

STUDY GUIDE

SIX SESSIONS

THE CASE FOR A Creator

*A Six-Session Investigation of the
Scientific Evidence that Points Toward God*

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SESSION 1

Science and God

I was convinced that science and faith were at odds — and that science definitely had the edge in the credibility department ... And rather than facing an “unyielding despair” that’s implicit in a world without God, I reveled in my newly achieved freedom from God’s moral strictures. For me, living without God meant living 100 percent for myself. Freed from someday being held accountable for my actions, I felt unleashed to pursue personal happiness and pleasure at all costs ... As a journalist, I was unshackled to compete without always having to abide by those pesky rules of ethics and morality. I would let nothing, and certainly nobody, stand between me and my ambitions.

Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator*

Read This!

If possible, read the following book content in preparation for your group meeting: *The Case for a Creator*, chapter 4: Where Science Meets Faith, or *The Case for a Creator Student Edition*, chapter 1: Science vs. God? Otherwise, read it as follow-up.

Watch This!

Video Teaching Segment

Space is provided to take notes on anything that stands out to you.

"Ironically, to say that science is the only begetter of truth is self-contradicting, because that statement in itself cannot be tested by scientific method. It's a self-defeating philosophical assumption."

— Stephen C. Meyer

Discuss This!

1. How much confidence do you put in science as a source of truth? How did you develop the level of trust (or lack thereof) you currently have?

THINK ABOUT THIS!

Some people claim that we live in a technological culture where science trumps all other forms of knowledge. Only science is rational; only science achieves truth. Everything else is mere belief and opinion. If something cannot be qualified or tested by the scientific method, then it cannot be true or rational. Science represents the empirical, the hard facts, and the experimentally proven. Everything else can be dismissed as being mere opinion, superstition — and mindless faith.

2. To what degree do you believe that only science is rational and everything else is mere opinion, superstition, or mindless faith?

"It was my science that drove me to the conclusion that the world was much more complicated than can be explained by science."

— Cosmologist Allan Sandage

3. Has scientific progress made God unnecessary? Why or why not?

THINK ABOUT THIS!

"The whole point of faith is to believe regardless of the evidence, which is the very antithesis of science."

Michael Shermer, publisher, *Skeptic* magazine

"Religion is something left over from the infancy of our intelligence; it will fade away as we adopt reason and science as our guidelines."

Atheistic philosopher Bertrand Russell

"Proof is only applicable to very rarefied areas of philosophy and mathematics ... For the most part we are driven to acting on good evidence, without the luxury of proof. There is good evidence of the link between cause and effect. There is good evidence that the sun will rise tomorrow. There is good reason to believe that I am the same man as I was ten years ago. There is good reason to believe my mother loves me and is not just fattening me up for the moment when she will pop arsenic into my tea. And there is good reason to believe in God. Very good reason. Not conclusive proof, but very good reason just the same ... I believe it is much harder to reject the existence of a supreme being than accept it."

Michael Green, *Faith for the Non-Religious*

"You can't absolutely prove — or disprove — the existence of God."

Science philosopher Stephen C. Meyer

4. To what extent do you think it is possible to prove—or disprove—the existence of God? In terms of your own investigation, what level of evidence (or proof) would be sufficient for you to believe or disbelieve the existence of God? How likely is it that there would ever be enough evidence to eliminate your doubts (one way or the other)? What are the implications of your answers?

*"For those who believe in God,
no explanation is necessary.
For those who do not,
no explanation is possible."*
— Opening lines of the film
The Song of Bernadette

5. If science is, in fact, the search for truth, should scientists be free to consider the possibility of the supernatural if the evidence of cosmology, physics, and biochemistry points in that direction? Why or why not?

*"I believe that the testimony of science
supports theism. While there will always
be points of tension or unresolved conflict,
the major developments in science in the
past five decades have been running in a
strongly theistic direction. Science,
done right, points toward God."*
— Stephen C. Meyer

6. Is it possible to believe in science and also believe in God? Can faith in God ever be rational? Why or why not?

"I didn't see any God out there."

— Yuri Gagarin, Soviet cosmonaut,
after orbiting Earth

THINK ABOUT THIS!

"You will understand that my atheism was inevitably based on what I believed to be the finding of the sciences, and those findings, not being a scientist, I had to take on trust."

C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*

"I'd have to say that the biggest reason why I don't believe in god is because there is no proof of his existence. Throughout the millions of years that man has been on earth, there has never been any solid evidence that there is a creator. If there is a god, wouldn't he want as many followers as possible? Why leave any doubt? Why not come to earth and tell everyone he exists? Or, better yet, make it so that everyone knows he is there."

Norm, in an online discussion

7. Which of the following “isms” most accurately reflects your current position? What influences or factors prompted you to arrive at this perspective? How long have you held this position?

- **Agnosticism:** the belief that knowledge of the existence or nonexistence of God is impossible
- **Atheism:** the disbelief in the existence of God
- **Deism:** the belief in a supreme being who remains unknowable and untouchable and permits the universe to run itself according to natural laws
- **Fideism:** the belief that matters of religion are not supported by evidence or reason and all that is required is faith
- **Pantheism:** the belief that God and the universe are one
- **Polytheism:** the belief in many gods
- **Theism:** the belief in the existence of God

*“All I have seen teaches me to trust
the Creator for all I have not seen.”*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

THINK ABOUT THIS!

"Some claim science and faith are fundamentally at odds. Others have said science and faith represent two separate and distinct realms that don't and can't interact with each other. However, I personally take a third approach, which is that scientific evidence actually supports theistic belief. In fact, across a wide range of sciences, evidence has come to light in the last fifty years which, taken together, provides a robust case for theism. Only theism can provide an intellectually satisfying causal explanation for all of this evidence."

Stephen C. Meyer

8. Are science and faith at odds? Can science and faith *ever* be compatible? Must a science-minded person reject religious beliefs? Explain your answers.

"God gave us ... two powerful and well-matched abilities: to prove things we find hard to believe and to believe in things we find hard to prove."

— Michael Guillen, *Can a Smart Person Believe in God?*

THINK ABOUT THIS!

"I believe only and alone in the service of Jesus Christ. In him is all refuge and solace."

Johannes Kepler, who discovered the laws
of planetary motion and elliptical orbits

"At the center of every human being is a God-shaped vacuum which can only be filled by Jesus Christ."

Blaise Pascal, father of the mathematical theory
of probability and combinational analysis

"If we need an atheist for a debate, I'd go to the philosophy department — the physics department isn't much use."

Charles Coulson, an architect of molecular orbital theory

"I think of God as the greatest scientist. We human scientists have an opportunity to understand the elegance and wisdom of God's creation in a way that is truly exhilarating. When a scientist discovers something that no human knew before, but God did — that is both an occasion for scientific excitement and, for a believer, also an occasion for worship."

Francis Collins, director of the Human Genome Project,
which first mapped all the genes of human beings

9. To what extent can we separate ourselves from our own biases? How much do our religious or atheistic preconceived notions and worldview taint the conclusions we draw? How might *your* current view of God — positive or negative — affect the way you assess the scientific evidence for his existence?

THINK ABOUT THIS!

"Question boldly even the existence of God."

Thomas Jefferson

"Do not be afraid to be free thinkers. If you think strongly enough, you will be forced by science to the belief in God."

William Thompson, physical scientist and teacher

"Let's have a new period in the history of science where we have methodological rules that actually foster the unfettered seeking of truth. Scientists should be allowed to follow the evidence wherever it leads — even if it leads to a conclusion that makes some people uncomfortable."

Stephen C. Meyer

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for Those Investigating Christianity

- Is there any limit to what man can discover scientifically? If so, what are the limits of science? If not, what are the possibilities?
- Which of the following statements do you think are true in spite of the fact that they cannot be tested or validated scientifically? What are some other examples of traits, values, or truths that exist but cannot be explained by science alone?
 - Humans have the capacity to love.
 - Humans have the capacity to self-reflect.
 - Humans have consciences.
 - Humans are creative creatures.
 - It is better to love than to hate.
 - It is wrong to murder an innocent person.
- Because scientific theories can change over time, how reliable is what we learn from science today? To what extent do you think future scientific discoveries will disprove current scientific understanding?
- Do most people you know believe that Christianity and evolution are either/or concepts or both/and ideas? Do you agree with Lee's conclusion that if life emerged out of naturalistic circumstances, God is out of a job?
- Physicist John Polkinghorne asserts that science and religion are friends, not foes, united by the common quest for knowledge. Do you agree with this assertion? Are you open to the possibility? Why or why not?

Between Sessions

Personal Reflection

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

(Jeremiah 29:11–13)

1. Do you gravitate toward or away from scientific inquiry? What about religious inquiry? How curious are you about God?
2. Carefully meditate on the above verses from Jeremiah and just imagine these are God’s words to you personally. What is your response? Are you skeptical? Bemused? Cynical? Or do you feel a spark of hope that this concept might be real? Try this exercise: Suspend your disbelief, just for a moment, and consider the possibility that God is real, that he cares about you, and that he invites you to seek and find him. How does this possibility impact you?

3. Now reread the promise made to you in the last sentence of the Jeremiah passage. What if God is real and keeps all his promises? Notice, though, that the promise is conditional—you must do your part. How willing are you to seek truth sincerely with your whole heart and to follow the evidence wherever it leads? What might hold you back from such an open-minded search?
4. Jesus once had a conversation with one of his followers who admitted to him, “Lord, I believe, now help me with my unbelief!” Can you relate in any way to this man’s honest and heartfelt plea? How surprising is it to you to discover that the Bible identifies many people who faced doubts about God, and yet he answered them? You can rest assured that God welcomes your objections, questions, and doubts—and that he even invites you to come to him with your unbelief!

Personal Reading

Please read the following book content in preparation for session two:

The Case for a Creator, chapter 2: The Images of Evolution

The Case for a Creator, chapter 3: Doubts about Darwinism

Or, *The Case for a Creator Student Edition*, chapter 3: Exploring
Evolution