Answering Difficult Questions
Stonecroft Evangelism Tools
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Introduction—How to Answer Difficult Questions

Everyone has questions. When your friend asks you questions about the Christian faith, be thankful for the opportunity to share the Gospel. “...if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.” (1 Peter 3:15).

Here are some tips for answering your friend’s spiritually-related questions.

• Be gentle (2 Timothy 2:23-26). Your goal isn’t to debate or prove your point. Share your thoughts lovingly and pray that God would work in your friend’s heart. Remember that God—not your arguments—will ultimately change her heart.

• Ask questions in return. Encourage your friend’s curiosity to know God and read the Bible. Use every opportunity to learn more about what your friend believes.

• If your friend rejects the Gospel, don’t take it personally. She is in conflict with God, not you. Try to find out how your friend feels about God. Discover why she is refusing Him and His truth.

• Acknowledge you don’t know all the answers. Be willing to say “I don’t know. Can I get back to you?”

Volumes have been written to answer the most frequently asked questions about the Christian faith. Our purpose is to give you summary answers—ideas of what to say if your friend asks one of these questions. Remember, you don’t need to provide all the answers. We encourage you to study more in-depth resources if you desire more information on a certain topic.

Small Group Use

Discussion questions provided at the end of each section allow your group to review and discuss each topic.

1. Ask someone in your small group to read the “difficult question” and the response.

2. Together discuss the content using the small group questions at the conclusion of each section.

We hope these questions promote further consideration about the specific topic, and through discussion provide a deeper understanding and confidence to address it when asked.
Does God exist?

Evidence of God – Every design has a designer.

The Universe is highly complex in design—therefore the Universe has a Designer.

Take a look around. Since our cosmos has amazing precision, could it have resulted from an explosion? William Paley, and English clergyman of the 18th Century, offers a great example when he said that every watch requires a watchmaker. Imagine you’re taking a walk through a forest near your home. As you walk you notice a beautiful gold watch lying near a tree stump. Immediately you wonder how it got there. Do you think, did the wind and rain come together to form such a beautiful piece of art?

No, you would never think such a ridiculous thing! You would think something like, I wonder if someone dropped this beautiful watch? You know the watch was designed by a talented watchmaker. It didn’t result from the wind, rain, erosion, or an explosion. It has clear marks of design. It has a purpose; it conveys information; and it is specifically complex.

The universe is much more precise and awe-inspiring than any watch! When Isaac Newton studied our solar system he said, “This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.”

Evidence of God—If the Universe had a beginning, it had a cause.

This evidence for God uses The Law of Causality, a fundamental principle of science. This law says, “Everything that has a beginning has a cause.”
Science provides us more-than-sufficient evidence that the Universe has a beginning and that it appeared out of nothing. This is an accepted fact in modern science. This leaves us with two possibilities: either something came from nothing entirely on its own, or someone created something out of nothing.

This evidence of God is very important. Everything that comes to be has a cause. Since the Universe was not eternal, but had a beginning, the Universe must have had a Creator.

Evidence of God—Every law has a law-giver.

If we believe there is a moral law, it seems logical that there is a moral law-giver.

Even the most remote tribes that have been cut off from the rest of civilization observe a moral code. Every civilization promotes behavior believed to be good and acceptable, while deeming other behaviors as evil or worthy of punishment. Where then do we get the idea of right and wrong? Perhaps this moral law (or conscience) comes from an ultimate law-giver above humanity. If we believe there is some sort of moral law, then we can assume that there is a law-giver.

In addition, these “moral” laws take us in the opposite direction than “natural selection” would lead us. These laws could not be the product of evolution.

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Aren’t there many ways to God?

Visit your favorite coffee shop and you can order your drink just the way you want it. Choice is king! So, can we select a religion just like we select a flavor of coffee? Do all religions ultimately lead to Heaven?

Christianity is unique among all other belief systems. The world’s religions are based on works of humans. Christianity is based on faith and the work that God did for us when His Son, Jesus, died on the cross. That distinction is essential to understanding that there is only one true spiritual framework, only one way to Heaven.

• **Christianity is not a religion.** It is a relationship with God. Real Christianity is more than a religion. It is not a denomination, nor a church building. It is not about elaborate traditions or rules or even specific moral standards. Christianity is a relationship between a person and Jesus Christ.

  Jesus stands in extreme contrast to all other religious leaders. Jesus is God. He not only claimed to know truth, but He stated He is truth. Jesus said, “...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Jesus Christ is the very essence of truth.

  Christianity is not based solely on Jesus’ teachings, but on Jesus Christ Himself. In other belief systems, it is possible to be part of a religion and not know the founder. Not so with Christianity. A personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the essence of following the Christian faith.

• **Christianity teaches a unique view of salvation.** All religions are not the same. Even those religions which recognize only one true God hold conflicting views of what He is like and what He requires of people. It is only logical to recognize that, if
God exists, He has the right to say who He is and what He requires of humans. Christianity is based on the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christianity states that Jesus lives in all who receive Him. He enters our life and we experience a new birth. Christianity emphasizes that He is coming to Earth again. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 summarizes the Gospel: “...Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.”

Christianity is Jesus Christ living in a person. It is not following a set of rules, performing rituals, acting a certain way, or joining a church. Christians have repented of their sins and have a relationship with God by making Jesus Lord of their life. While religion is something you put on—acting and living a certain way—Christianity is an inner reality. It is an inside change which results in changed behavior. No one deserves it. No one has earned it. God gives right standing with Himself as a free gift. All a person has to do is to receive God’s gift.

Jesus did not say He would teach people a new way to live or a new system of religion. Instead Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Notice Jesus said “I AM the way”—not that I know the way, or that I will teach the way, but that I am the way. Jesus died to pay the penalty of our sin. In this way, He offers full pardon to all who come to Him for forgiveness. He rose from the dead so that He could give His own nature to anyone who receives Him by faith.

Questions:

1. What areas of your life are different in the last three months because you stayed close to Jesus?

2. Some people argue that all religions are based on following and worshiping the same God. They say we may call Him different names and approach Him in different ways, but we are all His children. What do you think? What questions would you ask the person who makes similar statements?

3. Even when talking about hot topics, a Christian should exercise restraint and show respect. It is one thing to disagree with a position; it is quite another to disparage a person. We must hold fast to the Truth while showing compassion to those who question it. How can you show compassion to someone who believes very differently than you?
What about the people who never heard about Jesus Christ?

God delivers the truth to people who need to hear. He can certainly ensure that the Gospel of Jesus Christ reaches those who will turn to Him in faith. God is perfectly just, righteous, and loving (according to the Bible). Deuteronomy 4:29 says, “But from there you will search again for the LORD your God. And if you search for him with all your heart and soul, you will find him.” If a person truly desires to know God, He will make Himself known.

All people are accountable to God. Here’s why:

- **Nature reveals God.** Romans 1:19-20 says, “They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.” Even people who know very little about God fail to live up to what they know. None of us live up to the requirement for life that God has given us.

- **People are sinful and they reject God, no matter their background.** All people know deeply in their hearts that they reject the one, true God. Romans 1:21-23 says, “Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn’t worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.” Therefore, all people are personally responsible for rejecting God.
Questions:

1. List specific examples from Scripture where God made Himself known.

2. This is a hard topic and many people don’t want to accept the truth. Do you believe that if a person truly desires to know God, God will make Himself known? How might He do that?
How can a Good God allow evil things to happen?

This is a question for the ages. An almighty, sovereign God could certainly have stopped Adam and Eve from sinning and plunging the world into darkness. We’ve inherited their self-focused ways and continue to sin against God and each other, sometimes with very evil intent and outcomes. Some say, “God gives people free choice, so it’s humans who choose evil,” but we all know that God could stop that very evil if He chose. He could violate our free will for the apparent greater good, but He doesn’t.

So, why not?

Frankly, we don’t know.

But we do know this: Whatever God’s reasons for letting evil continue, it can’t be that He doesn’t care. It can’t be that He isn’t good. How do we know? We know because God did not stand by and let sin and its consequences roll over us like a black tide. He didn’t stand outside of this messed up world wringing His hands in weak concern or watching evil go by with cold indifference.

No, we know God cares deeply about our suffering. He left his neighborhood, came to ours, and suffered right along with us. He let evil roll over Him on the cross. He cares so much about our plight that He suffered to eradicate evil, first in our hearts, and one day, in the Universe.

We don’t know why God allows evil and suffering to continue. But we know it’s not because He doesn’t care and can’t fix it. After all, He experienced evil and suffering on our behalf.

Questions:

1. Can you think of a time in your life when God used suffering to draw you closer to Him?

2. How can you use the answer to the above question to help someone else going through a rough time?
Why should I believe that Jesus is God?

What an essential question! If Jesus is not God, then His death on the cross would not be sufficient to pay the penalty for sin. Only God could pay the penalty.

Here are some evidences of Jesus being God:

• **Jesus claimed to be God!** When Jesus shared His name, He often began with the words, “I AM.” The Jewish people knew God’s name to be “I AM,” meaning the eternal, self-existent One (Exodus 3:14). When Jesus used the phrase “I AM” in reference to Himself, His listeners understood that He was revealing the fact that He is God. This caused the religious leaders much concern. John 10:30-33 says, “‘The Father and I are one.’ Once again the people picked up stones to kill him. Jesus said, ‘At my Father’s direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?’ They replied, ‘We’re stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God.’” So, was Jesus lying about His identity?

• **Jesus rose from the dead!** Jesus is God and the very source of life—men could not kill Him. He died because He voluntarily laid down His life. He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. A Roman officer standing in front of the cross saw everything that happened. When he saw Jesus die he said, “This man was really the Son of God!” (Mark 15:39). No one ever talked, lived, died, or rose again as Jesus did.

• **The Bible presents reliable information concerning Jesus Christ.** It presents Jesus as eternal, present at creation, and active.

  Jesus reveals to us what God is like. John 14:9 says that whoever has seen Jesus has seen the Father. Read Hebrews 1:3 (NIV). Notice the words “exact representation.” Jesus is an exact representation of

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the character of God. He possesses all the qualities of deity. In Him, we see God’s righteousness, purity, judgment, character, power, and great love.

The prophecies of the Old Testament have been fulfilled through Jesus in the New Testament. A collection of many more than 100 prophecies in the Old Testament talk about the future Messiah, the promised deliverer. The New Testament shows Jesus’ fulfillment of prophecy: God sent Jesus to be born of a virgin, minister on Earth, and to die a cruel death by crucifixion. Jesus was resurrected on the third day, seen by many people, and then He ascended into Heaven. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we can be sure these prophecies were written hundreds of years before Jesus arrived to Earth as a baby.

In Luke 24:44, Jesus said, “When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

Questions:

1. Why is it significant to you, as a believer, that Jesus was not just a prophet?

2. Practice sharing themes from the principles above. Which point do you find easiest to explain? Which do you think is most powerful?
Is the Bible true? Why should I believe any of the claims of the Bible such as Jesus’ resurrection and miracles?

The Bible is the written version of God’s words. Encourage any seekers to read it and think about what it has to say. Let the Bible speak for itself. Consider these facts about its origin and history:

Manuscripts—The Bible stands alone as the best-preserved literary work of all history. It was completed nearly 2,000 years ago, yet more than 24,000 ancient New Testament manuscripts have been discovered. No other ancient document begins to approach that many discovered documents. They are direct translations, taken from the earliest manuscripts. They are not a copy of a copy. The nearest comparable literary work is Homer’s Iliad. That work has 643 discovered manuscripts. That’s a pretty significant difference!

- **Archaeology**—Archaeological evidence presents compelling support that the Bible is accurate in what it describes. Numerous excavations lend credibility to cities and places mentioned in the Bible.

- **Prophecy**—The Bible has proven to be completely accurate in the prophecies that have been fulfilled. A prophecy is a prediction of what is to happen in the future. The Bible claims to have 100 percent success in predicting future events. Is this true? Some scholars list more than 1,000 biblical prophecies and say that 668 of them have already been fulfilled. The rest are yet to come.

- **Preservation**—Through the years, the Bible has proved to be indestructible. It has survived relentless, determined opposition for as many as 3,000 years. This fact emphasizes the divine origin of the Bible. Other ancient writings have been lost. Even books written a hundred years ago are out of print and
nowhere to be found. Isaiah 40:8 says, “The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever.”

- **Harmony**—The books of the Bible, written during a period of 1,500 years by different authors, present a common theme and unusual harmony. Scholars say that God used 40 men from varied backgrounds to write the text of the Bible. In spite of the fact that the Bible is a library of books that was written by people from different walks of life during a period of 1,500 years, it has one primary theme. These books possess a unity that can only be explained by divine inspiration.

- **Author Commitment**—The New Testament writers abandoned their prior beliefs, adopted new ones, and did not reverse their faith, even under persecution or death. They backed it up with action and unwavering dedication. Due to these beliefs, the writers were persecuted and martyred. If they had fabricated the message of the New Testament, wouldn’t they have recanted rather than suffer horrible persecution and death? Not one recanted—even though eleven of the twelve apostles were martyred for their faith and the apostle John spent years in exile.

- **Bible’s Power**—The Bible demonstrates power in the lives of those who obey it. The reason for that is because the Bible proclaims the power of God. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.”

- **Biblical claims**—The Bible itself claims to be the inspired writing of God Himself and the source of all truth. He inspired humans to record His words. 2 Peter 1:20-21 says, “Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet’s own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.”

We can be confident that God has preserved the Bible for us. Whatever the Bible teaches on any subject is authoritative truth revealed by God.

If your friend isn’t sure whether the Bible is true, encourage her to read it. Start with the book of John and read about Jesus and His ministry. Even better, meet and read it together.
Questions:

1. How has the Bible been helpful in your spiritual growth?

2. What changes have you seen in your life as a result of reading the Bible?

3. Imagine your friend questions the Bible’s relevance today. How might you use the facts of its authenticity to show relevance?

4. The Bible is the world’s all-time best selling book, but does that make it true? What evidence is there that distinguishes the Bible from other literary works and proves its authenticity?
So, I can do anything I want and still be forgiven, right?

Paul answered a similar question in Romans 6: “Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.”

Jesus lived the perfect life for us and died for ALL our sins—past, present, and future. When, Jesus enters the lives of Christians we become new creations. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “…anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” The Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us and that results in change. 1 John 2:5-6 says, “But those who obey God’s word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.”

We won’t want to continue to sin!

Questions:

1. What does it mean to become a “new creation”?
2. How does it influence our lives?
Stonecroft Evangelism Tools
Stonecroft equips you to share your faith by offering you these and other resources:

- Sharing the Gospel Through Your Story
- Starting a Faith Conversation
- Answering Difficult Questions
- Community Discovery Through Prayer
- Facilitating a Stonecroft Small Group

Contact us at connections@stonecroft.org or call 800.525.8627 to learn more.