

Mr. G's Introduction to the 'Existence of God' Section – Video Transcript

Welcome to the section of the course where we consider the question of God's existence. Does God exist? Can we know that God exists? It's important to understand in this section that we cannot prove God exists in a scientific-method kind of way, with empirical evidence (empirical means based on observation or experiments). But there are many evidences of His existence, and I feel the evidence is strongly in favor of His existence. We'll start by considering some of the various evidences, or arguments, for God's existence. Some of them have kind of technical-sounding names, like the teleological argument and the cosmological argument. We'll then consider some of the arguments people use against the existence of God, and think about whether they are valid or not. We'll especially be thinking about the question of evil and suffering in the world. Then we'll look at some common objections to the existence of God and consider appropriate responses. In the process we'll hear the testimonies of a few atheists who have come to faith in Christ, and see what we can learn from them. You'll notice, by the end of this section, that we will have given good evidence for the existence of God, but we will not yet have shown specifically that the God of the Bible, the Christian God, exists necessarily. That will come in later sections involving the reliability of the Bible, whether the resurrection really happened, etc.

A couple things I'd like to point out for us to keep in mind. First, and maybe you already know this, but I just wanted to emphasize that belief in God vs. non-belief in God is not a question of uneducated vs. educated, or stupid vs. intelligent. Some believe, and many would have you think, that intelligent, educated people don't believe in God, but nothing could be further from the truth. There are brilliant people in every field of study who believe in God. I like to point to my dad as such a person; he has a PhD in Physics from one of the best universities in the world, and he has believed in God, and in God's creation of the world, since his conversion experience in college. He sees no conflict between using your mind and belief in God. And there are many like him.

So how do smart people see the same evidence and come to very different conclusions about the existence of God? Of course, we all have presuppositions as we've seen, and presuppositions might lead people to be not convinced by certain evidences one way or the other. An atheist might not be impressed by the evidence we present, just as I would not be affected by so-called evidence an atheist would present. Why? Because I believe that I know God personally, I've experienced walking with Him and interacting with Him, and seeing Him act in changing my life and touching lives of people around me. If you tried to convince me that my physical dad didn't really exist, that wouldn't get very far, because I know him. I know He's real no matter what you might say.

Anyway, another reason that some might not accept the existence of God, while others do, is that some people might simply not *want* to believe. They might sense that it would mess up

what they're doing, the way they want to live, or would hurt their pride because they realize that if God were real, they would have to obey Him. A desire to believe, or not to believe in God definitely can play a role in how someone responds to the evidence.

Some people might be affected in their acceptance of or refusal to believe in the existence of God by their past experiences. If they've had a horrible experience at a church, for example, or if someone who's called himself a Christian has done something bad to them, they might have a blockage against believing in God because in their mind He's associated with that hurt. On the other hand, someone may have had a wonderful experience with family or friends who loved God, and be drawn to believe in Him through that influence.

Often both believers and non-believers in God would say that they are genuinely seeking truth, and are just going where the evidence leads them. They might accuse the other side of being brainwashed, of not honestly seeking the truth or going where the evidence leads. Ironically intelligent people on both sides have said this. I think we need to do our best to address the questions and concerns of non-believers, but also keep in mind that in the end we all really need God to reveal Himself to us and help us to come to Him, to believe in Him, to know Him. Without His help, all of us would be lost. So Christians, don't look down on atheists. Show them love and pray for them.

OK, to wrap up I wanted to introduce you to a very prominent atheist scientist whose name we will be hearing in this section: Richard Dawkins. He is a British evolutionary biologist and a popular author. He's over 80 years old now. He wrote one book which is especially well-known called "The God Delusion," about how belief in God is a dangerous delusion. As we'll see, some of his ideas and objections are widely known and repeated, although there are some significant inconsistencies in his thought and there are intelligent answers to his objections. So we'll be running into him more in this section.