

# **CLASS NOTES - FUNDAMENTIALS II**

**Taught By Robert Stapleton**



**COPIES OF THIS MATERIAL MAY  
ONLY BE MADE WITH  
PERMISSION BY AUTHOR**

## **FUNDAMENTALS II CLASS INSTRUCTION**

**Robert Stapleton**

### **CLASS DESCRIPTION:**

1. Class seeks to explore the philosophical foundations, which establish the existence and attributes of God.
  - A. In conjunction with this, we will examine the postures, which oppose the existence and attributes of God.
    1. In doing so we will give specific treatment to Atheism, Agnosticism, and Existentialism, although other postures will be mentioned.
  - B. We will also give some attention to the role of logic and rationality in ascertaining God's existence.

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. The following books are to be read in the following order and a log is to be kept.
    - A. Logic and the Bible, Thomas B. Warren.
      1. To be completed by second class.
    - B. Have Atheists Proved There Is No God?, Thomas B. Warren.
      1. To be completed by fourth class.
    - C. The Warren-Flew Debate, Thomas B. Warren and Anthony G.N.Flew.
      1. To be completed by sixth class.
    - D. The Human Body, Wayne Jackson.
      1. To be completed by seventh class.
    - E. Instructions concerning log record, etc.
      1. Keep a log of your reading, with dates and pages read.
        - A. Your log should be turned in to instructor no later than the beginning of class day during the finals week – late papers count one grade per day off.
  2. Write a brief critique of each book with no more than three pages per book, Times New Roman 12 Font.
    - A. Pay attention to grammar, etc., as I will be paying attention.
    - B. Your critique will count for 20% of your total grade.
    - C. Your critique should be turned in to instructor no later than the beginning of class day during the finals week – late papers count one grade per day off.
  3. Class time will be devoted to the discussion of each book, its strengths and its weaknesses.
    - A. Knowledge of each book will be helpful, as students will be expected to take part in the discussion.
    - B. Your input into these sessions will count for 10% of your grade, so be prepared to look smart.
2. Recommended reading.
    - A. The books listed below, along with hundreds more written by men of science, will help you in your studies on the subject of the existence of God and atheistic-

evolutionary thought.

1. Fundamentals II – Dave Miller. \*
- A. Authors indicated with an \* are members of the churches of Christ.
2. The Warren-Matson Debate On The Existence of God. \*
3. The Problem of Evil and Suffering, Edward P. Myers. \*
4. None of These Diseases, S.I. McMillen.
5. I Believe Because, Batsell Barrett Baxter. \*
6. Theistic Evolution, Bert Thompson. \*
7. A Study Course In Christian Evidences, Bert Thompson & Wayne Jackson. \*
8. Survey Course In Christian Doctrine, Vol. 1-4, C.C. Crawford.
9. Genes, Genesis, And Evolution, J.W. Klotz.
10. Evidences Of Christianity, J.W. McGarvey. \*
11. Evolution: The Challenge of the Fossil Record, Duane T. Gish.
12. Facts and Faith, J.D. Thomas. \*
13. Christianity: A Clear Case Of History, Ed Wharton. \*
14. The Revelation of God In Nature, Bert Thompson and Wayne Jackson. \*
15. Paley's Evidences of Christianity, William Paley.
16. The History of Evolutionary Thought, Bert Thompson. \*
17. Evolution or Creation?, Basil Overton. \*
18. The Harmony of Science and Scripture, Harry Rimmer.
19. Worlds Apart, A Handbook On World Views, Norman L. Geisler and William D. Watkins.
20. Evolution The Fossils Say NO!, Duane T. Gish.
21. The Evolution of A Creationist, Jobe Martin.
22. The Lie: Evolution, Ken Ham.
23. Facts and Fallacies of the Fossil Record, Brett A Rutherford. \*
24. Scientific Creationism, Henry M. Morris.
25. It's A Young World After All, Paul D. Ackerman.
26. Fallacies of Evolution, Arlie J. Hoover.
27. The Scientific Case For Creation, Henry M. Morris.
28. A Symposium on Creation I, Henry M. Morris and Others.
29. A Symposium on Creation II, Donald W. Patten and Others.
29. Science And The Bible, Henry M. Morris.
30. Handbook on Materialism, Roy J. Hearn. \*
31. The God-Killer?, James D. Bales. \*
32. The Other Side of Evolution, Jon Gary Williams. \*
33. The Creator in the Courtroom, "Scopes II," Norman L. Geisler.
34. Why Scientists Accept Evolution, Robert T. Clark and James D. Bales. \*
35. In the Shadow of Darwin, A review of the teachings of John N. Clayton, Bert Thompson and Wayne Jackson. \*
36. In Six Days, C.H. McGowen.
37. Come Let Us Reason, Norman L. Geisler & Ronald M. Brooks.
38. Christian Evidences Vs. Modernism, Bill Nicks. \*

39. Evolution and Antiquity, J.D. Thomas. \*
  40. The Divine Demonstration, Harvey W. Everest. \*
  41. The Warren-Barnhart Debate. \*
  42. The Source, John N. Clayton. \*
    - A. Brother Clayton's teachings are questionable on the age of the earth, the flood, theistic evolution, and a few other things. However, one should obtain a copy for reference sake.
  43. Therefore Stand, William Smith.
  44. God, the Atom, and the Universe, James Reid.
  45. In The Beginning God, Jesse P. Sewell. \*
  46. A Critical Look At Evolution, Robert S. Camp. \*
  47. More Than A Carpenter, Josh McDowell
  48. Evidence That Demands A Verdict, Josh McDowell.
  49. Answers To Tough Questions, Josh McDowell.
  50. Reason Skeptics Should Consider Christianity, Josh McDowell.
  51. Love Is Always Right, Josh McDowell.
  52. The New Tolerance, Josh McDowell, Bob Hostetler.
  53. Daniel In The Critic's Den, Josh McDowell.
  54. Creation VS. Evolution, Ralph O. Muncaster.
  55. The Evidence for Creation, Examining the Origin of Planet Earth, G.S. McLean, Roger Oakland, Larry McLean.
  56. Reasons for Believing, A Seekers Guide to Christianity, Frank Harber.
  57. Christianity and Evolution, Pierre Teilhard De Chardin.
  58. Beyond Good and Evil, Friedrich Nietzsche.
  59. Genesis and the Big Bang, Gerald L. Schroeder.
  60. Creation Compromises, Bert Thompson.
  61. Darwinism under the Microscope, James P. Gills, Tom Woodward.
  62. A Ready Defense, Josh McDowell.
3. Memory Verses:
    - A. The following verses are to be committed to memory and will be on the tests.
      1. Genesis 1:1
      2. Psalm 14:1
      3. Psalm 19:1
      4. Romans 1:20
  4. Tests:
    - A. Two scheduled tests will be administered.
      1. Each will account for 35% of your total score.
      2. Any additional credit will be at the instructor's discretion.

## FUNDAMENTALS II

### CLASS NOTES

Robert Stapleton

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. The subject of the existence of God is one that has been hotly debated for centuries.
  - A. Undoubtedly, it will never be settled until time ceases.
  - B. However:
    1. If one believes that God does not exist, and lives accordingly, they **had** better be right!
      - A. On the other hand, if one believes that God exists, and lives accordingly, and in the end he is wrong, what has he lost?
    2. If one believes that God does not exist, and he is correct, he will never know it.
      - A. However, if he is wrong, he will eternally know of his error.
    3. Bert Thompson had this to say, “The querist is painfully and logically drawn to one of two conclusions: {1} If there is **no** God then nothing matters at all; {2} If there **is** a God, then nothing else matters!” (emp. his), Theistic Evolution, p. 17.
    4. As one ponders these points, the question that needs to be considered is, *“If you deny the existence of God, do you feel lucky?”*

#### BODY:

##### 1. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD:

- A. Either God exists or He doesn't!
  1. There is no middle ground on the subject.
  2. In seeking to defend His existence one must understand that there is no empirical evidence that proves His existence.
    - A. Empirical – relying on or derived from observations or experiment: empirical results that supported the hypothesis. Verifiable or provable by means of observations or experiment: empirical laws.
  3. Yet, this does not mean that we cannot show that He exists, only that no one has seen Him (Ex. 33:20), and that no experiment can reproduce Him.
  4. Scripture teaches us that the one who denies the existence of God is a fool – Psa. 14:1.
  5. Logic, reason, and experience all tell us there is a God.
- B. Definitions of major words associated with the subject:
  1. **Atheism:**
    - A. Definition:
      1. “Atheism is the life philosophy of persons who are *free from* theism. It is predicated on the ancient Greek philosophy of Materialism.

2. "American Atheism may be defined as the mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience, independent of all arbitrary assumptions of authority or creeds.
  3. "The Materialist philosophy declares that the cosmos is devoid of immanent conscious purpose; that it is governed by its own inherent, immutable and impersonal law; that there is no supernatural interference in human life; that man-finding his resources within himself-can and must create his own destiny; and that his potential for good and higher development is for all practical purposes unlimited." Who's Who in America, 39<sup>th</sup> edition, 1976-1977, Volume 2, published by the American Atheist Center, Austin, Texas.
- B. "Aims and Purposes"
1. "To stimulate and promote freedom of thought and inquiry concerning religious beliefs, creeds, dogmas, tenets, rituals and practices.
  2. "To collect and disseminate information, data and literature on all religions and promote a more thorough understanding of them, their origins and histories.
  3. "To advocate, labor for, and promote in all lawful ways, the complete and absolute separation of state and church; and the establishment and maintenance of a thoroughly secular system of education available to all.
  4. "To encourage the development and public acceptance of a humane ethical system, stressing the mutual sympathy, understanding and interdependence of all people and the corresponding responsibility of each, individually, in relation to society.
  5. "To develop and propagate a social philosophy in which man is the central figure who alone must be the source of strength, progress and ideals for the well-being and happiness of humanity.
  6. "To promote the study of the arts and sciences and of all problems affecting the maintenance, perpetuation and enrichment of human (and other) life.
  7. "To engage in such social, educational, legal and cultural activity as will be useful and beneficial to members of American Atheists and to society as a whole." Who's Who in America, 39<sup>th</sup> edition, 1976-1977, Volume 2, published by the American Atheist Center, Austin, Texas.
2. **Agnosticism:**
- A. Definition:
1. Agnosticism is a concept, not a religion. It is a belief related to the existence or non-existence of God. An agnostic is a person who feels that God's existence can neither be proved nor disproved, on the basis of current evidence. Agnostics note that theologians and philosophers have tried to prove, for millennia, either that God exists or that God

does not exist. None have convincingly succeeded. Are they Theists? No, because Agnostics do not believe in a God, or a Goddess, or in multiple Gods, or multiple Goddesses or in a pantheon of Gods and Goddesses.

2. An Agnostic usually holds the question of the existence of God open, pending the arrival of more evidence. They are willing to change their belief if some solid evidence or logical proof is found in the future. However, some have taken the position that there is no logical way in which the existence or the non-existence of a deity can be proven.

3. **Deism:**

A. Definition:

1. Deism is defined in Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1941, as:  
"[From Latin Deus, God - Deity] The doctrine or creed of a Deist."  
A. Deist is defined in the same dictionary as: "One who believes in the existence of a God or supreme being but denies revealed religion, basing his belief on the light of nature and reason."
2. The theory that represents the universe as a self-sustaining mechanism from which God withdrew Himself as soon as He created it.  
A. Deism views God as Creator but not as Sustainer.
3. We could say that the Deist believes that God wound up the "watch" (i.e., world) and now simply allows it to do as it pleases.  
A. This removes God from the position of being a Providential Being.

4. **Existentialism:**

A. Definition:

1. The doctrine that existence takes precedence over essence and holding that man is totally free and responsible for his acts. This responsibility is the source of dread and anguish that encompass mankind.  
- *Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition*; William Collins Publishers, Inc.; Cleveland, Ohio; 1979

5. **Monotheism:**

A. Definition:

- A. The view that teaches the existence of one and only one God.
- B. Comes from "mono," meaning one and "theism," meaning God. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are monotheistic religions.
  1. Allah, the god of Islam, is not the same God of Christianity or Judaism.  
A. Nevertheless, Islam is monotheistic.

6. **Pantheism:**

A. Definition:

1. The belief that God is the universe.
2. Pantheism is the philosophy that everything is God (pan - "everything" Theos - "God"), or that the universe and nature are divine
3. Strict pantheism is not atheism.  
A. It does not believe in a transcendent or personal God who is the



creator of the universe and the judge of humans.

- B. Many pantheists feel the word "God" is too loaded with these connotations and never use the word in their own practice - though they may use it to simplify, or to explain things to theists.

7. **Panentheism:**

A. Definition:

1. Panentheism differs from Pantheism in that according to Pantheism God is all things, whereas, according to Panentheism, God is *in* all things.
2. One description of Panentheism is that God has the same relationship to the world as the body has to the soul.

8. **Polytheism:**

A. Definition:

1. The doctrine of many gods.
  - A. Polytheism acknowledges the existence of a Higher Power, but attributes the powers that he sees at work to his own god.
  - 1. Therefore, the concept of a sun-god, moon-god, rain-god, etc.

9. **Skepticism and Infidelity:**

A. Definition:

1. Terms that simply convey a doubt or disbelief in the existence of the God of revelation.

10. **Theism:**

A. Definition:

1. The belief in the existence of a personal, infinite Creator who is both immanent (living, remaining, or operating within) in His creation and yet who is wholly transcendent (that which exists apart from the material universe) above it.
  - A. God as Creator is transcendent – i.e. He is other than the creation.
  - B. God as Sustainer is immanent – i.e. He is the final reason for the power of everything that is good and that is in existence today.
  - C. Theism is seen in two types:
    1. Natural Theism, which treats the existence of God in light of nature and reason.
    2. Christian Theism, which is the doctrine of God as an immanent, transcendent, Person Being.
      - A. This class is a defense of the doctrine of God as revealed in the Bible.
      - B. Not the perversions of that doctrine
- B. Various classes of arguments for the existence of a Supreme Being:
  1. **Metaphysical realm** – motion and causality.
    - A. Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy that deals with first principles, which seek to explain origins.
  2. **Physical realm** – design, harmony, order and purpose of the universe, sun, moon, and stars.

3. **Historical realm** – universal consent of society that such a Being exists.
  4. **Moral realm** - conscience, morality, judgment, reward and punishment.
  5. **Mathematical realm** – statistical chance of creation happening on its own.
- C. Arguments for the existence of God:
1. **Ontological Argument** – argument based upon the fact that the human mind has the necessary conception of a perfect and absolute Being.
    - A. Ontology is the study of the nature of being or reality.
    - B. Man’s concept of God is that He is absolute perfection.
      1. With this argument in mind it would be impossible to conceive of God as not existing.
        - A. He would not be “absolute perfection” if He did not exist.
        - B. This would be a self-contradiction.
    - C. The Ontological Argument was first advanced by “St” Anselm in the Middle Ages (d. 1109).
      1. He began with this definition, which set forth the concept; “God is the idea of that than which nothing greater can be conceived.”
        - A. To this he added the idea, “But I can think of something that is greater than the idea of that than which is no greater.”
          1. To which someone asked, “What?”
          - B. To which he replied, “The existence of that than which there is no greater.”
      2. So we end up with a philosophical argument difficult to totally understand when stated this way.
    - D. God is pictured as matching the dictionary definition of a Supreme Being, i.e., One who is perfect, independent, and infinite.
      1. This is viewed philosophically as a rational argument.
    - E. This argument is a universal argument in that the belief in a supernatural God is held by “all.”
      1. It seems that the belief in “God” is part of man’s nature.
      2. The argument suggests that that since there is a thirst for God, there must be a God creating that thirst.
    - F. The Ontological argument is a deductive argument.
      1. It begins with an assumption based upon the universal existence of a belief in a Supreme Being.
      2. The argument does not define God.
        - A. It simply argues for the existence of such a Being.
    - G. Using logic one could argue using the following syllogism.
      1. An intuitive, universal belief must be true. (major premise)

2. The belief in God is universal and intuitive (minor premise)
3. Therefore the belief that there is a God is true. (conclusion)
2. **Cosmological Argument** – argument based on the cosmos being an effect for which there must be an adequate cause.
  - A. Basically, the principle is that for every effect there must be an adequate cause.
  - B. General arrangement for the argument is as follows:
    1. Everything finite must have a cause.
      - A. Important to recognize that this argument speaks of the finite.
        1. Thus, it goes as follows – “Every finite, or contingent thing has a cause. God is infinite, thus the finite.”
    2. The effect is never greater than that which is its cause.
    3. Therefore, the universe must have a Supernatural Cause of great power and wisdom.
  - C. Three possible alternatives for the explanation for the existence of the universe.
    1. The material universe is eternal.
      - A. It has no beginning or ending point.
        1. Yet no scientist will affirm such.
    2. Evolution.
      - A. General.
        1. Sometimes called Atheistic Evolution.
        2. Or Organic Evolution.
      - B. Theistic.
    3. The material universe was created ex nihilo (i.e. out of nothing), by the intelligent planning of a Supernatural Being who has great power – Heb. 11:3.
  - D. This argument is credited to Thomas Aquinas, who lived in the late Middle Ages (1224-1274).
  - E. Often times the skeptic attempts to set aside this argument by asking about the origin of God.
    1. “If everything has a beginning, what about God?”
      - A. This is what one would call a nonsensical question.
        1. If God is God, then He is eternal.
        2. If He is eternal, then there is no point of origin.
      - B. One might also consider the question of what of the existence of a non-caused universe?
        1. Nothing cannot create something!
    2. Classical Theism speaks of God’s aseity (self-existence).
      1. Aseity from Latin “a se,” meaning from Himself.
  - F. Some have called this argument one of the “watchmaker” arguments.
    1. The point is if you have a watch, someone had to have made it.

- A. It could not have created itself.
- 2. Since the universe exists, and something cannot come from nothing, nor can something create itself, it demands that there be a Creator.
- 3. **Teleological Argument** – argument based upon design or final cause.
  - A. Biblical writers quite often appeal to this argument more so than any other – Psa. 19:1-6; 139:14; Mt. 6:26-29; 10:29; Acts 14:17; Rom. 1:20.
  - B. This argument is illustrated by various means:
    - 1. “Watchmaker” – design, creator.
    - 2. Dictionary – arranger.
    - 3. Human Body (See Fundamentals II, Miller).
    - 4. Automobile (See Fundamentals II, Miller).
  - C. Scientific illustrations of this point:
    - 1. The distance of the earth from the sun. (Same argument for size, etc.)
      - A. The sun is 93,000,000 miles from the earth.
      - B. Life can exist for unlimited periods of time only between -
        - 18 degrees Celsius (0 Fahrenheit) and 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit).
      - 1. If the earth was located either closer or further from the sun the temperature would either be too high or too low for life.
    - 2. The rotation of the earth on its axis.
      - A. If this were not exact one side of the earth would constantly be hot while the other would be constantly cold.
    - 3. The earth's orbit and tilt of its axis.
      - A. Tilted at exactly 23 1/2 degrees on its axis.
    - 4. The proper percentage of oxygen in the atmosphere.
      - A. Twenty-one percent.
    - 5. The relationship of the moon to the earth.
      - A. Its mean distance is 238,857 miles.
      - B. If this was considerably different then the earth could well be covered with water at "high tide."
    - 6. The life cycle of oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange between plants and animals.
      - A. Without either neither would exist.
    - 7. The circulatory system of the human body.
      - A. Quite complex.
        - 1. See Chart in Fundamentals II again.
    - 8. The intricate structure of the human eye.
    - 9. The human mind.
  - D. Since these, and other things that could be given, show that the universe, and all that is within, follow orderly design, and not

confusion and chaos, there is implied the necessity of One who designed it.

1. The universe, the earth, and all the systems of the earth are orderly and function systematically.
  - A. This demands the existence of a designer or creator.
2. The existence of intelligence, harmony, and purpose all cry out for there to be One who brought it all together.
  - A. The only other alternative is chance.
  - B. The odds of which are far too great to support a logical debate on the subject.
    1. One might as well take the position that Webster's Unabridged Dictionary happened by chance as to argue that the universe, and all that is in it, happened by chance.
- E. Using logic one could argue using the following syllogism.
  1. Design assumes a designer. (Major Premise)
  2. The universe shows evidence of complete design in its every function. (Minor Premise)
  3. Therefore, there is a designer. (Conclusion)
    - A. That designer, of course, would be God.
4. **The General Argument** – argument based on the universal belief in God and man's religious instinct.
  - A. History and ethnology prove that all nations have a belief in a supernatural being or beings.
    1. Ethnology - The science that analyzes and compares human cultures, as a social structure, language, religion, and technology; cultural anthropology.
      - A. The branch of anthropology that deals with the origin, distribution, and characteristics of human racial groups.
  - B. Some ideas are crude but, nevertheless, they exist.
  - C. Either God exists or He does not.
    1. No middle ground.
    2. If He does not exist, material substance is the only entity, and this entity has produced the idea of the existence of God.
      - A. Further, if He does not exist, then the logical conclusion to the false idea of the existence of such a Being is that the material substance is the universal falsifier.
  - D. In respect to this one needs to apply what is called the law of causality to the problem.
    1. If God does not exist, then how do we give a logical and reasonable account for such an effect of men believing in God?
  - E. Belief in deity, and acts of worship directed at deity is universal.
    1. If there is no Supreme Being, i.e. God, how do we explain such?

5. **The Moral Argument** – based on the moral constitution of man and the moral order in the world today.
  - A. Mankind possesses a moral nature.
    1. The origin of that nature can be debated.
      - A. But the existence of it cannot be.
  - B. We acknowledge the testimony of the moral order of the world:
    1. Right is lauded while wrong is short-lived.
    2. History vindicates the right while it condemns the wrong.
  - C. This argument is some times referred to as the anthropological argument due to its connection to man specifically.
    1. Man is an intelligent creature.
    2. He has a conscience, which is based upon an innate moral code.
      - A. This code, or natural law, requires a Lawgiver.
      - B. Society has recognized the concepts of right and wrong.
        1. If there is no Supreme Lawgiver, where does this uniform impulse to do good, and refrain from bad, come from?
6. **The Esthetical Argument** – based on the presence of beauty in the universe.
  - A. The fact of beauty cannot be denied.
    1. In spite of all that is dreary, there is much that is beautiful.
      - A. In the human physique – faces and figures.
      - B. In the human arts – art, literature, architecture, music.
    - B. Man’s esthetic faculty responds to the beautiful in nature.
7. **The “Turkey Argument”** – I’m sorry, I just have to throw this in.
  - A. A man was delivering a devotional lesson one Wednesday evening and he made the comment on how the congregation had chosen a couple families in the community to provide a Turkey for the holiday season and how wonderful that was.
    1. He then went on to say something to the effect that because those families received their turkeys that it proved that God exists because God was good enough to provide the turkeys through the church.
      - A. I thought I was going to die laughing right there on the spot!
        1. Well, to be honest, I didn’t laugh out loud, but I sure wanted to.
  - B. My point here is this, if we are going to argue for the existence of God lets do our homework.
    1. Question – If a couple of turkeys “prove” the existence of God what does the problem of thousands of families that went without turkeys for the same holiday “prove?”
8. Another **Subjective Argument** – I heard another teacher (an elder) tell

a class that the best way to “prove” the existence of God was to tell the person what God had done for them since they had become a Christian.

- A. Do you suppose the Muslim could tell someone what Allah has done for him or her since they converted from Hedonism to Islam?
  - 1. Maybe they could tell some things about what Allah has done for them since he or she converted from Christianity.
- B. What about the Catholic, do you suppose one might be able to “tell what God has done for them since they converted to Catholicism?”
- C. The Baptist.....?
- D. The Buddhist.....?
- E. The Jew.....?
- F. The Pentecostal.....?

9. Summation in respect to the arguments for the existence of God.

- A. They do not scientifically prove the existence of God.
  - 1. They do, though, present logical evidence for the existence of God.
  - 2. This evidence, when weighed, can produce faith in God.
  - 3. In essence, faith in or non-belief in a Supreme Being is produced by the study of such arguments.

C. Possibilities existent today:

1. **Atheism** – the view that there is no God.

- A. Two issues under consideration, which result in the denial of the existence of God.
  - 1. Authority – i.e. an unwillingness of individuals to allow anyone to tell them what to do, especially when it conflicts with what they believe to be right and what they want to do.
  - 2. Accountability – i.e. an unwillingness to accept the concept of having to be responsible for their actions, or having to face any type of eternal consequences for their actions.
- B. Of course, one should be able to see how ridiculous it is to believe that by denying the existence of God that they will escape having to face authority and accountability.
  - 1. Ignorance is not bliss!

2. **Agnosticism** – the view that if there is a God, it is not possible to know it.

- A. Various issues involved here.
  - 1. There is frustration in that one may have attempted to prove the existence of God as one would prove the existence of other things known to exist, but failed in doing so.
    - A. For example, you cannot prove that God exists in the same way that you may prove that a hamburger exists.
      - 1. You cannot:
        - A. See Him.
        - B. Smell Him.

- C. Taste Him.
  - D. Touch Him.
  - E. Hear Him.
- 2. By the way, other things that we acknowledge to exist cannot be verified by these things either.
  - A. How about a radio wave?
    - 1. Ever see one?
    - 2. Ever smell one?
    - 3. Ever taste one?
    - 4. Ever touch one?
    - 5. Ever hear one?
  - A. Not the results of one, but the wave itself.
- 3. I am sure that you could think of other things that could be used to illustrate this point.
- 2. Others simply are not willing to take the time necessary to examine the evidence offered either for or against the existence of God.
  - A. Therefore, the conclusion is drawn that one cannot know for sure either way.
    - 1. Those who hold this view were referred by Madalyn Murray O'Hair as being "*chicken atheists*."
    - 2. On another occasion she wrote that agnostics were "*gutless and prefers to keep one safe foot in the god camp*." American Atheist Library, Modern Document
- 3. **Materialism** – i.e. the view held by some that they do not need God or that they simply do not care one way or the other as they view all that exists from a materialistic perspective.
  - A. At least two issues seen here.
    - 1. Due to the brevity of life they follow the "*eat, drink, and be merry*" life style due to their knowledge that death is soon to come to them.
    - 2. In respect to any benefits of life it appears that so long as the materialist enjoys life, as it is, there is no reason to be concerned about an after life.
- 4. **Religion** – i.e. the view that says, "there is a God."
  - A. Alternatives to this view are two:
    - 1. God exists, but He is unknowable.
    - 2. God does not exist.
  - B. There are numerous applications that are connected to the religious view of God.
    - 1. One may be afraid to not believe in Him.
    - 2. One may believe that they cannot cope without there being some sort of a god to assist them with their personal problems.
      - A. "God" is viewed as an answer to man's problems in that He can help them out of their problems.



- B. At times Atheists will claim that God is nothing more than a “crutch” for weak-minded believers.
- C. In relation to the existence of God there are numerous facts that cannot be explained without the existence of a Supreme Being who is in control.
  - 1. **Cosmology** – one cannot explain the existence, size, and dimensions of the universe without there being such a Being.
    - A. Evolution has tried, but failed miserably!
  - 2. **Teleology** – likewise one cannot explain the presence of order and design without there being such a Being.
  - 3. **Anthropology** – further, one cannot explain the nature and rationale of humanity without the existence of God.
    - A. Questions such as given below cannot be answered properly without the presence of God.
      - 1. “Where did I come from?”
        - A. Evolution does not answer the question regardless of what the evolutionist claims.
      - 2. “What am I doing here?”
      - 3. And “Where am I going?”
  - 4. **Ontology** – the universal concept of religion is left unexplained if there is no God.
    - A. Why is it that man desires a Supreme Being if One does not exist?
- D. The issue of faith is one that must be properly understood when it comes to a discussion of the existence of God.
  - 1. When one mentions faith it is important to realize that there are various extents of such.
    - A. There is what I call the “*a walk in the dark*” type of faith.
      - 1. One “hopes” there is a God but sees no evidence of such.
      - 2. Many Christians, when asked if they are going to heaven, have such a faith, as is displayed in their answer “Well, I hope so.”
        - A. John says we can know it – 1 Jhn. 5:13.
    - B. There is also what could be called “*blind faith*,” which is seen in the view that one believes in something even when there is no evidence to support such.
    - C. And, of course, there is what I would call “*true faith*,” which is found in the lives of those who seek the truth and then develop a system of faith based upon that truth.
- E. Briefly stated, at this juncture, would be various proofs for the existence of God.
  - 1. We can sum up the areas of proof for the existence of God with four “R’s.”
    - A. **Reality** – in relation to the existence of Jesus and the numerous claims made concerning Him.
      - 1. Consideration of the many prophecies stated and fulfilled.
    - B. **Realization** – answered prayer, miracles (as seen in the Bible), and

the work of the Holy Spirit (as also seen in the Bible).

C. **Records** – various records, both biblical (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21) and non-biblical, which serve to provide proof for the existence of God.

1. The non-biblical evidence serves to substantiate the Biblical claims.

D. **Revelation** – the existence of the material universe, along with its order, etc., serve to indicate the necessity of a Designer – Psa. 19:1; Rom. 1:20.

F. Even in the face of all of the evidence that is offered for the existence of God, there are numerous problems that must be dealt with in regard to getting people to accept the evidence.

1. Many view the evidence as weird and that only those who may be psychologically unbalanced would accept such as proof for the existence of God.

2. Others simply choose to reject any arguments made and remain in intellectual darkness.

A. Of course most who do so will claim the same for us.

3. Others seek to retreat to another view (i.e. atheism, et. al) and have “faith” that they are correct in their view.

A. Regardless of what the Atheist says, atheism is as much a faith as is theism.

4. Some simply reject what is said due to their unwillingness to accept any responsibility for what they have heard.

A. It is as if they reject the evidence of God that this means that He does not exist.

B. As we have said, ignorance, though, is not bliss!

## 2. WHO IS GOD?

A. The fundamental question of who is God is one that needs an answer.

1. In any attempt to do so, though, many other questions will arise.

A. Such as:

1. What is God like?

2. How does He exist?

3. Can we know absolute truth?

2. Modern philosophy seeks to deny the objective reality of God and declares truth and morality to be relative and subject to one's personal understanding.

A. Instead of man having been created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26), God is falsely created in man's image

3. The philosophies of man continue to ask the same obvious questions.

A. “Was something or someone in existence before the beginning of the material universe?”

B. “Before the beginning of determinable time, was there a great-uncaused first cause?”

- C. "How was it that man came to exist in the universe?"
- D. "When thinking of man, what is he?"
- E. "How do we even know that we exist?"
  - 1. I always want to slap the person who asks this question and then ask them if it hurt?
  - 2. If they say "Yes," then I want to ask them "How do you know it does?"
- F. "How does man really know what is real?"
  - 1. Try selling them some ocean front property in Arizona and see if they can tell the difference.
- G. "At death, what happens to man?"
- H. "When one considers right and wrong, is there absolute difference between the two?"
- I. "Where are we going?"
  - 1. In view of the majority of the philosophies of man the ultimate conclusion is that we cannot know for sure the answer to these questions and others like them.
  - 2. In other words, we are constantly walking in intellectual darkness.
- 4. Modern philosophy affirms:
  - A. That God is unknowable.
  - B. There are no absolutes.
  - C. Reality is a matter of individual perception.
    - 1. All of which leaves man living a life that is without meaning or purpose.
- 5. The Bible, though, teaches that man can know of the existence and character of God.
  - A. When the Bible is accepted, man can know:
    - 1. God exists.
    - 2. Who He is.
    - 3. What He is like.
    - 4. There is knowable truth.
    - 5. Where man is from.
    - 6. Where man is going.
    - 7. There is a clear difference between right and wrong.
    - 8. What happens to man following death.
    - 9. And that there is meaning and purpose to life.
  - B. Without God, all of these questions remain unanswered.
- B. The answer to the question of who God is, is best answered by asking and answering another question, "Who does God say that He is?"
  - 1. To obtain the answer to that question one must turn to the Book given to us by God.
    - A. It contains the many names of God, which provide us with an idea of His nature and character.
    - B. The God of both the Old and New Testaments is the one and same God.

1. The Hebrew and Greek names are intimately related to His nature and character.
2. Old Testament Names of God:
  - A. El or Elohim – Gen. 1:1 (approximately 2,500 locations in the Bible)
    1. El is used as a prefix to many other names of God.
    2. Elohim is the plural name, which indicated the Godhead (sometimes referred to as the Trinity).
      - A. This name is used when God swears an oath, makes a covenant, or calls things into existence.
      - B. It indicated the immutability and agreement of the Godhead.
  - B. El Alah – Deut. 7:9.
    1. Translated “The Faithful God.”
      - A. Reference to binding oneself to an oath.
  - C. El Chai – Deut. 5:26.
    1. Translated “The Living God.”
  - D. El Elyon – Gen. 14:18.
    1. Translated the Most High God.
    2. Points to the exalted nature of God.
      - A. Thus, He is a God who is to be revered, worshipped, and feared.
      - B. He is shown to be strong and mighty.
  - E. El-Shaddai – Gen. 17:1.
    1. Translated the "Almighty" God.
      - A. It stresses divine greatness, but also indicates power over nature for the good of man or "Providence."
      - B. The Almighty makes the powers of nature serve His purposes.
    2. This name is often used to indicate that God is a loving Father who enters into relationship and friendship with His people.
  - F. El-Olam – Gen. 21:33; Psalms 90:2.
    1. Translated "Everlasting" God.
      - A. This is a seldom-used name, however, it indicates that God exists for all eternity.
      - B. It indicates that He is the God of all ages.
    2. The word olam has the sense of something "secret" or "hidden."
      - A. Olam is sometimes translated as "forever."
      - B. Hence the idea of God existing outside of time in a location man cannot fathom.
        1. Since God is forever, this indicates that He is all patient and all wise.
  - G. Adonai – Gen. 15:2.
    1. Translated "Lord."
      - A. From this we see that God is King, Ruler and possessor of all creation.
    2. This name indicates that God is the controller of His people.

- A. When man recognizes God as Lord, they are giving up their rights.
      - 1. Man is no longer his own.
      - 2. He is bound to do His will and obey His commandments.
    - 3. Name demands man's obedience.
  - H. Yahweh or Jehovah – Ex. 3:14, 15; Mal. 3:6.
    - 1. Translated "I AM" God.
      - A. This is the greatest name of God, the one that was held most in reverence by God's people, Israel.
      - B. This name indicates that He is the one and only true God.
      - C. It was first revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14.
        - 1. There God declared Himself to be "**I AM THAT I AM**" because Moses wanted to tell the Egyptians what name the Hebrew God is called.
          - A. This indicates to the pagan nations of the world, who worshipped many false gods, that Jehovah is the only true God who exists.
      - 2. In many translations of the Bible, the capital form, "LORD," is used to indicate Jehovah.
  - I. Jehovah Jireh – Gen. 22:14.
    - 1. Translated "Jehovah will provide."
      - A. Especially connected to the provision of a sacrifice for man.
  - J. Jehovah Nissi – Ex. 17:8-15.
    - 1. Translated "The Eternal, Our Banner."
      - A. It is seen in His being man's victory – Rom. 8:31-39.
  - K. Jehovah Raah – Psalms. 23.
    - 1. Translated "The Eternal, My Shepherd."
  - L. Jehovah Rapha – Ex. 15:26; Psalms. 103.
    - 1. Translated "The Eternal Healer."
  - M. Jehovah Sabaoth – 1 Sam. 1:3; Psalms. 24:10.
    - 1. Translated "God of Hosts."
      - A. This is a common form of the name of God in the prophetic books of the Bible.
      - B. This fuller form calls up a vision of the King of Glory surrounded by a host of angels.
        - 1. It is often used in the prophetic books to speak of a victorious God, the supreme King of heavenly hosts, who has triumphed over all His enemies.
  - N. Jehovah Shalom – Jud. 6:24.
    - 1. Translated "The Eternal, Our Peace."
  - O. Jehovah Shammah – Ezek. 48:35.
    - 1. Translated "The Eternal is Present."
  - P. Jehovah Tsidkeno – Jer. 23:6.
    - 1. Translated "The Eternal, Our Righteousness."
  - Q. Immanuel or Emmanuel.

1. Translated "God with us."
  - A. The word is literally the Hebrew for "with us [is] God."
2. This name is only used twice in the Old Testament (Isa. 7:14; 8:10) and once in the New Testament - Mt. 1:23.
  - A. It is used to prophesy the coming of Jesus Christ, the incarnation of God as a man, or literally, God with us.
3. New Testament Names of God:
  - A. Theos.
    1. Translated "God."
    2. This is the common Greek word for any pagan god, but in the New Testament, this form takes the place of El- Yisrael, the "God of Israel" in the Old Testament.
      - A. Most often it is used with a possessive pronoun, such as "my God," "your God," or "our God."
  - B. Kurios.
    1. Translated "Lord."
      - A. Applied to God and specifically Jesus Christ.
    2. Kurios takes the place of the Hebrew Adonai and Jehovah.
      - A. God is the possessor and ruler of all things especially His people.
  - C. Pater.
    1. Translated "Father."
      - A. The name Father is also used in the Old Testament to indicate that God is the Father of His people, Israel.
      - B. In the New Testament, it points specifically to the first person of the Godhead, the Father of Jesus Christ.
        1. It also is used in the sense that God is the Father of individual believers who have been adopted into the family of God.
          - A. Children of God have the legal rights of sons and daughters and may rightfully call God "our Father."
      2. Pater is sometimes used to designate God the creator of all things.
  - C. To answer the question of who is God we might summarize it this way, "There is one God in all of the universe who has revealed Himself to mankind in three persons...God the Father...God the Son...and God the Holy Spirit. This one God...who created all things...is a God who loves His creation and who desires and seeks the very best for it."

### **3. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD:**

- A. The Attributes of God are divided into three categories.
  1. Absolute.
  2. Moral.
  3. Relative.
- B. Absolute:
  1. Immensity – 2 Chron. 6:18.
    - A. His center is "everywhere" while His circumference is nowhere.

- B. May also be seen as being transcendent in that He is beyond our thinking and imagination.
      - 1. He cannot be represented by anything in our world.
  - 2. Eternality – Gen. 21:33; Ex. 3:14; Psa. 90:2; 102:24; Rom. 1:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 9:14.
    - A. Speaks to the fact that God is without beginning or end.
      - 1. He has always existed, and will always exist.
        - A. Thus, no beginning and no end.
  - 3. Immutability – Num. 23:19; Psa. 33:11; 102:27; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 1:12; 6:17; Jas. 1:17.
    - A. In respect to such things as actions, promises, and purposes He remains the same.
  - 4. Self-Existent – Ex. 3:14; Isa. 44:6; Acts 17:24-27.
    - A. Self-existence means that God was not created and is without beginning or end.
      - 1. Genesis 1:1 begins with the supposition of the existence of God.
        - A. No explanation is given in respect to His existence.
  - 5. Self-sufficient – Psa. 50:12.
    - A. He is not dependant upon anyone or anything for His continuation.
  - 6. Unity-compound-unity – Gen. 1:26; 11:6; Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28.
- C. Moral:
- 1. Holiness – Psa. 99.
    - A. The nature of His holiness – Isa. 6:1-5; Rev. 4:8.
      - 1. Refers to His unique person – Ex. 15:11; 1 Sam. 2:2.
      - 2. Refers to His exalted position – Psa. 99:2,3; Isa. 57:15.
      - 3. Refers to the specific place where God dwells:
        - A. Psa. 99:9 – holy hill.
        - B. 2 Chron. 38:27 – holy dwelling place.
        - C. Psa. 5:7; 11:4; 138:2 – holy temple.
        - D. Isa. 56:7; 66:28 – holy mountain.
        - E. Psa. 24:3 – holy place.
        - F. Rev. 21:18 – holy Jerusalem.
        - G. Rev. 22:19 – holy city.
    - 4. Refers to His people – Ex. 19:6; Lev. 11:44, 45; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 26:19; 1 Pet. 2:9; 3:5.
  - B. There is nothing evil about God.
    - 1. He is compared to light, of which darkness cannot overcome.
    - 2. God and evil cannot dwell together – Psa. 5:4.
    - 3. He is against those who do evil – Psa. 34:16.
  - C. His holiness encompasses all His other attributes.
    - 1. He is holy God, holy love, holy sovereign, etc.
    - 2. He is holy in everything He is and does.
  - 2. Righteous – Rom. 3:21-26.
    - A. Concept found extensively within the Bible:

1. Righteous – used in 225 verses in the Bible; 37 times in the N.T.
  2. Righteousness – used in 297 verses in the Bible; 92 times in the N.T.
  3. Righteously – used in 8 verses in the Bible; 2 times in the N.T.
  4. Just – used in 89 verses in the Bible; 36 times in the N.T.
  5. Justice – used in 33 verses in the Bible; 0 times in the N.T.
- B. What is meant by the righteousness of God?
1. Grammatical meaning:
    - A. Hebrew - TSADDIYA – “straight.”
    - B. Greek – DIKAIOS – “to declare righteous.”
  2. In regard to its moral understanding it means to be free from sin or unrighteousness – Psa. 92:15.
  3. Its practical application indicates that every act of God is just and fair – Psa. 145:17.
  4. In respect to its theological usages it:
    - A. Refers to who God is – 1 John 2:29.
    - B. Refers to what God has done – Psa. 145:17; Isa. 53:10, 11; Jere. 23:5, 6; Rom. 3:21-26.
- C. Reasons as to why the righteousness of God is so important:
1. It establishes the validity of what God has said – Isa. 45:22-25.
  2. It explains the justice of God in judging all mankind – Psa. 50:4-6; Acts 17:31.
  3. It eliminates the need for self-righteousness – Rom. 3:27, 28; 10:1-4; Tit. 3:5-7.
  4. It enables man to practice righteousness in his personal life – 1 Thess. 2:10; Jas. 1:19, 20; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 2:29; 3:7, 10.
3. Faithful – Psa. 89:1, 2, 8, 20, 24-27 cf. Prov. 20:6; 25:19.
- A. Bible indicates that the character of God is faithful – 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Jhn. 1:9 cf. Psa. 36:5; 119:98.
- B. At least seven things involved in the faithfulness of God:
1. He will extend His compassion – Lam. 3:22-26, 31-33, 40, 41; 5:19-22.
  2. He will forgive man of his sins – 1 Jhn. 1:9.
  3. He will keep His word – Deut. 7:6-9; Heb. 6:13-20; 10:23; 11:11.
  4. He will preserve His children blameless at the second coming of Christ – 1 Cor. 1:4-9; 1 Thess. 5:23, 24; 2 Tim. 2:11-13.
  5. He promises help in times of suffering and temptation – 1 Cor. 10:11-13; 1 Pet. 4:12-19.
  6. He offers protection from the enemies of the child of God – 2 Thess. 3:1-3.
  7. He will restore His people through Christ – Isa. 49:5-13.
4. Mercy – Psa. 103:1-22; 2 Cor. 1:3.
- A. Concept found numerous times in the Bible:
1. Mercy – used in 265 verses in the Bible; 53 times in the N.T.
  2. Mercies – used in 44 verses in the Bible; 5 times in the N.T.



3. Merciful – used in 38 verses in the Bible; 5 times in the N.T.
4. Tender mercies – used in 11 verses in the Bible; 0 times in the N.T.
5. Compassion – used 39 times in the Bible; 20 times in the N.T.
6. Loving kindness – used in 26 verses in the Bible; 0 times in the N.T.
- B. The mercy of God involves seven things:
  1. It involves His pardon – Psa. 103:11, 12.
  2. It involves His patience – Psa. 103:8, 9.
  3. It involves His person – Psa. 103:1, 8; Eph. 2:4.
  4. It involves His pity – Psa. 103:13, 14; 109:21-27.
  5. It involves His plan – Psa. 103:15-19.
  6. It involves His provision – Psa. 103:2-5.
  7. It involves His punishment – Psa. 103:8, 9; 106:44-46; Lam. 3:22.
5. Patient – 2 Pet. 3:1-18.
  - A. Grammatical meaning:
    1. Hebrew AREK used 15 times referring to the idea of being slow to anger.
    2. Greek MAKROTHUMEO used 14 times referring to being longsuffering.
  - B. The patience of God involves five things:
    1. It calms God's righteous anger and makes forgiveness possible – Psa. 103:8, 9; Num. 14:18, 19; Neh. 9:17; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nah. 1:1-3.
    2. It cares about people who are in need of the Lord – Psa. 86:15-17; Rom. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:12-17; 2 Pet. 3:9.
    3. It characterizes His love – 1 Cor. 13:4-8.
    4. It comes to the believer as they develop the fruit of the Spirit in their lives – Gal. 5:22, 23.
    5. It controls God's sovereign plan – Rom. 9:22-24; Jas. 5:7-11; 1 Pet. 3:18.
6. Love – 1 Jhn. 4:7-5:5.
  - A. The word love is found in 286 verses in the Bible; 158 times in the N.T.
    1. In the N.T. the primary word used is agape and its derivatives.
  - B. Because of God being a God of love, He is benevolent and good.
    1. His ultimate purpose is to favor man and draw him into a loving relationship with Him.
      - A. He made the ultimate sacrifice in order to make that relationship possible – Jhn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8.
    2. Every action toward man is motivated by God's love.
- D. Relative:
  1. Omnipotence – Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Jere. 32:17-25; 2 Tim. 2:13; Heb. 6:18; Jas. 1:13, 17.
    - A. Nature is subject to His will – Job 42:2.
    - B. Man is subject to His will – Dan. 4:25; Jas. 4:12-15.
    - C. Angels are subject to His will – Heb. 1:7.
    - D. Satanic forces give into His Almightyness – Job 1:2; 2:6.

- E. He is able to do all that is “doable.”
- 2. Omniscience – Psa. 147:5.
  - A. He is the ultimate source of knowledge and truth.
    - 1. Past, present, and future are open before Him.
  - B. He sees and knows all that is knowable – 1 Sam. 2:3; Psa. 139:1-4; Prov. 5:21; Acts 1:24; Rom. 11:33.
- 3. Omnipresence - Psa. 139:7-9; Isa. 6:3; 66:1; Jere. 23:24; Acts 17:24-28.
  - A. Often referred to as His being omnipresent as He is everywhere that God could and would be.
    - 1. He is not measured or understood by finite man.
  - B. The name, “***I AM THAT I AM***,” (Ex. 3:14) was given in order to indicate that God exists in a way that nothing and no one else can exist.
  - C. As a Spirit (Jhn. 4:24) God does not have a physical body such as humans do.
    - A. This relates to His ability to be “everywhere” at the same time.
- 4. Wisdom – Psa. 104:24; Rom. 11:33; 1 Tim. 1:17.
  - A. This wisdom is clearly seen in the Scheme of Redemption.
- 5. Personal – Gen. 1:5, 10, 16, et al.
  - A. God is referred to as He rather than it.
    - 1. He is something other than a force, energy or substance.
  - B. He has a personality.
    - 1. He is self-conscience and self-willed.
    - 2. He thinks and acts.

#### **4. THE NATURE OF GOD:**

- A. The Greatness of God – Psa. 8:1, 9; 83:18; 96:1-6; 145:1-3; 150:2.
  - 1. He is incomprehensible – Judges 13:17, 18; Isa. 9:6; Psa. 145:3.
    - A. This refers to:
      - 1. What He knows – Job 42:3; Psa. 139:1-6; Isa. 28:29.
      - 2. What He does – Isa. 25:1; Rom. 11:33.
      - 3. Who He is – Psa. 145:1-3.
  - 2. He is incorruptible.
    - A. Because He is holy – Psa. 38:4; 97:12; 99:3, 5, 9; 111:9; 145:21.
    - B. Because He is eternal – Psa. 72:17; 102:11, 12; 135:13.
  - 3. He is incomparable.
    - A. Because of His position – Eph. 1:19-22; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:1-4.
    - B. Because of His power – Psa. 66:1-4; 68:32-35.
      - 1. Power to answer prayer – John 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23-26.
      - 2. Power to save people – John 1:12; Acts 4:12; 1 Pet. 1:3-5.
- B. The Sovereignty of God – Rom. 9:6-24; 11:33-36.
  - 1. Is seen in His control over all things based upon three things:
    - A. Position – Psa. 97:1; 99:1-3; 103:19; 113:1-6; Dan. 4:17, 25, 34, 35.
    - B. Power – Isa. 43:13; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3.
    - C. Pleasure – Psa. 115:3; 135:5, 6; Prov. 16:4 (cf. Ezek. 18:23, 32).

2. Is seen in His providential care of all things which involves four areas:
  - A. His ways – Isa. 55:8, 9; Rom. 11:33.
  - B. His will – Eph. 1:11 cf. Gen. 58:19-21.
  - C. His work – Phil. 1:6; 2:13 cf. Acts 15:18.
  - D. His wisdom – Dan. 2:20-23.
3. Is seen in His choice in the destiny of all people of which two things need to be considered:
  - A. God's right to offer salvation based upon His terms – Rom. 9:14-24.
  - B. His reason for offering salvation as He has – Acts 13:48; 1 Cor. 1:26-29; Eph. 1:4-6.
- C. The Power of God – Psalms 111:1-10.
  1. Two basic principles are evident here:
    - A. His power is unique – Psalms 71:19; 77:13, 14.
      1. It is evident that no one can do what He can do.
        - A. His power is seen in His creation – Isa. 44:24; 45:5-7, 18.
        - B. His power is seen in His control of time and events – Isa. 44:6-8; 46:5, 9-11.
        - C. His power is seen in His care of His people – Isa. 43:1-13.
    - B. His power is "unlimited" – Psalms 145:1-6, 8-13.
      1. I.e. He is capable of doing that which can be done both logically and naturally.

## 5. THE BELIEF OF ATHEISM:

- A. The title of this section would probably not make most Atheists happy!
  1. Atheism is as much a system of belief as is Theism.
    - A. Theism is the belief in the existence of God.
    - B. Atheism is the belief that God does not exist.
  2. Often times the Atheist is referred to as being an "unbeliever" in order to avoid what we have just said.
    - A. However, the word "unbeliever" needs further consideration.
      1. What has to be seen is that being an Atheist does not mean that they do not accept a certain faith or certain things by faith.
        - A. Their faith is, God does not exist.
    - B. Many "believers" are "unbelievers."
      1. As a Christian I am a "believer" in the God of the Bible.
        - A. However, I am an "unbeliever" in the god of Islam.
      2. Thus, the "unbeliever" is not one who has no beliefs at all.
  3. When one denies one thing they, in essence, affirm another.
    - A. When one rejects faith in God they end up affirming the all-sufficiency of matter to create and sustain the universe and all that is in it.
- B. Beliefs of Atheism:
  1. Atheism believes, but cannot prove, that God does not exist.
    - A. To disprove God one would have to be God.
      1. This is so as to disprove God one would need to know everything and

- be in every place.
- B. To prove God, on the other hand, one does not need to know all.
    - 1. We can illustrate this point this way, “To prove that a statement is not in this outline one would have to know what is on every page, for the page that he did not know may well contain the statement.”
      - A. On the other hand, “To know that the statement is there, one only needs to know the page that it is found on.”
  - 2. When one considers the writings of the atheists they see that they often find their system of belief difficult to believe.
    - A. Over the centuries numerous statements “wondering” or “questioning” whether there may actually be some Supreme Being behind it all have come forth from the pens of the atheists.
      - 1. John N. Clayton, a popular speaker in the churches of Christ was at one time an atheist.
        - A. Although I cannot agree with John’s theistic-evolutionary view of origins, his booklet entitled “Why I Left Atheism” is worth reading.
      - 2. William J. Murray, son of the late Madalyn Murray O’Hair, wrote a book entitled “My Life Without God” telling of his years being raised in the home of an atheistic mother and why he left atheism.
        - A. Even though Murray has pronounced a belief in God and is now viewed to be religious, I cannot endorse all that he teaches.
  - 3. Although the atheist laughs at the idea of there being an Eternal God he ends up believing in the eternal existence of matter.
    - A. In so far as the Christian is concerned, it is more reasonable to believe that which was created came from God.
      - 1. There are but two choices:
        - A. Matter created mind (including consciousness and intelligence).
        - B. Mind (i.e. God) created matter.
      - 2. Which seems the most logical?
  - 4. The atheist is compelled to believe in the spontaneous generation of life from non-life.
    - A. Atheism and evolution go hand in hand.
      - 1. Robert T Clark and James D. Bales coauthored a book entitled “Why Scientists Accept Evolution.”
        - A. The overwhelming conclusion seen in the book is that, as Arnold Lunn was quoted to say, “We must accept...a theory which we have every reason to distrust because the only alternative implies the existence of God.” P. 91.
          - 1. This was said in connection to why he believed in evolution.
  - B. When a University Professor stands before his class and claims that “all scientific personnel believe in evolution” he states what he knows is not true.

1. Many Scientists, realizing that the theory of organic evolution is contrary to scientific experimentation, have turned from the theory.
- C. When the atheist laughs at the miracles of the Bible he opens himself to criticism because believing that life came from matter would be a greater “miracle” than the miracle of God having created man from dead matter.
5. With the system of order that is existent the atheist must believe that it came into existence as the result of chance or fate.
  - A. As much as the atheist hates to do so, he must acknowledge “apparent design” in nature (quotations are put here as this is how the atheist refers to the existence of design).
  - B. Numerous books have been written which demonstrate the fact of order or design in the universe.
  - C. It is ridiculous to suggest that this order, whether in man, nature, or the universe came about by accident.
6. With the existence of consciousness the atheist must believe that this state arose out of a state of non-conscious matter.
  - A. They must search for the origin of mind, power of speech, and the love of beauty.
7. The atheist is forced to believe that man is nothing more than a “machine” that has no responsibility for his conduct.
  - A. The humanistic position is that man is nothing more than matter and is without any power of choice.
    1. From this comes the “if it feels good” philosophy.
  - B. In contradiction to their position, the atheist sets forth blame and praise as if man has some responsibility for his actions.
8. The atheist must believe that there are no moral values if man has no responsibility for his deeds.
  - A. The concept of morality implies “ought” and “ought” implies a power of choice.
  - B. When it is stated that man “ought” or “ought not” to do something it implies that man can help what he does, and has an obligation to act one way instead or another.
9. In order to be consistent, the atheist must believe that all thought is irrational.
  - A. The reason for this is that “thought” is the inevitable by-product of irrational causes if the atheist is correct.
  - B. When one considers the atheistic system of belief they see that there is nothing rational about their arguments against God.
- C. The Atheist, his atheism, and the foolishness of his debate:
  1. Atheism attempts to block out or override the concept of the existence of God.
    - A. It has been said that if you try to tell the atheist the truth, they say “Shut up!” stick their heads in the ground, and shout – “There is nobody there, there’s nobody there, there’s nobody there, I tell you! See, I can’t see them!”

- B. The same “reasoning” that the child has when he hides his eyes and since he can’t see you it means you can’t see him.
- 2. What needs to be understood is that even if the entire world denied the existence of God that would not prove that He does not exist!
  - A. God’s existence is not determined by the number of people who believe in Him, just as the number who accepts it does not determine truth.
- 3. The atheist argues long and loud against the existence of God.
  - A. But if what he believes is true then they have no enemy to fight and no reason to argue.
- 4. What does the atheist have to offer man?
  - A. Can he offer:
    - 1. Eternal life?
      - A. Of course not!
    - 2. Spiritual comfort?
      - A. No way!
    - 3. Love?
      - A. Absolutely not!
    - 4. Kindness?
      - A. Watch them and see.
    - B. How many benevolent societies do you know of that are operated by atheists?
    - 5. Comfort in the time of need?
      - A. No way!
  - B. He offers fairy tales and nightmares:
    - 1. Mankind was spontaneously generated from a rock.
    - 2. Mankind’s great, great, great whatever was a monkey.
    - 3. Mankind might have a fish as a cousin down the line somewhere.
    - 4. Mankind had no hope beyond this life.
    - 5. Mankind should live for just this life.
    - 6. When man is dead, he is like the old dog Rover, dead all over.
      - A. Not much to look forward to.
- D. Atheism’s “sugar stick” of an argument against the existence of God.
  - 1. Basically, there are two types of atheists.
    - A. Strong and weak.
      - 1. The “strong” atheist actively believes and argues that God does not exist.
        - A. This group is much more active in their conversation with those who believe in God.
        - B. They attempt to use “logic” and anti-biblical “evidence” to deny the existence of God.
        - C. Often times these are the militant atheists who are insulting in their remarks.
          - 1. It seems they believe that they can “prove” their point with profanity and rudeness.

2. The “weak” atheist.
  - A. This group denies the existence of God, but it is no big thing with them.
  - B. I compare them to the “moderate Christian” who believes in God, but who does nothing to contend for such.
2. The one argument that the atheist thinks sets aside the idea of the existence of God more than any other is the argument of evil and human suffering.
  - A. It goes something like this.
    1. A Christian and an atheist are discussing the existence of God and the atheist asks, “Is the God of the Bible a God who is supposed to be all good and powerful?”
      1. To which the Christian would answer in the affirmative.
    2. Then the atheist goes on to ask something like “Well, doesn’t evil and suffering exist in the world today?”
      - A. To which the unsuspecting Christian would answer in the affirmative again.
    3. Then the clincher comes from the atheist when he asks, “If God is all good he would not want evil and suffering to exist, would he?”
      - A. Uh, oh, the Christian has just allowed himself to be boxed in.
        1. Now what does he do?
          - A. Run, or change the subject?
      4. At this point, if the Christian hasn’t jumped up and run away, the atheist goes on to ask, “If God is as powerful as you claim then would he not be able to remove all evil and suffering?”
        - A. Oh, no!
          1. Now the Christian has really dug himself into a hole!
      5. The next nail in the coffin comes with this part of the argument, “Well, since we admit that evil and suffering exist, God therefore, cannot be all good (which would mean that He is not perfect and therefore not God), or he is not all powerful (therefore limited in his abilities and scope), isn’t that right?”
        - A. Ahhhhhhhhhh.
      6. And then here it comes, the final blow “So, therefore, since this proves either that God is not all good and powerful or he doesn’t care about man, then we must agree that He doesn’t exist, right?”
    - B. This type of argument is not new.
      1. As a matter of fact, we see it in Judges 6:1-13.
        - A. The people of God had been victimized by the Midianites for seven years.
          1. It seemed as if everything that happened to Israel was bad.
            - A. Their crops were destroyed.
            - B. Their livestock had been confiscated.
            - C. The people of Israel were forced to find refuge in the caves of the mountains.

- B. Gideon was confronted by “an angel of the Lord” and told that “The Lord” was with him.
  - 1. To which he asked, “Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?”
    - A. Good question.
- C. Many have asked similar questions over the years.
  - 1. I have a teenage devotional book entitled, “If God Loves Me, Why Can’t I Get My Locker Open?” (Lorraine Peterson, Bethany House Publishers)
    - A. I have another entitled “Where Is God When It Hurts?” (Philip Yancey, Zondervan Publication).
  - 2. Many, when confronted with tragic news of death or illness cry out for an answer.
- C. Let’s see if we can find one?
  - 1. Actually, this argument was first set forth by the Greek philosopher Epicurus (342-270 B.C.).
    - A. He argued that if God wishes to prevent evil, but cannot, then He is not all-powerful; on the other hand if He can prevent evil, but will not, then He is not good. If he has both the power and the will to eliminate evil, then why is evil existent today?
  - 2. We, first have to see that there is an assumption in the argument.
    - A. That assumption being that there can be no good purpose served by allowing evil and suffering to exist in the world.
  - 3. Secondly, we must see that since God’s “ways” are higher than ours (Isa. 55:8,9), we must realize that it may not be possible for the finite to completely comprehend all that the infinite does or allows.
    - A. God’s “ways” are “unsearchable” (Rom. 11:33) and may not always be understood by man.
    - B. There are those “secret” things that belong only to God (Deut. 29:29).
  - 4. The argument on evil and suffering is one that appeals to some sort of an alleged universal system of justice, which they supposedly violate.
    - A. But this presents the question of, if God does not exist then how is it possible for there to be any such thing as evil?
      - 1. Doesn’t the idea of “evil” suggest that there must be a violation of some standard?
      - 2. Let the atheist define for us that standard.
    - B. Let’s remove God and the Bible out of the issue and enquire about a standard, which indicates that something is evil.
  - 5. When we properly address this matter what must be understood is the nature of God.
    - A. As we have already noted, a part of that nature is His love for His creation.
      - 1. This love is displayed in various ways.



- A. One of which would be His giving man a “free moral agency.”
  - B. This has been put in syllogistic form:
    - 1. God is love. (minor premise)
    - 2. But love allows freedom of choice. (major premise)
    - 3. Therefore, God allows freedom of choice. (conclusion)
- B. When this freedom of choice is permitted, there is always that possibility of a wrong choice being made.
  - 1. When wrong choices are made, just as when right choices are made, there are consequences – Gal. 6:7, 8.
  - 2. Consider the affect if every choice had the same consequence.
    - A. How would one know to choose the good as opposed to the bad?
      - 1. Such choices need to be made – Isa. 7:15.
    - B. Eliminate pain (suffering) from fire and what would prevent a person from sticking their hand in an open fire or laying it on a burner?
- D. Examination of reasons for suffering in the world:
  - 1. Wrong choices made by former generations.
    - A. When former generations of mankind abuse their freedom of choice the consequences often carry over into later generations just as good choices and their consequences carry over.
      - 1. See Exodus 20:5, 6.
        - A. People in various parts of the world starve to death while animals freely walk the streets because a former generation of people set these animals aside as objects of worship.
    - B. Disease is a clear example of man bearing the consequences of former generations.
      - 1. Get a copy of the book *None of These Diseases* and read it.
      - 2. Disease is ever so clearly related to bad choices made by man in the past and present.
        - A. See Genesis 3:22, 23.
          - 1. Present day man is heir to the conditions introduced into the world by Adam and Eve – Rom. 5:12; 8:20-28.
        - B. See Exodus 15:26.
    - E. Meteorological phenomena can also be seen as the consequences of former generations.
      - 1. Violent physical disruptions, such as earthquakes, etc., are produced by the differing geographical features of the earth.
        - A. Various scholars contend that the universal flood of Noah’s day produced the conditions, which cause such disruptions - Gen. 6-8.
          - 1. Now consider the reason for the flood – Gen. 6:5-7.
  - 2. Wrong choices made by others.

- A. Much of the suffering that man confronts is caused by the bad choices of others.
  - 1. How many drunks cause suffering and death every day?
- B. Since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11), one cannot argue that they must be allowed freedom of choice but it should be denied those who make wrong decisions that affect others in a bad way.
  - 1. There is a “price” that must be paid for this freedom.
    - A. Some times that “price” is suffering and death.
- 3. Wrong choices made personally.
  - A. See Judges 6:1.
    - 1. Pay special attention to the words “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord:...”
  - B. See 1 Peter 4:15.
    - 1. Why should God be blamed for what happens to the person who commits a crime and is accordingly punished?
    - 2. It cannot be argued that God, being all loving and all-powerful, should have prevented the crime and the subsequent suffering if He wanted to preserve freedom of choice.
      - A. Keep in mind, it is not a question of could God have limited the ability of man to commit crime.
        - 1. He clearly could have if He chose to overrule man’s freedom of choice.
      - B. This is where God limits His own activity by allowing man the freedom to choose, even if that choice is contrary to His will for man.
- 4. The affect of natural law on this question.
  - A. We live in a world regulated by a system of natural law that God instituted.
    - 1. Gravity – what goes up, must come down.
      - A. What if I climb a tree and jump?
        - 1. Should I fault God if I get injured or killed?
      - B. What if I throw a rock up into the air and stand in its downward path?
        - 1. Should I fault God for my injury or death?
  - B. Man can benefit by the laws of nature, and he can suffer because of them, depending on how they are used.
    - 1. If certain principles of such laws are overlooked or rejected, who should be faulted?
      - A. God, or the one who overlooked or rejected the principles?
  - C. If it be argued that “If God is all loving and all-powerful then He could intervene, and prevent disasters” then we must ask do we really want to be in a world where God suspends His natural laws every time one of His creatures is faced with the possibility of

- injury or death?
  - 1. This would render the natural law-system of the earth undependable and result in life being hopelessly confusing.
  - 2. In the end, it would argue more for atheism than theism.
- 5. Benefits from suffering.
  - A. As already alluded to, there are certain benefits to suffering.
    - 1. If there was no pain, one who may be injured could walk around severely injured.
    - 2. Often time's pain serves as a warning of more severe problems.
  - B. We are reminded by suffering that this world is not man's eternal home - Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11.
- E. One needs only to look at the cross to see that suffering is not contrary to the goodness of God.
  - 1. Christ "suffered" for all mankind – Heb. 5:8, 9; 1 Pet. 2:21-25.
- E. When dealing with this argument one should compel his disputant to define the standard of "good" and "evil."
  - 1. It should be pointed out that if "evil" is a problem, then it is only a problem because there must be a standard by which it can be judged.
    - A. But this is exactly what the atheist is arguing against.
  - 2. When one brings up the "evil" argument it presents us with an opportunity to point to the standard of God.
    - A. When the atheist presents this argument he thinks he is setting up an unanswerable dilemma.
      - 1. But, actually, just the opposite is true.
        - A. We are more than willing to talk about good and evil.
- F. Other questions thrown at us from the atheist that allegedly prove that God does not exist.
  - 1. One of the biggest problems that the atheist faces is that they have no idea of what true Christianity is all about.
    - A. If they did, they would have to abandon most of their arguments.
  - 2. Various questions from the atheist.
    - A. "Will God eternally accept people from all religious organizations, and if not, is He a God of love?"
      - 1. This question shows an ignorance of what the Bible teaches.
      - 2. Christ died for His, and only His church – Mt. 16:18, 19; Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:22, 23.
        - A. Any spiritual blessings to be provided by God are to be provided to His children – Eph. 1:3.
        - B. Salvation is found in, and only in, Christ and His church – Acts 4:12.
    - 3. The love of God has been manifested to all mankind providing them with an opportunity to be saved – Jhn. 3:16; Acts 17:30; Tit. 2:11, 12; 2 Pet. 3:9.
      - A. If they reject that opportunity, why should God be faulted?

- B. If I offer a hungry person a meal and they reject it, why should someone speak badly of me, and claim I have no love for the downtrodden?
    - 4. This argument overlooks another attribute of God.
      - A. That attribute being His being a God of truth and not confusion – 1 Cor. 14:33.
        - 1. Truth saves – Jhn. 8:32; 17:17.
          - A. But when rejected, it condemns – Jhn. 12:48.
        - B. God, being a God of truth, cannot logically accept religious systems, which contradict one another through seeking to advance false doctrines.
    - B. “How can one claim that God is a loving God while He condemns innocent babies to hell?”
      - 1. This argument shows the woeful ignorance of the atheist when it comes to the Bible.
        - A. No where, denominationalism notwithstanding, does the Bible teach the theory of original sin and its consequences!
          - 1. Instead it came from the mind of men like Augustine and John Calvin.
      - 2. When one searches the Bible to see what it says they will see that it teaches that sin is not inherited – Ezek. 18:20.
        - A. Why would Jesus hold up little children, who were vile, sinful creatures, as examples of what adults should become if they were indeed such? – Mt. 18:1-4; 19:13-15.
    - C. “Does God speak through people like the Pope and Joseph Smith today?”
      - 1. This question is designed to trip up the one who may answer in the affirmative.
        - A. If one answers “yes,” then they will be presented with a number of contradictions between the two religions.
      - 2. The answer to this question, and similar ones, is a resounding **no**.
        - A. Jesus is the head of the church, not the Pope – Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18.
      - 3. They may also be presented with the contradictions between the Bible and the Book of Mormon.
    - D. Denominationalism, and all of its conflicting doctrines, has contributed much to the success of atheism when it comes to these kinds of questions.
      - 1. See the problem as stated here by Thomas Paine, “The Calvinist, who damns children of a span long to hell to burn forever for the glory of God, and the Universalist who preaches that all shall be saved and none shall be damned, boasts alike of their religion and their Christian faith.”
  - G. Another thing to consider is the fact that God is “all knowing.”
    - 1. Therefore, we must allow for there to be reasons for evil and suffering that are beyond our ability to ascertain.

- A. As we learn from Job, God is under no obligation to explain Himself for everything that He does or allows.
- H. Common mistakes made by the theist when encountering the atheist.
  - 1. Perhaps the greatest mistake is asking the atheist to prove there is no God.
    - A. The problem is, you do not ask a person to prove a negative.
      - 1. If you think I am wrong, prove to me that there is not an ice-cream factory on Jupiter.
    - B. Actually, asking for proof against a negative question is not even a good request.
      - 1. How can he prove there is no God?
        - A. If he could, don't you think he already would have?
      - 2. Actually, for one to prove there is no God they would have to be God themselves as such would require knowledge of all things.
    - C. Many atheists will say they do not have proof for the non-existence of God.
  - 2. Many theists are as guilty as many atheists in labeling their opponents.
    - A. They have been labeled as evil, stupid, or morally void.
      - 1. Granted, some may fit into one or more of those categories, but then so could some "Christians" fit into some of them.
    - B. Many atheists are honest, loving people.
    - C. We should not stoop to such tactics!
  - 3. If you are going to engage an atheist in discussion, then do not make the mistake of failing to answer his questions.
    - A. When you do he will conclude that you were incapable of answering the question.
      - 1. The problem here is that you provide the atheistic community "fodder" when you leave their arguments, unanswered.
    - B. They will not come back and say to other atheists that you were as dumb as a box of rocks.
      - 1. Instead they will imply that you could not deal with their question/questions because they were unanswerable.
    - C. It is better to say, "I don't know, let's study that and get back together." than to just ignore it.
  - 4. Be careful that you have your facts right. Don't be guilty of stating that which you cannot back up.
    - A. When you are able to provide documentation for your claims it provides credibility to your argument.

## **6. THE BELIEF OF AGNOSTICISM:**

- A. The term "agnostic" was first used by Thomas Huxley in 1869 when he came to realize that he had not answered all the questions on atheism, pantheism, or theism.
  - 1. The etymology of the word is from the negative "a" and the Greek root "gnosis" (to know).

2. It is somewhat of a general term signifying the lack of knowledge in a certain area.
  - A. While atheism implies that God does not exist, and theism implies that He does, agnosticism refers to the lack of knowledge with regard to whether He exists or not.
3. Some have claimed there are two categories of agnosticism:
  - A. Atheistic.
    1. The agnostic atheist claims that neither the existence nor nature of God is knowable.
    2. They argue that man cannot have knowledge of God's existence.
      - A. They say that man cannot have knowledge of the unknowable.
    3. The atheistic agnostic finds himself at odds with the atheist.
  - B. Theistic.
    1. The agnostic theist claims to believe in the existence of God, but argues that the nature of God is unknowable.
    2. They claim that man can state that God exists, but due to the unknowable nature of the supernatural he cannot state what God is.
    3. The theistic agnostic finds himself at odds with both atheism and theism.
    4. Carl Sagan, the noted agnostic had this to say "Those who raise questions about the God hypothesis and the soul hypothesis are by no means all atheists. An atheist is someone who is certain that God does not exist, someone who has compelling evidence against the existence of God. I know of no such compelling evidence. Because God can be relegated to remote times and places and to ultimate causes, we would have to know a great deal more about the universe than we do now to be sure that no such God exists. To be certain of the existence of God and to be certain of the nonexistence of God seem to me to be the confident extremes in a subject so riddled with doubt and uncertainty as to inspire very little confidence indeed. A wide range of intermediate positions seems admissible, and considering the enormous emotional energies with which the subject is invested, a questioning, courageous and open mind seems to be the essential tool for narrowing the range of our collective ignorance on the subject of the existence of God." *Carl Sagan - "The Amniotic Universe," Broca's Brain, p. 311.*
4. Agnosticism is primarily based on two main principles:
  - A. It is impossible to know reality.
    1. This is so because all knowledge comes either from the senses or from the ideas of the mind.
  - B. One cannot go beyond their senses for a basis for knowledge due to cause and effect.
5. Based upon their principles agnosticism includes two things:
  - A. The existence and nature of God is unknown.

1. Referred to as Limited Agnosticism.
2. If a person supposes that he can know something, then they must accept the position that they could know God.
  - A. So the door is open to knowledge.
- B. God is unknowable.
  1. Referred to as Complete Agnosticism.
  2. It is argued that since man is finite, he can never come to the knowledge of an infinite Being.
    - A. Admittedly, man cannot come to knowledge of God on his own.
    - B. Agnosticism, though, ignores the possibility that God could choose to reveal Himself to man.
      1. This is exactly what the Bible teaches.
      2. God has chosen to reveal Himself through nature (Psa. 19:1; Rom. 1:18-22.) Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21) and Jesus (Jhn. 14:9).
  3. With this in view we see that complete agnosticism is self-defeating.
    - A. If man cannot know what is real, how is it possible for him to know enough about reality to affirm that God is not real?
    - B. When one argues for complete agnosticism they close the door for any potential knowledge.
- B. Examination of the philosophy of agnosticism in relation to “humility” and knowledge.
  1. Often times the agnostic will claim something to the effect that “If I claim to know that something is true, then I must acknowledge that whoever disagrees with me is wrong, and that would make me intolerably arrogant.”
    - A. Such a philosophy has led some to go so far as to say that they cannot know that 2 plus 2 is 4.
      1. The rational there is that once one admits to some knowledge of truth it opens the door for more.
      2. There is also the false sense of “humility” that is being overrun by “pride” if one admits they know something.
    - B. Granted, not all agnostics are like this.
      1. Some admit to knowledge of things within their own mental processes.
  2. Our approach to this is to show that one can know something while all the time possessing humility.
    - A. Clearly, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” Prov. 16:18.
      1. Likewise, God exalts the humble – Jas. 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:6.
    - B. We will never win an argument with a “humble” agnostic if we let our “pride” get out of hand.
  3. Additionally, there is a problem or two here, though.
    - A. Agnosticism is the theory that God is unknown and unknowable.
      1. But how does the agnostic “know” this if they do not know anything?
        - A. Is their pride getting in the way here?

2. If you cannot know anything, how do you know that you cannot know anything?
- B. Could it be that the agnostic must admit that others may know something he doesn't?
  1. If not, then would that not make him omniscient?
- C. Agnosticism's claim that they cannot know whether God exists or not examined.
  1. Truth is not all that hard to find if one wants to find it.
    - A. The problem is, many do not want to find it.
      1. It seems that many who hold to the agnostic philosophy believe that if they profess a lack of knowledge for the existence of God that this gets them off the "hook" when it comes to responsibility.
        1. Of course that is not true, but they don't know that yet.
  2. Actually, God is not nearly as difficult to "find" as the agnostic would lead us to believe.
    - A. Look at the following Scriptures:
      1. Isa. 55:6
      2. Isa. 65:1.
      3. Jere. 29:13, 14.
      4. Acts 14:17.
      5. Acts 17:27, 28.
      6. Rom. 1:19-24.
  3. It seems that the biggest problem that the agnostic faces is not the lack of sufficient proof to prove the existence of God but their unwillingness to take an honest look at this evidence.
- D. Those who advocate agnosticism have a greater chance of being wrong than either the atheist or the theist.
  1. Common sense says that either God exists or He doesn't.
    - A. If I am wrong, the atheist is right, and the agnostic is wrong.
    - B. If I am right, the atheist is wrong, and the agnostic is wrong.
      1. They are advocating a no win philosophy.
  2. We must admit that either man exists due to the creative work of God, or he exists due to some incredible coincidence.
    - A. The agnostic offers no proposal as to how man got here.
  3. When it comes to trying to discuss these matters with the agnostic one is up against an insurmountable object.
    - A. To the one caught up in a false religion we can show that Christianity makes more sense.
    - B. To the atheist, we can show the incredible odds against our arriving at where we are solely by chance.
    - C. But to the agnostic it is like speaking to someone who does not understand your language.
      1. When someone chooses to refuse to choose you are very limited in being able to show him or her, which is the wisest decision or road to take.



- D. The agnostic has placed himself or herself in the position of knocking down any posture that comes their way without having to provide a better explanation.
  - 1. It is much like trying to convince a person which door they should take when they are insistent on staying outside.
    - A. They are comfortable there.
    - B. They “know” why they are there.
    - C. And see no reason to go beyond the entranceway.
- E. The agnostic has placed himself in the position that only he knows what tools to use to find the truth, and yet he remains in the one place where he knows the truth is not.
  - 1. All of the agnostic’s claims of putting their faith in reason fall by the wayside when we see how they ignore reason when it tells them they have no answer to the most important questions of life.
    - A. Standing outside in the rain, refusing to enter a door because you do not know what is on the other side, is not a sign of intelligence.
      - 1. Just the opposite is true.

## 7. THE BELIEF OF EXISTENTIALISM:

### A. Definition:

- 1. “There is no simple answer to this question (the question of what is existentialism, r.w.s.) because each...writer...gives his own account of what he is trying to do.” Existentialism and Religious Belief, David E. Roberts, p. 3.
- 2. “A philosophy that emphasizes the uniqueness and isolation of the individual experience in a hostile or indifferent universe, regards human existence as unexplainable, and stresses freedom of choice and responsibility for the consequences of one's acts.” *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition.*
- 3. “Philosophical theory or approach which emphasizes the existence of the individual person as a free and responsible agent determining their own development through acts of the will.” *New Oxford Dictionary of English*
- 4. “The modern system of belief made famous by Jean Paul Sartre in the 1940s in which the world is meaningless and each person is alone and completely responsible for their own actions, by which they make their own character.” *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*
- 5. “Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he wills himself to be...Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Such is the first principle of existentialism.” Sartre, Existentialism, Philosophical Library, 1947, p. 3.

### B. Background and origin of this theory:

- 1. The roots of existentialism can be traced to the Middle Ages.
  - A. The philosophy gained popularity in Europe in response to World War I and II as somewhat of a climax to the Black Plague that had covered most

all of Europe.

1. Due to the problems associated with the Black Plague and the World Wars many people were struggling with their faith.
2. They began to conclude that God had left them alone, thus they were on their own to get through the problems confronting them.
  - A. They were seeing themselves as having no meaning or purpose.
    1. Or, if there was meaning, then it was man who invented it.
  - B. They, then, embraced their existence and tried to live life as full and rich as possible based on the existential philosophy.
2. Present day theory comes from two individuals.
  - A. Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) – who was the first to use the word existentialism and who stressed individual power and put pressure on man to create his own moral code and decide his own destiny.
    1. Man was encouraged by Kierkegaard to look inwardly for the meaning and purpose of life.
    2. Kierkegaard believed that the meaninglessness of one's existence filled him with anxiety, despair, and a sense of hopelessness and deep depression.
      - A. Kierkegaard felt that the only way to overcome the meaninglessness of existence was to turn to God.
  - B. Freidrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) – took the ideas of Kierkegaard to the extreme level.
    1. His conclusion was that neither the meaning nor purpose of life could be found outside the person.
      - A. This completely removed God from the picture.
      - B. Nietzsche, of course, regarded Kierkegaard's position of turning to God unacceptable.
    2. Perhaps the statement that he is most known for was "God is dead," Book Three of The Gay Science (Joyous Wisdom) p. 108.
      - A. Based upon the belief that God was dead led him to advocate the idea that humans are left to discover morals and purpose without any help from Deity.
    3. By the way, you can get on the Internet and purchase a shirt with the following:

***God Is Dead***  
***Nietzsche***  
***Nietzsche Is Dead***  
***God***
3. Actually, one may see a form of existentialism as far back as the Garden of Eden.
  - A. Man yielded to the temptation to become as God – Gen. 3:5.
    1. Therefore, he would be in control of himself.
- C. Basic beliefs of existentialism:
  1. Beliefs of existentialism can be summed up by the following:

- A. Choice over destiny.
  - B. Experience over reason.
  - C. An emphasis on the individual.
  - D. Those who partake in the goals of present day society to have a comfortable existence are seen as being a part of the “herd.”
  - E. An emphasis on human choice and freedom.
  - F. Human existence cannot be explained by reason.
  - G. There is a focus placed on death and its role in the life experience.
  - H. An emphasis is placed on anxiety, especially related to things such as death, guilt, and meaning.
2. The philosophy of existentialism has had a radical impact on the shaping of human culture through various means.
    - A. The Movie Forrest Gump, written by Eric Roth, was intended to discuss existential ideas.
      1. The life of Forrest Gump was a life decided by chance with the events having no long-term purpose.
    - B. Some have gone so far as to suggest that the violence and breakdown of modern society in the 20<sup>th</sup> (and now 21<sup>st</sup>) century can largely be attributed to this philosophy.
  3. Present day morality had been shaped considerably by the philosophies of modern man, and especially existentialism.
    - A. We hear the following from time to time and may even be “guilty” of propagating the philosophy.
      1. “What is true for you is not true for me.”
      2. “Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.”
      3. “One person’s art is another person’s pornography.”
      4. “There are no objective morals, just differing opinions.”
      5. “If it feels right, do it.”
    - B. Moral standards are determined more by man’s feelings than by objective truth.
      1. Truth is seen to be relative.
      2. The idea of “right” is determined by whether one thinks what they are doing is right for them.
        - A. When it comes to moral issues what determines whether something is right or wrong is whether the one confronted with the choice believes it is right or wrong.
          1. In other words, if one believes that premarital sex is wrong then it is wrong for them.
            - A. But if another believes it is right then it is right for him.
          2. The same “rule” can be applied to all moral choices.
      - B. Religion, which is based upon an objective revelation from God, is relegated to the position of personal preference.
        1. In other words, religion is true if it works for me.
        2. No religion can claim to have the truth when this philosophy is

advocated.

3. One study conducted among American adults, about ten years ago, indicated that at that time 69% of those polled believed that morals were determined by the situation one found himself in.
4. Another study, conducted in 1991 by George Barna, indicated that 72% of Americans, between the ages 18-25, did not believe absolutes exist.
  - A. By the way, the lack of belief in absolutes is believed to “solve a multitude of problems” for the existentialist.
    1. People began to question how two contradictory ideas could both be true.
    2. Therefore, the philosophy of no absolutes.
  - B. However, this is not true.
    1. The statement that there are no absolutes is self-contradictory.
      - A. The one who advocates this theory claims, “it is absolutely true that there are no absolutes.”
        1. Huh?
5. Kierkegaard wrote: “The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do. The thing is to find a truth which is true for me.” A Kierkegaard Anthology. Ed. R. Bretall. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, pp. 4-5.
6. Ernest Hemingway wrote: “Good is what you feel good after doing and bad is what you feel bad after doing.” Location unknown.
7. What Christianity says about truth.
  - A. Human reasoning alone cannot determine truth – Rom. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:14.
    1. Truth is attainable – Jhn. 8:32; 17:17.
      - A. But not by human reasoning alone.
  - B. Truth is exclusive – Rom. 3:4.
    1. There are absolutes.
      - A. Some things are right, and will always be right, and others are wrong, and will always be wrong, regardless of what I feel or think about them.
        1. Murder is always wrong and never right.
        2. Adultery is always wrong and never right.
    2. To argue otherwise one contradicts him self by saying that they are right and I am wrong.
  - C. Truth has been revealed to man – Rom. 1:20; 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb.1:1, 2.
    1. One who disagrees with the truth revealed by God is in error – Jhn. 18:37.

C. The following poem seems to sum up the issue.

**“It All Depends”**

It all depends on where you are  
It all depends on what you are  
It all depends on what you feel  
It all depends on how you feel  
It all depends on how you're raised  
It all depends on what is praised  
What's right today is wrong tomorrow  
Joy in France and England's sorrow  
It all depends on point of view  
Australia or Timbaktu  
In Rome, do as the Romans do  
If taste just happens to agree  
Then you have morality  
And where there are conflicting trends  
It all depends, it all depends.  
(Author unknown)

D. Take a look at the following (Kippy Myers, The Restorer, April 1989):

I like (Jer. 10:23)  
I feel (Gal. 5:16-21)  
I want (Acts 8:18-24)  
I think (2 Kgs. 5:1-15)  
They do it (1 Sam. 8:4-8)  
It seems right (Prov. 14:12)  
I am sincere (2 Sam. 6:6,7)  
I am always right (2 Cor. 13:5)  
No one will see me (Prov. 15:3)  
It is for a good cause (Rom. 3:8)  
I don't see why not (Acts 5:1-11)  
The preacher said so (Gal. 1:6-9)  
Others do worse things (Matt 7:5)  
God didn't say not to (Lev. 10:1, 2)  
God doesn't mind (1 Cor. 2:10-13)  
It isn't against the law (Acts 5:26-29)  
It hurts no one but me (1 Cor. 8:12,13)  
Most people think it is okay (Matt. 7:13,14)  
My parents and grandparents did it (Gal. 6:5)  
It doesn't bother my conscience (Prov. 30:20)  
We have done it this way for years (Josh. 5:2-9)  
It's all right if we do it in God's name (Matt. 7:21-23)  
God doesn't expect us to be so technical (1 Thess. 5:21)

- E. If one pushes the moral issue with one who subscribes to the philosophy of existentialism it is interesting where you end up.
    - 1. Take about any moral issue and ask if it is okay to do whatever it is under consideration.
      - A. The response will come back something like, "Everyone has the right to live as he wants."
        - 1. Now push that by asking, "why do you believe that" and see what is said.
      - B. You will probably get an answer something like, "Well, because it is true."
        - 1. Now push it again by asking "But why do you believe that?"
      - C. You may get an answer something like, "Well, we live in a free country and everyone has the right to do as he wants."
        - 1. Push that by asking, "What is the basis for your belief that everyone has the right to do as he wants?"
    - 2. I can guarantee you that if you keep pushing it long enough you will get an answer something like "Well, I feel that everyone has the right to do as he wants."
      - A. If you rebut that by saying "Well, I feel that a person does not have the right to do as he wants."
        - 1. See what happens.
          - A. Most of the time an argument follows which proves that these people do not believe what they claim they do.
            - 1. That is that all have the right to do what they want or to believe what they want to believe.
          - B. It is much like the people who start fights while protesting war.
          - C. Or people who will argue all day long that debating is wrong.
        - 2. So long as individual feelings dictate what is right or wrong you never end up with anyone being right or wrong.
- D. The alleged goal of existentialism was to escape nihilism, which is the philosophy of meaninglessness.
  - 1. Nihilism denies the existence of truth and value.
  - 2. The attempt of the existentialist is to create his own meaning and reality.
    - A. Where they ended up, though, was that man is nothing more than the sum total of the acts that make up his life.
    - B. Opposition to reason to ascertain truth is opposed.
    - C. Subjectivity is emphasized over objectivity.
      - 1. Truth, then, is personal rather than objective.
      - 2. Man becomes the legislator when it comes to matters of truth.
      - 3. Feelings determine what is true and what isn't.
        - A. The idea is, it is true if I feel strongly enough about it being true.

- B. What we have is, “It is truth, because it is true for me.”
  - 4. The subjectivity of the philosophy carries over into the concept of God.
    - A. Since each person views God differently, He becomes what I want Him to be.
      - 1. His will for me becomes what I want it to be.
- E. Existentialism is divided into two major categories:
  - 1. Atheistic Existentialism:
    - A. This posture sets forth the belief that there is no God.
    - B. This philosophy is basically summed up in the concept of mere existence.
    - C. It rejects the concept of truth and any idea of absolutes.
      - 1. They acknowledge the idea of partial truths.
      - 2. Without any absolute basis though, morality is subjective.
        - A. Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), a noted existentialist of years gone by, summed man up as being “a useless passion” that deeply cares about an existence that ends up in the grave, void of value.
    - D. Several years ago Time Magazine recorded this statement from a leading existentialist, “Hey, man, I looked God up in the yellow pages but He wasn’t listed.”
      - 1. The one who made the statement was getting at the idea that there is no one home in the universe and man is left in his existence in the state of complete despair.
  - 2. Theistic or Religious Existentialism:
    - A. This posture has a belief in God but continues to believe that they have free will to make their own decisions in all matters with no “interference” by God.
- F. Existentialism and situation ethics.
  - 1. Most of those who have spent time defending situation ethics have been influenced by existentialism.
    - A. The connection between the two theories is seen in where existentialism has taught man that their own feelings and experiences have become the final measure of truth.
      - 1. What we end up with is the idea that every person does that, which is right in his own eyes.
        - A. The results of such is conflicting doctrines and flexible standards.
  - 2. Caution needs to be used here.
    - A. If not, we can find ourselves advocating some really stupid things.
    - B. Various teachings of situation ethics influenced by existentialism:
      - 1. There are no such things as absolutes.
        - A. If true, then no truth.
        - B. But, then, how could one be absolutely sure?
      - 2. Love is preeminent over everything else.
        - A. Love is important, but it does not set aside commands – Mt. 7:21-23; Jhn. 14:15; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; Heb. 5:8, 9.

3. Truth is relative determined by particular times or situations.
    - A. A little boy in a Bible class said, "A lie is an abomination to the Lord but a very present help in trouble."
      1. The telling of a "white lie" is seen by many as being proper as it results in a positive result.
- G. Existentialism and ways to get to God.
1. "Religion" teaches that there are many ways to God.
    - A. For example:
      1. "Christians" teach that the way to God is through Jesus.
      2. Catholics say it is through the Pope.
      3. Islam claims it is through Allah and Mohammed.
      4. Judaism has its claims.
      4. Mormons claim Joseph Smith as their prophet.
      5. Some claim that living a good life will result in one going to heaven.
      6. Others (such as Seven Day Adventists) claim that by keeping the 10 Commandments one will go to heaven.
      7. Etc., etc., etc.
    - B. Many of those who hold to these various theories claim that of all the ways to get to God, any will work.
      1. It is as if all "paths" are valid ways to reach God.
  2. Both existentialism and the many "paths" advocates ultimately claim that man can have truth any way he likes it.
    - A. This says that man does not need to change in order to go to God since man "creates" God the way he likes Him to be.
- H. A critique of the philosophy of existentialism.
1. There is a great inconsistency seen in the way the lives of those who espouse this philosophy are lived.
    - A. If truth is determined by what I feel then truth may well be different for you on the same subject.
    - B. The existentialist must turn to Christianity to obtain a set of ethical values that are consistent.
  2. Although the laws of logic are opposed by the very philosophy of existentialism, they turn to the same laws to attempt to prove that irrationalism is the way of meaning.
    - A. On this they want their "cake and eat it too."
  3. A society cannot be held together while everyone within that society seeks to do that which is right in his own eyes.
    - A. Yet, this is what must be accepted when one argues that values are relative.
  4. Although the existentialist argues against the existence of absolutes, they see freedom and subjectivity as absolutes.
  5. Existentialism and the Bible do not go hand in hand.
    - A. The author of Ecclesiastes considered the meaning and existence of life.
      1. Yet he came to a completely different conclusion – Eccl. 12:13, 14.



## **8. THE TRUTH OF IT ALL:**

- A. We have already examined the major areas of proof relative to the existence of God.
  - 1. It does no good to take an atheist to the Bible and try to prove to him from the Scriptures that God exists.
    - A. But that does not mean that we cannot produce evidence that He does.
      - 1. Atheism is unverifiable.
        - A. In order to know there is no God, one would have to be God.
        - B. When confronted with the limits of human knowledge, one cannot say with any degree of certainty that there is no God.
        - C. With new things being constantly learned about the universe it is ridiculous to claim impossibility for the existence of God.
      - 2. Agnosticism is self-defeating.
        - A. Claiming to not be able to know is itself a claim to knowledge, which must be justified.
          - 1. One could correctly ask, “Well, how do you know that you do not know?”
        - B. Claiming that we cannot know something about God is claiming to know something.
          - 1. I.e. He is unknowable.
          - 2. However, if we have no knowledge of God, how would it be possible to claim God is unknowable?
      - 3. Theism is arguable.
        - A. Believing in a Creator is more logical than believing that the entire universe and all that is in it came about by chance.
          - 1. One must choose between the two:
            - A. Creator or Designer.
              - 1. Indicative of that which is in existence came about as a result of intelligent guidance.
            - B. Chance.
              - 1. Indicative of that which is in existence came about without any intelligent guidance.
        - B. When we consider the intricate pattern, the order of the system, and the function of the universe it appears more likely that it all came into existence by intervention of intelligent guidance.
- B. The “demand” for there to be an intelligent Being.
  - 1. The question of origins is best answered with the answer “In the beginning God...” - Gen. 1:1.
    - A. The only alternatives are organic evolution or theistic evolution.
      - 1. For the most part, the organic evolutionist has not, nor ever will, answer the question of origins.
        - A. When the subject comes up they go back in time several million years and start talking about the “Big Bang” as the point of origin.

- B. But that misses the point, we want to know about origins, not about a time when something that was already in existence went “bang!”
      - 1. Until the question of origins (along with several other questions) is answered evolution remains a failed theory.
  - 2. Theistic evolution has not fared any better.
    - A. This theory, although advocated by several in the church, has failed as it continues to contradict Scripture.
      - 1. I would encourage you to get a copy of Bert Thompson’s book, Theistic Evolution, and spend some time with it.
    - B. Arguments against theistic evolution:
      - 1. “There is no theistic statement which shows theistic evolution is true.
      - 2. “Theistic evolution is wrong because the Bible states that Adam was the first man.
      - 3. “Theistic evolution is wrong because it cannot explain Eve.
      - 4. “Theistic evolution is wrong because it cannot explain where man acquired his soul.
      - 5. “Theistic evolution is wrong because it logically denies the fall of man (Genesis 3).
      - 6. “Theistic evolution is wrong because the Bible teaches catastrophism; evolution teaches uniformitarianism.
      - 7. “Theistic evolution is wrong because the Bible states that the heavens, the Earth, the seas, and all that is in them were created in six days.
      - 8. “Theistic evolution is wrong because it makes a liar out of Jesus the Savior, and His inspired writers.” A Study Course In Christian Evidences, Bert Thompson & Wayne Jackson, pp. 92-97.
- C. Personal experience cries out for there to be God.
  - 1. Man has longed for “heaven” from the beginning of time.
    - A. It does not take long to see that every longing that man has makes sense and has been fulfilled.
      - 1. Man longs for air to breath and there is air.
      - 2. Man thirsts and there is water to quench that thirst.
      - 3. Man experiences hunger, and there is food to satisfy that desire.
      - 4. Man experiences physical needs and the sexual relationship has been provided.
      - 5. Man desires to be loved, and love is present.
      - 6. Man longs for God...
        - A. If there is no God, then this would be the only longing that is not satisfied in our world – Eccl. 3:11.
- D. For there to be justice, there must be God.
  - 1. Clearly, there is much injustice in the world.
    - A. If life is all there is, then injustice would rule.

2. In order for there to be justice...
  - A. Man must survive the grave.
  - B. There must be a judge.
  - C. There must be judgment.

### CONCLUSION:

1. We must admit that one may not be able to prove with 100% certainty that God exists though the use of scientific measures such as replication.
  - A. Yet, that does not infer that we are left without evidence for His existence – Psa. 19:1.

### COMPARISON CHART

	REALITY	MAN	TRUTH	VALUES
<b>Naturalism</b>  Atheism;  Agnosticism;  Existentialism	The material universe is all that exists. Reality is "one-dimensional." There is no such thing as a soul or a spirit. Everything can be explained on the basis of natural law.	Man is the chance product of a biological process of evolution. Man is entirely material. The human species will one day pass out of existence.	Truth is usually understood as scientific proof. Only that which can be observed with the five senses is accepted as real or true.	No objective values or morals exist. Morals are individual preferences or socially useful behaviors. Even social morals are subject to evolution and change.
<b>Pantheism</b>  Hinduism; Taoism;  Buddhism;  much  New Age  Consciousness	Only the spiritual dimension exists. All else is illusion, <i>maya</i> . Spiritual reality, <i>Brahman</i> , is eternal, impersonal, and unknowable. It is possible	Man is one with ultimate reality. Thus man is spiritual, eternal, and impersonal. Man's belief that he is an individual is illusion.  - Page 49 -	Truth is an experience of unity with "the oneness" of the universe. Truth is beyond all rational description. Rational thought as it is understood	Because ultimate reality is impersonal, many pantheistic thinkers believe that there is no real distinction between good and evil. Instead, "unenlightened" behavior is that which fails to understand

	to say that everything is a part of God, or that God is in everything and everyone.		in the West cannot show us reality.	essential unity.
<b>Spiritism and Polytheism</b>  Thousands of Religions	The world is spirit beings who govern what goes on. Gods and demons are the real reason behind "natural" events. Material things are real, but they have spirits associated with them and, therefore, can be interpreted spiritually.	Man is a creation of the gods like the rest of the creatures on earth. Often, tribes or races have a special relationship with some gods who protect them and can punish them.	Truth about the natural world is discovered through the shaman figure who has visions telling him what the gods and demons are doing and how they feel.	Moral values take the form of taboos, which are things that irritate or anger various spirits. These taboos are different from the idea of "good and evil" because it is just as important to avoid irritating evil spirits as it is good ones.
<b>Postmodernism</b>	Reality must be interpreted through our language and cultural "paradigm." Therefore, reality is "socially constructed."	Humans are nodes in a cultural reality – they are a product of their social setting. The idea that people are autonomous and free is a myth.  - Page 50 -	Truths are mental constructs meaningful to individuals within a particular cultural paradigm. They do not apply to other paradigms. Truth is	Values are part of our social paradigms as well. Tolerance, freedom of expression, inclusion, and refusal to claim to have the answers are the only universal values.

			relative to one's culture.	
--	--	--	----------------------------------	--

[www.xenos.org/classes/papers/5wldview.htm](http://www.xenos.org/classes/papers/5wldview.htm)