suggestion. And prayer is my third suggestion. . . . If I had to do it all over, I would do more praying and less preaching."¹

Proximity

Finally, we need proximity with the people we want to talk to. It's not enough to just prepare and pray, as important as those elements are. We've also got to get close to the people who need the answers—friends, family members, and

acquaintances who, whether they realize it or not, are starving for God's truth and desperate for his grace.

God didn't just love the world—he came to it in the person of Jesus (see John 3:16). Jesus didn't just pray for this world—he went into the towns and villages to “seek and save those who are lost” (Luke 19:10). Paul didn't just talk about communicating the gospel—he went to great efforts to “find common ground with everyone, doing everything . . . to spread the Good News and share in its blessings” (1 Cor. 9:22-23).

Likewise, we can't sit and wait for people with spiritual questions to come seek us out. In the Great Commission, Jesus tells us to go into our world to tell people about him (which will naturally include answering their spiritual questions) and to encourage them to become his followers (see Matt. 28:19-20).

OUR PURPOSE

We've discussed the importance of preparation, prayer, and proximity. Now a word about *purpose*: our aim should not be to address every fine point or nuance about every issue or to try to exhaustively satisfy our friends' curiosity regarding each question. Rather, as the verse puts it, our goal should be to “destroy every proud obstacle *that keeps people from knowing God*” (2 Cor. 10:5, emphasis mine).

So don't elevate every issue or make your friends feel that they must agree with you on every subpoint before becoming a Christian. Doing so could inadvertently add new and dangerous obstacles to their spiritual journey. Instead, give just enough information to help them move past their spiritual

barriers and toward faith in Christ. Then, after they are committed followers of his, they can go back and study every subject to their hearts' content—now with the help of the Holy Spirit illuminating their search as children of God.

OUR MOTIVATION

Finally, our purpose must be motivated by love. Our goal cannot be merely to win the argument, but rather—with the help of the Holy Spirit—to win the person to Christ. This is the purpose that will shape how we'll address each of the questions in the chapters that follow because ultimately it will be the care and concern that we show, even more than the words we say, that will draw our friends to God.

Let me end by coming back to the story we started with. As you prepare to answer the people with questions in your own life, I hope you are encouraged and helped to see how God wants to use you.

"I'm really glad you're here," I said to my two new high-school-aged buddies as they entered my office. "And I'm willing to do whatever it takes to help you get answers to your objections."

With that, we launched into a three-hour conversation. By the end I could tell that their doubts were starting to dissolve.

"Before we go," my friend asked, "I was wondering if you'd be willing to come to our next Skeptics Group to explain some of this information to our friends."

"Yes!" I said, probably sounding a bit more enthusiastic than I should have. "And would it be okay if I bring a friend with me?"

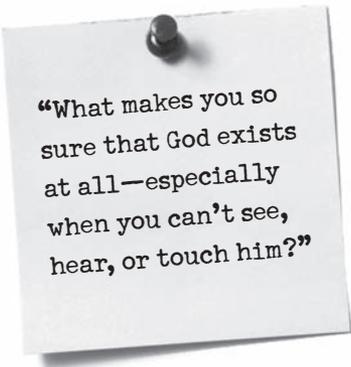
"Of course!" he answered.

The following week Lee Strobel and I went to his house and talked with a living room full of skeptical students. We had a great time sharing our spiritual stories and addressing their many questions. By the end of the evening—and by God’s grace—the original student who called me had recommitted his life to Christ, and within two weeks the friend he had brought to my office realized he had never really trusted in Christ, so he put his faith in him as well.

Thankfully, they immediately turned their Skeptics Group back into a bona fide Bible study—and started reaching out to their friends at school with the truth that they had discovered.

—Mark Mittelberg
June 2010

CHAPTER 1:



“What makes you so sure that God exists at all—especially when you can’t see, hear, or touch him?”

This was it—the day I was finally going to pop the question.

After years of friendship and many hours hanging out together, I knew my feelings for Heidi had grown beyond merely “being in like”—the truth is, I was really in love with her!

Was Heidi in love with me—enough to be willing to become my wife? That’s what I was about to find out. I felt fairly confident, but as any guy in my shoes knows, until you actually hear her say “yes,” you live with a certain amount of trepidation and doubt.

When the moment came, I worked up the nerve and blurted out the question. Heidi’s reply? After a brief hesitation—one that felt like a million years—she agreed to marry me! I don’t want to imply that I was excited, but the fact that I shouted, “She said YES!” over and over probably gives away my true feelings.

Was our love real? It certainly seemed to be on that day. As it did on the day of our wedding. And when each of our kids was born. And when Heidi brought me freshly brewed

coffee this morning. After more than twenty-five years of marriage, I think we've made a pretty strong case: our love for each other is genuine.

Love is not a physical entity, and yet it's very real. In fact, for those who are in love, it can be more real than the world around them! But in order to *know* if there is true love in a particular situation, sometimes we need evidence. And being the skeptic that I am, I needed fairly strong evidence.

In my relationship with Heidi, evidence of her love emerged along the way—she wrote me notes that reflected her affection; she spent hours with me on the phone; she seemed to enjoy being around me; she even gave me loving looks sometimes. Then there was the big day when she agreed to marry me. While each one of these actions pointed to her love for me, taken together they provided overwhelming confirmation. I could put it like this: *the cumulative evidence was more than enough to believe that Heidi's love for me was the real deal.*

But can I prove it to you? Can I show you our love for each other in a tangible way—one that you can see, hear, or touch? No, the love itself is invisible. It's one of those things that you have to detect through its effects. Much like air: You can't see it (unless you're in downtown Los Angeles), but you can breathe it, experience it, and move in it. Or like gravity—it's not visible, but you'd better not try to ignore it!

THE INVISIBLE GOD

One of the most important issues that surfaced in the survey we talked about in the introduction—in fact, tied for first place as the question respondents most hoped nobody would ask them—was this: how can you know there's a God? He's

not tangible; you can't weigh him, measure him, touch him, or see him with the naked eye—or detect him with radar, for that matter! His presence doesn't register with any of our senses, and yet you believe in him. Why?

It's a challenging question that's obviously central to all we believe as followers of Christ. So how can we respond?

First, we can point out to our friend, as I did above, that there are plenty of important things we believe in without seeing, hearing, or touching them. Love, as I've explained, is a profound reality, and most of us believe in love. But love itself is not a material thing. It's not something we can see, hear, or touch directly.

The Christian understanding is that God is not a material thing either. This is clear in John 4:24, in which Jesus tells us "God is Spirit." Unlike my friends, my dog Charlie, my iPod, or my mountain bike—all of which I can see, hear, and touch because they are physical, material things—God is a spiritual being or reality, and spiritual realities are not the kinds of things that can be seen with physical eyes or heard with physical ears or touched with physical hands. So I guess we shouldn't really be surprised that we can't experience God in the same way we can experience those other things.

A PERSONAL RESPONSE

But that's not to say we don't experience God in other ways. If you are one of his true followers, you have experienced him on a personal level, and I trust you sense his presence and work in your life on at least a periodic basis. I know that years ago in my own life I felt God's touch on me in numerous ways, leading up to the point at which I put my trust in

Christ. Some of those “touches” were wake-up calls in which he showed me the dead-end path my life was on, convicted me of sins, and revealed that I was made for much greater purposes than I was experiencing at the time.

Then, when I finally gave in to what I’m confident was the Holy Spirit drawing me to trust and follow Christ, I sensed his forgiveness and his acceptance as God’s newly adopted son. That squared with what I later read in Romans 8:15-16, where Paul says, “You received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, ‘Abba, Father.’ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children.”

And since that time I often know, in hard-to-explain and internal ways, that God is prompting me to speak to a person, send an encouraging note, challenge a wayward brother in the faith, or pray for someone in need. And occasionally I sense him guiding me in bigger life decisions regarding my work, ministry involvements, moves to new locales, and so forth. These leadings don’t come every day, but there’s a marked pattern of them in my life—they’ve had a huge influence in my overall direction and impact.

I share some of these details to show that one of the ways I know God is real and active in our world is that he’s real and active in my life, and I’m guessing you’d say the same thing if you’re a committed Christian. If so, then that’s a natural part of our answer to people who ask us this question about God’s existence. We know he exists because he’s our friend! He has forgiven us and turned our lives around, and he speaks to us, guides us, redirects us, and rebukes us when we need it (see Heb. 12:5-12)—always acting out of

love for us and what's best for our lives. So one point we can make is our humble acknowledgment of his presence and activity in our daily experience.

Our testimony alone can have a powerful influence on others, especially those who know us well and are therefore inclined to trust what we say. It can also influence those who have seen clear evidence of God's work in us—they can't see him, but they can see what he's done in our lives.

Experience is hard to argue with. That's why the apostle Paul often appealed to it, as did other biblical writers. He said to his skeptical listeners in Acts 26:12-16, for example, "One day I was on such a mission to Damascus. . . . A light from heaven brighter than the sun shone down on me. . . . I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? . . . I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. Now get to your feet! For I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant and witness.'" Paul went on from there and gave further details, but it's clear that his account of God's activity in his life made an impact. Agrippa, one of his listeners, interrupted and asked him, "Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christian so quickly?" (v. 28). To which Paul, the consummate evangelist, winsomely replied, "Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that both you and everyone here in this audience might become the same as I am" (v. 29).

Telling others about God's activity in our lives can be a powerful tool, but many people will not be convinced by that alone. They might conclude that you're sincere—but that you're mistaking coincidences in your life for supernatural interventions. And some people may even question

your sincerity. So let's explore some other ways we can point to the effects of the invisible God in our world by using examples that everyone can access. For the rest of this chapter we'll look at three of the best examples of evidence for God's existence that we can share with our friends: two that are scientific and one that is more philosophical in nature. (Note that other powerful kinds of evidence could be given to support belief in the Christian God, including those from history, archaeology, and the records of prophecies and miracles preserved in the Bible. I do so in my book *Choosing Your Faith . . . In a World of Spiritual Options*,¹ where I present twenty arguments for the Christian faith. Some of that information will come out naturally as we address the other questions in this book.)

As I've been exploring these matters for the last twenty-five years or so, I've come to believe that today, perhaps more than in any other period of human history, the fingerprints of God have become exceedingly evident for anyone who is willing to search for them. Each of these arguments is powerful on its own and has convinced many people of the reality of God. But when considered together, along with our own testimonies of experiencing him in our daily lives, the cumulative case is staggering.

EVIDENCE #1: THE EXISTENCE OF THE UNIVERSE

Throughout history, many people have supposed that the universe always existed. A number of famous ancient thinkers from the East (such as Lao Tzu, a central figure in the Taoist religion) and the West (such as Aristotle) believed that the universe is eternal—in other words, that it never had

a beginning. This was a fairly prevalent view among philosophers and scientists up until the twentieth century. They had their reasons for believing this, but there was no effective way to either confirm or disconfirm their beliefs—until recently.

Fortunately, in the last several decades there has been an exponential growth of understanding in many areas of science, especially in physics, astronomy, and cosmology. This third area, cosmology—which is the study of the origin, structure, and development of the physical universe—has seen explosive advancements in recent years. Let's look at one example.

In 1915, Albert Einstein developed the general theory of relativity (which is far too complex to explain in this chapter, even if I could fully explain it!). This theory, which is now almost universally accepted, has certain implications. One is that the universe—defined as time, space, matter, and physical energy²—had a starting point in history. And, since it had a beginning, it's not eternal as Lao Tzu and Aristotle believed. As a matter of fact, through Einstein's equations we can trace the development of the universe back to its very origin, back to what's called the *singularity event* when it actually popped into being (what is often referred to as the "Big Bang").

Now, many scientists and others, including Einstein himself, didn't like this result (perhaps because it sounded too much like the biblical account of Creation?). So they tried to find an error in the equations—one that would allow for the universe to be understood as eternal after all. But they didn't succeed. And recent experimental observations

have provided even more support showing that Einstein had it right: the universe really did have a beginning.

One of the scientific confirmations of Einstein's theory was provided by the Hubble Space Telescope, named after American astronomer Edwin Hubble. This impressive telescope allowed astronomers to see that the universe is actually expanding—and the farther away the galaxy is, the faster it's moving. This led most scientists to further reinforce their conclusion that the universe had a beginning point from which it began this expansion process.³

So how does this Hubble confirmation of the origin of the universe provide evidence for God? Great question! Here's how: if the universe had a starting point in history, then obviously it began to exist. But if it began to exist, then it must have had a cause for its existence. Things don't just begin to exist without a cause. Science itself operates on the principle that all events need a cause. As Einstein once declared, "The scientist is possessed by a sense of universal causation."⁴

But if the universe needs a cause for its coming into being, then that cause must be beyond the universe. As we saw earlier, the universe—by definition—is time, space, matter, and physical energy. So the cause for the universe must be something beyond time and space and matter and physical energy. In other words, the cause must be something uncannily similar to what we commonly refer to as "God"!

Before completely landing on this conclusion, let's look at an objection to it. My friend Chad Meister, who has his doctorate in philosophy and teaches philosophy of religion

at the graduate level, told me a story about what happened to him awhile back at a dinner with his wife and others from the company where she was an accountant. The firm was celebrating the end of tax season and had invited the employees and their spouses for a nice dinner at a five-star restaurant. Chad happened to sit next to a pilot for a major airline. As they ate, the conversation eventually came around to spiritual matters, and the pilot said he didn't believe in God—which is not a very good position to take when you're having dinner with the likes of Dr. Meister!

Chad brought up this cosmological evidence from the Hubble telescope, and the pilot responded, "Yes, but how do you know it is *God* who created the universe? Maybe an alien did the creating!" Chad replied, "Maybe so! But let's keep in mind that our alien, whom we can call Bob, is timeless (that is, outside of time), nonspatial (outside of the spatial dimension), immaterial (not made up of any matter), and does not consist of physical energy, yet was powerful enough to create the entire universe—all the billions and billions of galaxies, each of which has billions and billions of stars. In light of that information, you can call him Bob, but I call him Yahweh! This is the transcendent God beyond space and time in whom Christians have believed for two thousand years."

Can you see how powerful this information is—even when people try to escape it with clever stories about things like aliens or elves? Even Richard Dawkins, probably the most prominent proponent for atheism of our times, admitted in an article in *Time* magazine that "there could be something incredibly grand and incomprehensible and beyond our present understanding." When challenged with "That's

God!” he replied, “Yes. But it could be any of a billion Gods. It could be God of the Martians or of the inhabitants of Alpha Centauri. The chance of its being a particular God, Yahweh, the God of Jesus, is vanishingly small.”⁵

Against that kind of a diversion we can say, “You can call him what you want, but the evidence from the origin of the universe tells us a lot about what he is like—and the description sounds amazingly similar to what the Bible tells us about one particular God, who actually *is* called Yahweh, the God of Jesus, the Creator of the world.”

It’s worth noting that the initial reaction of some Christians to the very idea of the Big Bang at the beginning of the universe is negative—but I don’t think this is necessary. Yes, many scientists hold that this event was completely natural, unaided by any outside force or intelligence (such as God). But as we’ve seen, the evidence is against them. The event itself calls for a cause outside of the universe—one that is wise and powerful enough to be able to pull it off. That’s why Einstein and many other thinkers in his day and since then have resisted the idea of the Big Bang—they didn’t like the theological implications that came with it. But from a Christian point of view, the Big Bang sounds like an awfully compelling scientific description of the biblical doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*—“out of nothing.”

One other objection that frequently comes up is this: “Well, if everything needs a cause, then who caused God?” But this is a misunderstanding of the argument itself, which does not say that *everything* needs a cause—just *everything that has a beginning* needs a cause! Science shows, through Einstein’s calculations and Hubble’s telescope, among other

things, that the universe had a beginning—therefore the universe needs a cause. And that cause is the immaterial, eternal God of the universe, who had no beginning and who therefore does not have or need a cause.

We can summarize this cosmological evidence into a concise series of statements:

1. Whatever begins to exist must have a cause for its existence.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe must have a cause for its existence.
4. The attributes of the cause of the universe (being timeless, existing outside of space, and so on) are the attributes of God.
5. Therefore, the cause of the universe must be God.

This is precisely what Christians have always believed. The very first words of the Bible, in the book of Genesis, declare, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” In spite of what many people have heard, science is not at odds with belief in God. To the contrary, science actually provides compelling evidence *for* God’s existence!⁶

EVIDENCE #2: OUR “JUST SO” UNIVERSE

The more I watch the Discovery Channel and read about the amazing intricacies of our world, the more amazed I am at the beauty and complexity of it all. I often ride my mountain bike along the trails near where I live. Sometimes I stop and admire the unique plants growing along the hillsides or

down in the ravines; other times I'll enjoy the surprise of an unexpected deer, coyote, or fox as it runs out in front of me. Often I'll reflect on a sunset showering down brilliant colors of red, yellow, and orange. I'm regularly taken aback by what I see. I think often about how much I relate to the psalmist when he says, "The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship" (Ps. 19:1).

But here's what is amazing: this incredible array of life and beauty and complexity did not spring into existence unaided. Rather, what cutting-edge science is now telling us is that the building blocks of our world—the laws and physical constants that govern all the matter in the universe—appear to be precisely balanced and finely tuned for life to occur and flourish.

These laws and constants were set at the singularity event mentioned earlier. In other words, when the universe exploded into being—the Big Bang—there were a number of variables within the very structure of the universe itself that had to be set exactly as they are in order for life to exist. Scientists have so far discovered about fifty of these parameters and constants that must be "just so" in order for life to be possible anywhere in the universe.

Let's hone in on one particular example of this "fine-tuning." Physicists have discovered four forces in nature, and one of them is the *force of gravity*. Physicists have calculated that the strength of each of these forces must fall within a very specific range or there would be no conscious life possible. If the force of gravity, for example, were to change by one part in ten thousand billion billion billion relative to the total range of the strengths of the four forces in nature,

conscious life would be virtually impossible anywhere in the universe.⁷

There are many other parameters and constants that are also finely tuned and that, if changed even slightly, would have disastrous consequences for life in our universe. For example, if the neutron were not exactly as it is—about 1.001 times the mass of the proton—then all protons would have decayed into neutrons or all neutrons would have decayed into protons, and life would not be possible. If the explosion of the Big Bang had differed in strength by as little as one part in 10^{60} (one part in a trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion), the universe would have either quickly collapsed back on itself or expanded too swiftly for stars to form. Either way, life would be impossible. The list goes on and on.⁸

What makes all this even more fascinating is that these finely tuned parameters and constants are independent of one another. In other words, they could all be just right for life except for one, which is off to the smallest degree—and that alone would have precluded me from existing to write this and you from existing to read it. This makes it yet more unlikely that they all came to be just so by chance. In fact, because of this evidence Paul Davies, one of the leading physicists and cosmologists of our day, makes this audacious claim: “I cannot believe that our existence in this universe is a mere quirk of fate. . . . We are truly meant to be here.”⁹ That’s quite a statement for one who doesn’t even claim to believe in a personal God!

In addition to the parameters and constants necessary for life in the universe, there are also fascinating characteristics of a *planet* that are necessary for it to support complex

life. Recent discoveries demonstrate that there are at least two dozen such characteristics that must be in place for life to be possible on a planet. These include its consisting of the correct mass; being orbited by a large moon, having a magnetic field; manifesting an oxygen-rich atmosphere; orbiting a main-sequence, G2 dwarf star; and being in the correct location in the galactic habitable zone. Each of these factors has to occur in the right place at the right time with respect to the same planet in order for complex life to even be a possibility there. The probability of these factors converging is so infinitesimally small that many cosmologists and astrophysicists now admit that it's more reasonable to believe that a divine designer was involved than to assume it all happened by chance.¹⁰

Of course, not everyone is happy with this conclusion. Some are working overtime to find alternative theories to explain these phenomena without divine intervention. In fact, there are a few serious objections that we should address. The first is that these highly unlikely events can be explained without God if a very large number of universes exist besides our own, each with its own parameters and constants. If there are a very large number of universes and they were all produced randomly, most of them would surely include parameters that are life *prohibiting*. But if the number of universes is large enough—maybe infinite—then some of them, by sheer chance, might have just the right parameters for life. Luckily for us, the argument goes, our universe happens to be one that has the right parameters.

One big problem with this objection is that there is no scientific evidence that it is true or even possible. It's purely

speculative. Science fiction writers are having a heyday with the idea, but the scientific facts are lacking, to say the least.

Another problem is that if there are an infinite number of universes, then those must have been produced by some kind of a “many-universe generator.” But this generator itself must be a very sophisticated device in order to produce countless universes. I mean, even my toaster needs to be well designed to toast bread (though I’m not so sure it was really well designed, since it often pops my toast onto the kitchen floor!). How much more so a universe maker who produces countless universes, including finely tuned ones like our own. What kind of an incredible intelligence could account for such an astounding machine or process such as that?

Yet another objection I often hear is this: if the evidence points to a divine designer, then who designed the designer? If we don’t need to answer that question, it’s argued, then why do we need to worry about a designer of our universe? While this is an interesting challenge, it misses the simple point that the universe is better explained by design than by chance.

Consider this example: suppose you went on a deep-sea expedition and came upon what seemed to be an underwater city. It was unique, like nothing you’d ever seen before. Suppose there were structures apparently designed to sustain oxygen-breathing creatures (like us), including rooms from which water could be evacuated, long tubelike tunnels that could pump in oxygen from above the water, and various inlets that could be used for transportation purposes.

In this scenario, it would seem far more reasonable to believe that there was a designer who created this place than

to suppose that it came into being purely by chance. But we would not need to forgo the claim that an intelligent being designed the city just because that intelligent being itself may be in need of further explanation. So the question of whether or not God needs further explanation, though an interesting one, has no bearing on this argument about our finely tuned universe.¹¹

So our argument stands: the incredible confluence of the many examples of fine-tuning in the universe—each independently set to the precise measures necessary to support life—points powerfully to the existence of an incredibly intelligent designer who made it all “just so” . . . for us!

Or, as Isaiah 40:25-26, 28 puts it,

“To whom will you compare me?

Who is my equal?” asks the Holy One.

Look up into the heavens.

Who created all the stars?

He brings them out like an army, one after another,
calling each by its name.

Because of his great power and incomparable
strength,

not a single one is missing. . . .

Have you never heard?

Have you never understood?

The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator
of all the earth.

He never grows weak or weary.

No one can measure the depths of his
understanding.

Now, someone could object that the characteristics of God just established—that he is timeless, outside of space, matterless, and beyond the physical energy of the universe (from Evidence #1) and that he is a superintellect who fine-tuned the universe to precise measures in order to sustain life (from Evidence #2)—are *some* of the qualities normally attributed to God, but there is an important one missing: how can we know he’s a morally good creator?

Fair question. Let’s look at one more argument, this one from philosophy, which shows that God is not only the powerful and wise creator of the cosmos but also a morally good being who really does care about good versus evil, right versus wrong.

EVIDENCE #3: OUR MORALLY GOOD UNIVERSE

As an avid news watcher I often get depressed about the bad things that are happening in the world (and in my own city!). In Question 5, we’ll address the problem of evil, focusing on how a good and loving God could allow pain and suffering to exist in the world. But what the news reports all too often overlook are the really good things that are happening in our midst.

Here are some examples of goodness I’ve come across recently:

- A celebrity telethon (*Hope For Haiti Now*) raised \$57 million in donations for the Haiti earthquake disaster.
- Parents in Iowa adopted six young special-needs kids now that their biological children are nearly grown.

- A Chicago man donated his kidney to save a local grocery store cashier whom he hardly knew.
- A church in Indiana paid for a poor student's first year of tuition at a private college.
- A group of California students devoted countless hours of work to help displaced children in Uganda.

The list could go on and on. There are countless examples of goodness and virtue in our world. But a question arises: On what basis is something considered good or evil, right or wrong? And where did this basis come from? Did it start with the Big Bang? I can just imagine it: billions of years ago . . . massive explosion . . . galaxies emerging from the fiery blast. And then, out of the gaseous flames, “Thou shalt act altruistically; thou shalt be kind to the underprivileged; thou shalt love thine enemies; thou shalt not steal; and—oh yes—thou shalt maintain a moderately small carbon footprint” (all in perfect King James English, of course).

No one really believes that moral values emerge out of physical explosions. So where did they come from? Atheists are hard pressed to provide an answer for the existence of *objective* moral values. Look at what one atheist wrote in a recent article entitled, “Secularism’s Ongoing Debt to Christianity”:

Although I am a secularist (atheist, if you will), I accept that the great majority of people would be morally and spiritually lost without religion. Can anyone seriously argue that crime and debauchery

are not held in check by religion? Is it not comforting to live in a community where the rule of law and fairness are respected? Would such be likely if Christianity were not there to provide a moral compass to the great majority? Do we secularists not benefit out of all proportion from a morally responsible society?

An orderly society is dependent on a generally accepted morality. There can be no such morality without religion. Has there ever been a more perfect and concise moral code than the one Moses brought down from the mountain?

Those who doubt the effect of religion on morality should seriously ask the question: just what are the immutable moral laws of secularism? Be prepared to answer, if you are honest, that such laws simply do not exist! The best answer we can ever hear from secularists to this question is a hodgepodge of strained relativist talk of situational ethics. They can cite no overriding authority other than that of fashion. For the great majority in the West, it is the Judeo-Christian tradition which offers a template.¹²

We have, then, what is sometimes called the problem of good. The problem of good is a major challenge for atheism, for within the atheist view there simply is no way to explain or justify objective moral values.

When I read about or travel to other parts of the world, I'm often intrigued by the differences in etiquette. In India, many nationals do not use utensils to eat; they use their fingers

instead. It would probably be rude in those contexts to whip out my travel mess kit and eat in front of them with fork and spoon. We should respect the differences in etiquette that have been created by various people groups and societies.

But morals and values are different from etiquette, and we all know it. They are not the creations of human beings. As we've said, they are objective, not relative—so they are above us and our particular laws and practices. If there were a culture, for example, that threw their firstborn male babies into the flames in order to gain the favor of the gods, this would be a morally dreadful act. If there were a culture in which men kept females as slaves and beat and raped them at will, we would be morally outraged. If there were a culture that locked up black people for their color or Jewish people for their heritage or left-handed people for their differentness, we would decry these actions as moral abominations.

If that culture's members objected to our indignation by saying that's just the way people do things in their culture—it's their tradition or custom or preference—we would flat-out reject their answer. We know that murder and rape and bigotry and racism are wrong—really, objectively wrong—regardless of traditions, customs, or preferences. But where did we get this knowledge—this intrinsic sense of right and wrong? If we didn't invent it, if it transcends the realms of culture and politics, if it's something we can't get away from, then what is its source? Could it be that a Moral Lawgiver actually knit those moral standards, along with the ability to understand and operate by them, into the very fabric of what it means to be human?

That conclusion certainly seems to square with logic and experience. It explains why we could boldly tell the Nazis that exterminating Jews was wrong and that they deserved to be punished for such wicked acts. And why we knew that Saddam Hussein was doing evil when he oppressed the Iraqi people, murdered his own family members, tortured and killed those he considered political threats, and ordered the gassing of thousands of Kurds. Our confident conviction about these matters—then and now—shows that morals are objective, not relative.

Unlike the atheist, the Christian has a solid basis for objective moral values, for in the Christian view, God exists as a supreme, transcendent, divine person—the Creator of the universe and everything in it. Goodness flows from God’s very nature; moral values are not invented by human beings. They are *discovered* by human beings, but they are *grounded* in the very nature of a good, loving, personal God who made us in his image, implanted a sense of right and wrong in our hearts, and told us to live as imitators of him (see Eph. 5:1). Interestingly, this is also what the Bible tells us in Romans 2:15: “They demonstrate that God’s law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right.”

This is powerful evidence for God. We can put this evidence in the form of a simple argument:

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. But we know that objective moral values do exist.
3. Therefore, God does exist.

I'm not saying that atheists cannot recognize moral values or live generally moral lives. I'm certain they can. But recognizing something and even living by it does not mean that one has a real basis for it. The "moral" atheist is simply left hanging in midair on this issue, without any solid footing. Christians, on the other hand, have a rock solid foundation on which to build their beliefs and to live their lives. Our universe is morally good, and it's good because a transcendent and good God created it that way.

As we saw at the beginning of the chapter, God is like the virtue of love in this way: while we can't see love directly, we can often see evidence for it. The same is true about God. In addition to our own experience of him—which is important to talk about—we have looked at three kinds of evidence for him. These arguments provide solid reasons to believe in God: the existence of the universe, the amazing fine-tuning of the universe, and the reality of objective goodness. While each of these *points to* the existence of God, taken together they provide *strong confirmation of* his existence. We could sum it up like this: *the cumulative case for God's existence is more than sufficient for an open-minded person to believe that he really is there.*

God doesn't force his reality on anyone, but if our friends are interested in real evidence and answers, he has not left them wanting. God's fingerprints are dispersed throughout the cosmos. Maybe that's part of why Jesus told us so boldly in Matthew 7:7 to "keep on seeking, and you will find."

SUMMARY OF THE ANSWER

Question 1 asks us, “What makes you so sure that God exists at all—especially when you can’t see, hear, or touch him?”

- We believe in many things that we don’t see or directly experience with our senses—the virtue of love being a great example. Yet we see evidence of love through its effects. Similarly, we can’t see God, but we can believe in him based on his work in us and in the universe around us.
- One of the ways we can know that God is real and active in our world is that he’s real and active in our lives—he’s our friend! If that’s true in your own experience, then talking about him will be a natural part of your answer to people who ask you this question about God’s existence.
- Evidence #1: Whatever has a beginning has a cause. Science shows us that the universe had a beginning. It therefore had a cause—one that’s outside of itself and is therefore beyond time, space, matter, and physical energy. In other words, that cause has the characteristics of the God of the Bible.
- Evidence #2: Our universe is fine-tuned, with astounding “just-so” precision, in ways that make it a place that can support life. The odds of this happening on its own, by sheer chance, are vanishingly small and thus point powerfully to an intelligent designer—One whom the Bible calls God.

- Evidence #3: Apart from God there can be no objective moral standards. But we clearly live in a world that has objective moral standards. Therefore there has to be a divine moral lawgiver. We refer to that lawgiver as “God.”
- Our experience, science, and philosophy all point to the existence of an invisible God, One that fits the descriptions given in Scripture for Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and of us, as Christians.

TIPS FOR TALKING ABOUT THIS ISSUE

- Usually people who doubt God have a story to tell about how they got to that point. It’s important to ask them questions and to respectfully listen to what they tell you, even though you’ll probably not agree with everything they say. That’s okay; James 1:19 says we need to “be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.” Listening before speaking shows that you care about them, and it earns you the right to talk about your own beliefs.
- It’s almost a cliché to say that atheists are angry. But if your friends don’t believe in God and do seem angry, ask why. Often you’ll discover that something bad happened for which they blame God, the church, or a Christian. Listen with empathy and patience. Agree when you can, but also try to help them see that much of what’s done in God’s name or in religious circles is not from God but from imperfect people and institutions.
- Share the answers and information in this chapter, but

realize that helping people think in new ways is usually a slow process. Be patient, and be ready to explain it again and again or to talk about additional questions they might want to raise.

- Realize there may be deeper personal issues—beyond what people are talking to you about—that hold them back from believing or trusting in God. These may be lifestyle issues, personal problems, hurts, prejudices, or misunderstandings about what Christians think and stand for. Pray for discernment and sensitivity in sorting out what the real issues are, and then address those issues.
- Refer to the Bible's teachings in talking about your faith, but realize that many people don't accept its authority or truthfulness—especially those who question God's existence. Its message can still have power, but look to other sources of information to reinforce its truths (as we have in this chapter, with science and philosophy).
- The Bible makes it clear that these discussions are not just about logic and good answers—but also about a spiritual struggle. Pray that God will direct your words and attitude and that he'll open your friends up to his love and truth.
- Remember that love draws people, and disagreement can drive them away. So let love be your motivation, and be ready to back off if a conversation gets too heated or combative.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why might someone think you should believe only in things you can see, hear, or touch? What are some other things you believe in, in addition to love, that you can't see or experience directly through your senses?
2. What are some things you can talk about from your own experience that show you—and might convince your friends—that God really exists?
3. How does the fact that our universe had a beginning or the fact that it's fine-tuned with such exacting precision provide evidence for God?
4. Do you think there could be objective morality apart from God? From where would it draw its authority?
5. How has the evidence for God presented in this chapter affected your faith? Can evidence strengthen one's faith?

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

CHAPTER 1: “What makes you so sure that God exists at all—especially when you can’t see, hear, or touch him?”

Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics, by William Lane Craig (Crossway, 2008).

I Don’t Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek (Crossway, 2004).

The Twilight of Atheism: The Rise and Fall of Disbelief in the Modern World, by Alister McGrath (Galilee Trade, 2006).

There Is a God: How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind, by Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese (HarperOne, 2008).

God Is Great, God Is Good: Why Believing in God Is Reasonable and Responsible, by William Lane Craig and Chad Meister, eds. (InterVarsity, 2009).

CHAPTER 2: “Didn’t evolution put God out of a job? Why rely on religion in an age of science and knowledge?”

The Case for a Creator: A Journalist Investigates Scientific Evidence That Points toward God, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan, 2005).

Understanding Intelligent Design: Everything You Need to Know in Plain Language, by William Dembski and Sean McDowell (Harvest House, 2008).

Darwin on Trial, by Phillip E. Johnson (InterVarsity, 1993).

Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design, by Stephen C. Meyer (HarperOne, 2010).

Three Views on Creation and Evolution, J. P. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds, eds. (Zondervan, 1999).

A Fine-Tuned Universe: The Quest for God in Science and Theology, by Alister McGrath (Westminster, John Knox, 2009).

The Cell's Design: How Chemistry Reveals the Creator's Artistry, by Fazale Rana (Baker, 2008).

CHAPTER 3: “Why trust the Bible, a book based on myths and full of contradictions and mistakes?”

The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan, 1998).

The Case for the Real Jesus: A Journalist Investigates Current Attacks on the Identity of Christ, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan, 2009).

Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust the Bible, by Erwin W. Lutzer (Moody, 2008).

Knowing Scripture, by R. C. Sproul (InterVarsity, 2009, rev. ed.).

From God to Us: How We Got Our Bible, by Norman L. Geisler and William Nix (Moody, 1980).

The Big Book of Bible Difficulties: Clear and Concise Answers from Genesis to Revelation, by Thomas Howe and Norman L. Geisler (Baker, 2008).

The Many Gospels of Jesus: Sorting Out the Story of the Life of Jesus, by Philip W. Comfort and Jason Driesbach (Tyndale, 2008).

CHAPTER 4: “Everyone knows that Jesus was a good man and a wise teacher—but why try to make him into the Son of God, too?”

More Than a Carpenter, by Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell (Tyndale, 2009).

Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ, by Robert M. Bowman Jr. and J. Ed Komoszewski (Kregel, 2007).

Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels, by Craig A. Evans (InterVarsity, 2008).

Jesus under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus, Michael J. Wilkins and J. P. Moreland eds. (Zondervan, 1996).

Reinventing Jesus, by J. Ed Komoszewski, M. James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace (Kregel, 2006).

Jesus among Other Gods: The Absolute Claims of the Christian Message, by Ravi Zacharias (W Publishing Group, 2002).

What Have They Done with Jesus? Beyond Strange Theories and Bad History—Why We Can Trust the Bible, by Ben Witherington III (HarperOne, 2007).

CHAPTER 5: “How could a good God allow so much evil, pain, and suffering—or does he simply not care?”

The Case for Faith, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan, 2000).

Where Is God When It Hurts? by Philip Yancey (Zondervan, 2002, anniv. ed.).

Making Sense Out of Suffering, by Peter Kreeft (Servant Ministries, 1986).

When God Weeps, by Joni Eareckson Tada and Steven Estes (Zondervan, 2000).

A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss, by Gerald L. Sittser (Zondervan, 2004, expanded ed.).

Where Was God? by Erwin W. Lutzer (Tyndale, 2006).

CHAPTER 6: “Why is abortion such a line in the sand for Christians? Why can’t I be left alone to make my own choices for my own body?”

Who Broke the Baby? What the Abortion Slogans Really Mean, by Jean Staker Garton (Bethany House, 1998).

Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case against Abortion Choice, by Francis Beckwith (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Embryo: A Defense of Human Life, by Robert P. George and Christopher Tollefsen (Doubleday, 2008).

Pro-Life Answers to Pro-Choice Arguments, by Randy Alcorn (Multnomah, 2000, expanded and updated ed.).

CHAPTER 7: “Why do you condemn homosexuality when it’s clear that God made gays and that he loves all people the same?”

unChristian, by David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons (Baker, 2007).

No Perfect People Allowed: Creating a Come-as-You-Are Culture in the Church, by John Burke (Zondervan, 2007).

The Same Sex Controversy: Defending and Clarifying the Bible’s Message about Homosexuality, by Jeff Niell and James White (Bethany House, 2002).

Straight and Narrow? Compassion and Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate, by Thomas E. Schmidt (IVP Academic, 1995).

Hard Questions, Real Answers, by William Lane Craig (Crossway, 2003).

CHAPTER 8: “How can I trust in Christianity when so many Christians are hypocrites?”

“And why are Christians so judgmental toward everyone who doesn’t agree with them?”

Who You Are When No One’s Looking: Choosing Consistency, Resisting Compromise, by Bill Hybels (InterVarsity, 2010, rev. ed.).

Integrity: The Courage to Meet the Demands of Reality, by Henry Cloud (Harper, 2009).

Who Are You to Judge? by Erwin W. Lutzer (Moody, 2003).

Give Me an Answer That Satisfies My Heart and My Mind, by Cliffe Knechtle (InterVarsity, 1986).

CHAPTER 9: “Why should I think that heaven really exists—and that God sends people to hell?”

Life after Death: The Evidence, by Dinesh D’Souza (Regnery, 2009).

Heaven, by Randy Alcorn (Tyndale, 2004).

Heaven: Your Real Home, by Joni Eareckson Tada (Zondervan, 1997).

Hell: The Logic of Damnation, by Jerry L. Walls (University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).

Beyond Death: Exploring the Evidence for Immortality, by Gary Habermas and J. P. Moreland (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004).

CHAPTER 10: The questions our friends need *us* to ask *them*
Choosing Your Faith . . . In a World of Spiritual Options, by Mark
Mittelberg (Tyndale, 2008).

Faith Path: Helping Friends Find Their Way to Christ, by Mark
Mittelberg (David C. Cook, 2009).

Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions,
by Gregory Koukl (Zondervan, 2009).

Becoming a Contagious Christian, by Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg
(Zondervan, 1995).

Tough Questions series, by Garry Poole and Judson Poling (Zondervan,
2003, rev. ed.).

On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision, by William
Lane Craig (David C. Cook, 2010).

NOTES

INTRODUCTION:

1. Billy Kim made this observation at the Baptist World Congress in the year 2000 in Melbourne, Australia.

CHAPTER 1:

1. Mark Mittelberg, *Choosing Your Faith . . . In a World of Spiritual Options* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008), especially chapters 9–11.
2. Or as my mentor, Dr. Stuart Hackett, used to winsomely put it, “and by ‘universe’ I mean ‘*the works!*’”
3. The Hubble telescope continues to offer amazing pictures of and information about the universe. You can see many of these pictures online at <http://hubblesite.org>. This site also offers other fascinating features, such as tracking Hubble’s exact current location in space and previews of an even more powerful telescope that is now under construction, which will be sent into orbit in 2014.
4. Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*, 1994 Modern Library Edition, copyright 1954 by Crown Publishers, Inc. (New York: Random House, 1994), 43.
5. Debate between Richard Dawkins and Francis Collins, as cited on the Richard Dawkins Foundation Web page, <http://richarddawkins.net/articles/4047-god-vs-science-a-debate-between-richard-dawkins-and-francis-collins?page=22&scope=latest&type=articles>.
6. For more on this cosmological argument and many other evidences for God, see William Lane Craig and Chad Meister, eds., *God Is Great, God Is Good: Why Believing in God Is Reasonable and Responsible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009).

7. From an interview with Dr. Robin Collins in Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 132.
8. For some of the most recent findings regarding this kind of evidence, see Paul Davies, *The Goldilocks Enigma: Why Is the Universe Just Right for Life?* (New York: First Mariner Books, 2008).
9. Paul Davies, *The Mind of God* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 242.
10. For a fascinating book that sketches out these factors, see Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards, *The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos Is Designed for Discovery* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2004).
11. These two examples are based on related illustrations from Robin Collins's essay, "A Scientific Argument for God's Existence: The Fine-Tuning Design Argument," in Michael Murray, ed., *Reason for the Hope Within* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 47–75.
12. John D. Steinrucken, "Secularism's Ongoing Debt to Christianity," *American Thinker*, March 25, 2010. To read the article, go to www.americanthinker.com/2010/03/secularisms_ongoing_debt_to_ch.html.

CHAPTER 2:

1. Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004). Brad Dennison's influence is mentioned in the acknowledgments on page 329.
2. Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, 30th Anniversary Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, 2006), 1.
3. Richard Dawkins, "Ignorance Is No Crime," *Free Inquiry* magazine, 21, no. 3 (2001); see article at secularhumanism.org/library/fi/dawkins_21_3.html. Dawkins first said this in a book review he did for the *New York Times* on April 9, 1989.
4. Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: A Ballantine Book, Random House, 1980), 179.
5. For more on this, see my discussion of philosophical naturalism, or as it is sometimes called, *scientism*, in my earlier book *Choosing Your Faith . . . In a World of Spiritual Options* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008), 136–143.

6. Elaine Howard Ecklund, *Science vs. Religion: What Scientists Really Think* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). The summary quoted can be viewed at www.christianbook.com/science-religion-what-scientists-really-believe/elaine-ecklund/9780195392982/pd/392982?item_code=WW&netp_id=799891&event=ESRCN&view=details.
7. Chris Mooney, "Are Top Scientists Really So Atheistic? Look at the Data," *Discover* magazine blog article (April 13, 2010), <http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/intersection/tag/elaine-howard-ecklund/>.
8. John Polkinghorne, *Quarks, Chaos, and Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), xii.
9. See www.dissentfromdarwin.org.
10. The entire document, including the list of scientists' names and their credentials, can be downloaded online at discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/filesDB-download.php?command=download&id=660.
11. In my book *Choosing Your Faith* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008), as well as the complementary group study course, *Faith Path* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), I discuss in depth the various ways we can learn and test truth claims in order to end up with a wisely chosen set of cohesive beliefs.
12. This is from Sandage's spoken message as summarized in Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator*, 69–70.
13. Patrick Glynn, *GOD: The Evidence* (Rocklin, CA: Prima Publishing, 1997), 26.
14. This was mentioned as a possibility by prominent Darwinist Michael Ruse in an interview with Ben Stein in the movie *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*.
15. Ibid.
16. Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler Publishers, 1986), 271.
17. Klaus Dose, "The Origin of Life: More Questions Than Answers," *Interdisciplinary Science Review* 13 (1998), 348, as cited in Lee Strobel, *The Case for Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 107.
18. William A. Dembski and Sean McDowell, *Understanding Intelligent Design* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2008), 130,

- emphasis mine. Also note that the authors state their case “according to standard dating”; you may or may not agree with that dating—but you can still make this kind of point using the premises that your friends accept. In other words, you can make your point while operating on their playing field.
19. Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, 342, emphasis mine.
 20. An interview with Stephen Meyer in Strobel, *The Case for a Creator*, 229, emphasis mine.
 21. Dembski and McDowell, *Understanding Intelligent Design*, 131, emphasis mine.
 22. Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 1–2.
 23. *Ibid.*, 2, emphasis mine.
 24. *Ibid.*, 1, 3.
 25. Strobel, *The Case for a Creator*, 71.
 26. Some of the information and quotes on DNA were drawn from my book *Choosing Your Faith*, 171–173.
 27. This debate, including the part quoted, can be viewed online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7U_kcRCx88&feature=related. Again, I want to emphasize that you don’t have to accept all the possible interpretations that Dr. Craig refers to in order to see and communicate the point that Christians have a variety of views on *how* God created—but our first focus should be on *who* God is and what he wants to do in our lives.
 28. J. P. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds, eds., *Three Views on Creation and Evolution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999).
 29. *Ibid.*, as expressed by Paul Nelson and John Mark Reynolds, 42.
 30. *Ibid.*, as expressed by Robert C. Newman, 105–106, emphasis his.
 31. *Ibid.*, as expressed by Howard Van Till, 170–171.
 32. Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Dutton, published by Penguin Group, 2008), 94, emphasis mine.

CHAPTER 3:

1. Kenneth Kantzer was a theology professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School during the years I attended there. This is a story he often recounted, specifically as cited in Lynn Gardner, *Christianity*

- Stands True* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1994), 39. Also, Dr. Kantzer wrote the foreword for the book.
2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Given the magnitude of this question about the Bible and the space limitations of one chapter, we'll focus most of our comments on the reliability of the New Testament.
 5. Dr. Michael Licona, as quoted in an interview in Lee Strobel, *The Case for the Real Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 115.
 6. James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 855, emphasis in original.
 7. John's Gospel is almost universally considered the latest of the four, but he was also among the youngest of the disciples; he probably wrote it near the end of his life.
 8. Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996), chapters 9–11.
 9. William F. Albright, "Retrospect and Prospect in New Testament Archaeology," in *The Teacher's Yoke*, ed. E. Jerry Vardaman (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 1964), 189, as cited in ed. Norman Geisler and Ronald Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask: A Handbook on Christian Evidences* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 202.
 10. The two versions I find most helpful, due to their mix of clarity and accuracy, are the *New Living Translation* (NLT) and the *New International Version* (NIV). To see a variety of high quality Bible translations online—and to contrast and compare them (and to see how studying several of them will enrich your understanding of Scripture) see www.biblegateway.com.
 11. Similar things can be said of the Old Testament, especially based on the findings of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the mid-twentieth century. Old Testament manuscripts were discovered that predated what were at the time the oldest manuscripts in our possession by as many as a thousand years—yet the wording was virtually the same. For more information, see Norman Geisler and Ronald Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask: A Handbook on Christian Evidences* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990), especially chapter 7, "Questions about the Bible."
 12. *Parade* magazine (February 4, 1996), 7.

13. Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 103.
14. Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* (New York: Doubleday, a division of Random House, 2003), 303–304, emphasis his.
15. Cited by Strobel, *The Case for the Real Jesus*, 27, quoting from Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer, *The Gnostic Bible* (Boston: New Seeds Books, 2003), 48, 69, 46. For insightful information on the Gnostic gospels, read Challenge #1 in *The Case for the Real Jesus*, which deals with the claim that “scholars are uncovering a radically different Jesus in ancient documents just as credible as the four gospels.”
16. These examples were drawn from my earlier book, *Choosing Your Faith . . . In a World of Spiritual Options* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008), 196–199. More details about prophecy and more evidence for the supernatural origins of the Bible can be found there.
17. Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*, 232.
18. Ibid.
19. Ronald H. Nash, *The Gospel and the Greeks: Did the New Testament Borrow from Pagan Thought?* 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2003), 161–162.
20. Richard Gordon, *Image and Value in the Greco-Roman World* (Aldershot, Eng.: Variorum, 1996), 96, quoted in J. P. Holding, “Did the Figure of Mithras Influence Christianity?” www.tektonics.org (January 23, 2007).
21. Strobel, *The Case for the Real Jesus*, 169–172.
22. Sir William Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), 222, as cited in Josh McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 1977), 39.
23. Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996), chapters 9–11.
24. Strobel, *The Case for the Real Jesus*, 58. Evans is respected by conservatives and liberals alike; has written or edited fifty books; and has lectured at Cambridge, Oxford, Yale, and other universities.

CHAPTER 4:

1. Jefferson to Adams, October 12, 1813, quoted in Cyrus Adler, *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), 5.

2. Tutu lends his endorsement to the jacket of Meyers's book *Saving Jesus from the Church: How to Stop Worshiping Christ and Start Following Jesus* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).
3. Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* (New York: Doubleday, a division of Random House, 2003), 233, emphasis his.
4. Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 135.
5. It should not be unexpected that scholars have debated the significance of all these texts. For an incisive yet readable discussion of these and similar passages that draws on current biblical scholarship, see Robert M. Bowman Jr. and J. Ed Komoszewski's foundational book, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2007), 135–170.
6. All emphases in these Scriptures are mine. These passages are some of the clearest in showing the deity of Christ, but many skeptics view the Gospel of John, the last of the four Gospels, as less reliable than the others. I don't share their skepticism, but nevertheless I have focused most of the information in this chapter on information and biblical texts that are more widely accepted in the non-Christian world. An excellent resource in this connection is Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002).
7. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 55–56.
8. John Dominic Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus?* (San Francisco: Harper, 1995), 5.
9. E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1993), 280.
10. On the evidence for Jesus' resurrection, I highly recommend Gary R. Habermas and Michael R. Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2004), as well as Lee Strobel's *The Case for Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998).

CHAPTER 5:

1. See Lee Strobel, *The Case for Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: 2000), 29, for details on the study he commissioned through The Barna Group. They asked people, "If you could ask God only one question and you knew he would give you an answer, what would

- you ask?” The number one response was, “Why is there pain and suffering in the world?”
2. Cited by Chad Meister, “Atheists and the Quest for Objective Morality,” *Christian Research Journal*, 33, no. 02 (Charlotte, NC: Christian Research Institute, 2010), 32. He is citing a statement by Ted Bundy, paraphrased and rewritten by Harry V. Jaffa, *Homosexuality and the National Law* (Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and Political Philosophy, 1990), 3–4.
 3. Meister, *Christian Research Journal*, 33, no. 02, 2010, 32. Note that Dr. Meister is not saying—nor am I saying—that atheists can’t live moral lives, just that their worldview lacks a basis by which to declare what actually *is* moral or not moral.
 4. John D. Steinrucken, “Secularism’s Ongoing Debt to Christianity,” *American Thinker*, March 25, 2010. The article can be viewed at www.americanthinker.com/2010/03/secularisms_ongoing_debt_to_ch.html.
 5. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 45.
 6. *Ibid.*, 45–46. Emphases his.
 7. Harold Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (New York: Anchor Books, a division of Random House: first Anchor Books edition, 2004; originally published by Schocken Books, Inc., New York, 1981), 49.
 8. *Ibid.*, 125.
 9. I recommend a book that tackles these issues at a deeper level (and to which I contributed a chapter). It is called *God Is Great, God Is Good: Why Believing in God Is Reasonable and Responsible*, eds. William Lane Craig and Chad Meister (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009).
 10. Lee Strobel told this story in a sermon he presented at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois, on July 11, 1999. The sermon was titled, “Why Is There Suffering?” The sermon transcript is available for download at www.willowcreek.com/wca_prodsb.asp?invtid=PR03358.
 11. Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health, With Key to the Scriptures* (Charleston, SC: Forgotten Books, 2007), 193, 195.
 12. Deb Bostwick tells her story on the DVD of my curriculum, *Faith*

- Path: Helping Friends Find Their Way to Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009).
13. Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 224.
 14. Dinesh D'Souza, *What's So Great about Christianity* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008), 214.
 15. Galatians 3:13 (NIV) says, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.'"
 16. Philip Yancey, *Where Is God When It Hurts?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990, 1977), 17–18.
 17. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1940, 1996, HarperCollins ed. 2001), 91.
 18. Judson Poling said this during a message he gave in the mid-1990s at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois, during a "New Community Crossfire" service on the question of "Why Does God Allow Us to Suffer?"

CHAPTER 6:

1. Based on statistics cited by the National Right to Life. See Web site, www.nrlc.org/abortion/facts/abortionstats.html.
2. Francis J. Beckwith, *Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case against Abortion Choice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 88.
3. *Ibid.*
4. The information listed by date, January 1 through late April, has been adapted from the chart at www.cirtl.org/pdfs/NRTL_basic_abortion_facts.pdf.
5. Jean Staker Garton, *Who Broke the Baby?* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1998), 17.
6. Lejeune said this before the United States congressional hearings on April 23, 1981. Quoted in J. P. Moreland and Norman Geisler, *The Life and Death Debate* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1990), 34.
7. *Lovejoy Surgicenter v. Advocates for Life Ministries, et al.*, 1989, testimony of Aileen Klass as cited in Randy Alcorn, *Why Pro-Life?* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004), 27.
8. www.lifenews.com/nat2151.html.

9. As reported by ABC News at abcnews.go.com/Health/MindMoodNews/planned-parenthood-clinic-director-joins-anti-abortion-group/story?id=8999720.
10. For a more in-depth discussion about this passage by Greg Koukl see www.str.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5700.
11. Garton, *Who Broke the Baby?* 48.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 49.
14. This story was told by its narrator to Gretchen Passantino, who passed it on to me.
15. This letter, from which I've removed specific names and dates, was received by our church when I was on the pastoral staff at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois. It was originally published in Lee Strobel, *God's Outrageous Claims* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 180–181.

CHAPTER 7:

1. Excerpted from John 4:1-6 (emphasis mine). Throughout this chapter I'll draw from the account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-42.
2. It is true that Jesus prioritized reaching the “lost sheep of Israel”—but clearly that was only the initial part of his ultimate goal, which was to spread his love and truth to the entire world (see Matt. 28:18-20). As he said in John 12:32, “When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” This account in John 4 is an early illustration of that broader divine mission.
3. “LGBTQ community” is an abbreviation frequently used for those who are *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender*, as well as those who are *Questioning* their “sexual identity.”
4. This is something I've heard Lee Strobel say frequently in question-and-answer sessions we've done together in churches, as well as in conversations with individuals who ask him about God's view of homosexuality.
5. The obvious exception would be if there were undue levels of personal risk in doing so—because of either the aggressive nature of the person or the temptation that this kind of proximity might

put you under. In those cases both wisdom and Scripture would tell you to avoid the situation. In some cases a ministry opportunity is right for one Christian but not for another (see Rom. 14). We must follow God's leadings in these matters and respect what we know to be true about our own areas of weakness or vulnerability.

6. New Testament scholar Merrill Tenney writes, for example, "It was an unusual time for women to come to a village well for water . . . perhaps she did not care to meet the other women of the community. In consideration of her general character, the other women may have shunned her." *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 9*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 54.
7. David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons report in their book *unChristian*, for example, "Out of twenty attributes we assessed, both positive and negative, as they related to Christianity, the perception of being antihomosexual was at the top of the list." That perception is so strong, they explain, that "when you introduce yourself as a Christian to a friend, neighbor, or business associate who is an outsider, you might as well have it tattooed on your arm: antihomosexual, gay-hater, homophobic. I doubt you think of yourself in these terms, but that's what outsiders think of you." David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 92–93.
8. For more information on Lee Strobel's ministry, as well as free teaching videos from Lee, myself, and numerous other friends and colleagues on a variety of topics related to the truth of Christianity, see www.leestrobel.com.
9. That's a term Lee Strobel and I use to describe the ways God wants to use all of us as Christians. We've written about this in a story-driven, six-week devotional called *The Unexpected Adventure* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009). For information and free videos see www.theunexpectedadventure.com.

CHAPTER 8:

1. Garry Poole, who sent me this story, is the author of an important book that I highly recommend: *Seeker Small Groups: Engaging*

- Spiritual Seekers in Life-Changing Discussions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003).
2. *New Oxford American Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), s.v. “hypocrisy.”
 3. David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 46–47.
 4. Lee Strobel, *God’s Outrageous Claims: Discover What They Mean for You* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), condensed and adapted from pages 72–75, emphasizes his.
 5. *Decision* magazine (October, 2000), 39.
 6. Kinnaman and Lyons, *unChristian*, 55.
 7. Pastor Jim Dixon, during a weekend service on May 2, 2010, at Cherry Hills Community Church in Highlands Ranch, Colorado. To listen, go to www.chcc.org/sunday_service_love.aspx.
 8. Paul Copan said this in an interview with Lee Strobel in *The Case for the Real Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 246.
 9. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
 10. Erwin Lutzer, *Who Are You to Judge?* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002), 42.

CHAPTER 9:

1. Marie Little’s memorial service was held on August 15, 2009, at Willow Creek Community Church, in South Barrington, Illinois (where I served for many years as the director of evangelism). Marie’s husband, Paul Little, was killed in an automobile accident in 1975. He was the author of the classics *Know What You Believe*, *Know Why You Believe*, and *How to Give Away Your Faith*—all published by InterVarsity Press.
2. Dallas Willard’s story and comments are told by Philip Yancey in his book *Reaching for the Invisible God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 79.
3. C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1949, 1976, rev. 1980, first HarperCollins ed. 2001), 26.
4. Gary R. Habermas and J. P. Moreland, *Immortality: The Other Side of Death* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 81.

5. These quotes from C. S. Lewis are drawn from several sources, all listed at the Web site of the C. S. Lewis Society of California. See www.lewissociety.org/quotes.php.
6. Dinesh D'Souza, *Life after Death: The Evidence* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2009), 216. Also, D'Souza summarizes from Harold Koenig, *Medicine, Religion and Health* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2008).
7. *Ibid.*, 216.
8. C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1946, 1973, HarperCollins ed. 2001), 75, emphasis his.
9. Ralph D. Winter and Bruce A. Koch, "Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge," www.joshuaproject.net/assets/FinishingTheTask.pdf.
10. Mahendra Singhal spent the rest of his life working tirelessly to share the love and truth of Christ with Hindu people around the world. You can watch a video of him sharing his testimony at <http://vimeo.com/5964358>.
11. K. Connie Kang, "Next Stop, the Pearly Gates: Nearly two-thirds think they're going to heaven, while few believe they're hell-bound, poll finds," *Los Angeles Times*, 24 October 2003. Emphases mine.
12. Randy Alcorn, *Heaven: Biblical Answers to Common Questions* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2004), 54.
13. This is a condensed version of a story Bill Hybels told about his own experience, in his Easter service message at Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, Illinois, on April 4, 2010.
14. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1940, 1996, HarperCollins ed. 2001), 8–9.

CHAPTER 10:

1. This was from the October 21, 1984, presidential debate between Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale. The complete transcript of the debate can be seen at www.lexis.com/research/retrieve?_m=e00e057ab270fb8171fccce7f3909b6f8&_fmtstr=FULL&docnum=1&_startdoc=1&wchp=dGLbVtz-zSkAb&_md5=fa1744326e444f9b7f4619724472c1e4, and a video clip of this particular exchange can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoPuIUIBkBc.
2. Mondale made this comment in a May 25, 1990, PBS interview

with Jim Lehrer, which can be read at www.pbs.org/newshour/debatingourdestiny/interviews/mondale.html.

3. Those were Dawkins's words when he appeared on *The O'Reilly Factor* television program on Fox News, April 23, 2007. He made a similar statement in an interview with Don Cray for the article "God vs. Science," *Time* (Nov. 05, 2006)—see www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1555132,00.html.
4. Mark Mittelberg, *Choosing Your Faith . . . In a World of Spiritual Options* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008), chapters 9–11, starting on page 159.
5. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Edition, 2001), 52.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MARK MITTELBERG is a best-selling author, a sought-after speaker, and a leading strategist in evangelism and apologetics-oriented outreach. He is the primary author of the Becoming a Contagious Christian training course, through which more than one million people around the world have learned to effectively and naturally communicate their faith to others.

Mark's most recent book, *The Unexpected Adventure* (written with Lee Strobel), is a six-week devotional designed to inspire Christians and entire congregations to enter into the excitement of sharing Christ. His previous book, *Choosing Your Faith . . . In a World of Spiritual Options*, strengthens the faith of believers and is a great resource to give to friends who are figuring out what to believe. Mark also developed a DVD study course—Faith Path: Helping Friends Find Their Way to Christ—based on that book and wrote the articles for the *Choosing Your Faith New Testament*. His other books include the updated *Becoming a Contagious Church*, which sets forth an innovative blueprint for mobilizing churches for

evangelism, and the classic best seller *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, which he coauthored with Bill Hybels. Mark was contributing editor for *The Journey: A Bible for the Spiritually Curious*. He was also a contributor to *Reasons for Faith: Making a Case for the Christian Faith* (edited by Norman Geisler and Chad Meister) and *God Is Great, God Is Good: Why Believing in God Is Reasonable and Responsible* (edited by William Lane Craig and Chad Meister), which won the 2010 *Christianity Today* award for best book in the area of apologetics.

Mark was the evangelism director at Willow Creek Community Church for many years and is a frequent contributor to *Outreach* magazine. He was also an editorial consultant for Lee Strobel's *Faith under Fire* television show, on which he was a periodic guest. He and Strobel have been ministry partners for more than twenty years.

After receiving an undergraduate degree in business, Mark earned a master's degree in philosophy of religion from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. In recognition of his achievements in the areas of evangelism and apologetics, he was recently honored by the conferring of a doctor of divinity degree from Southern Evangelical Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina. Mark and his wife, Heidi, have two teenage children; they live near Denver, Colorado.