

B L I N D F A I T H

WEEK 1 GROUP GUIDE | MESSAGE BY SHAWN JOHNSON

START

To get things started, let's go around the circle and answer this question:

Are you a winter person or a summer person and why? Prepare to defend your answer.

SHARE

Welcome to our series, "Blind Faith."

We all have faith in something. Whether it is faith in ourselves, faith in God or faith in something or someone else, we all have faith. Faith is developed by the belief in what we perceive to be evidence. Take a chair for example: when we sit down in it, we are trusting that the chair will support us. Because of our past experience, we have faith that the chair will hold us. Our belief system isn't really all that blind.

There are reasons behind why we believe what we believe. For some, our belief system is based on truth, for others it might be based on something completely false, but is still a belief. We can feel emotionally strong about something and it still is untrue. We can also feel that something is completely false, when in reality it is completely true.

So what about faith in God? Is there enough evidence to point to a loving God who exists and knows your name? Are there logical reasons to believe in God? Does our notion of right and wrong in the universe point to a higher law given by God? What is the actual evidence that the Bible is trustworthy and without error? And ultimately, we know Jesus of Nazareth historically lived on this earth and made outrageous claims of being God in the flesh, but did he really prove it by resurrecting from the dead? Is Jesus really the only way to Heaven?

These are real questions that deserve real, intelligent answers. For far too long people have thought of Christianity as a blind faith. Throughout this series, we hope God will open your eyes and hearts to what we believe is the irrefutable evidence established by logic, reason, historical facts, and experience.

This entire series is based on questions we have received from people attending Red Rocks Church. We are grateful that so many of you sent in these great questions and we will do our best to help answer them. When it really comes down to it, regardless of how airtight the apologetics and arguments for God's existence are, we trust God will speak to you and reveal himself to you throughout this series.

To get started, instead of jumping right into the cosmological, teleological or moral arguments for God's existence, we want to start with a scripture found in Isaiah, where God makes a declaration about himself.

Let's read Isaiah 55:8-9

The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith talks about the importance of these two verses:

The statement that God's ways and thoughts are different from those of human beings does not mean that people can never expect to understand anything about Him or follow His ways. He reveals what His people need to know to return to Him (vv. 6–7) and to obey Him (see Dt 29:29), and what He has in store for those who love Him (1 Co 2:9–10). The statement needs to be understood in the light of where Isaiah was carrying this thought: Unlike human ways and thoughts, God's will produce the results He desires in the restoration of His people (Is 55:12–13). It is through His word that He will accomplish His purpose; it will "return to Me" (v. 11). God's word does not coincide with human worldviews which are all off center. But when His people return God's word to Him, they are changed people. They have received God's word and it has done its work within them. It has transformed both heart and mind.

As Christians, we believe in the God of the Bible, however you might be in this life group and you are still weighing the evidence and not sure about whether there is a God. If that is you, this is a perfect study to be able to ask some questions you probably have.

If there is a God, which Christians believe there is, do you think that God might have ways and thinking that would be higher or different than our human thinking?

If you struggle to believe that there is a God that exists, what would be the biggest question or reason why?

If you are a Christ follower, do you recall what was your biggest hang up in believing in God? Do you remember what helped answer some of those questions for you?

G R O W

In the message, Shawn talked about his trip to New Delhi, India and visiting the red light district. In the red light district, mere children were forced into being used to make money for sex traffickers. Inevitably, they would get pregnant and these young mothers would have children, who then would be forced to hide under the beds, while the mothers would be forced to do their jobs with their kids present. It is heart-breaking—what we would call absolute evil—to see those precious kids ripped from their childhoods and enslaved for someone else's profit.

Whether we are Christians or atheists, we can all agree that is wrong. We agree that it is destructive and heart-wrenching to see happen to someone. **Why?** Have we developed these feelings from evolution or social construction? Why is it that we seem to be hard-wired with a sense of what is right and wrong? If there is no God and no such thing as a higher law, then we have nothing to tell us this is wrong, but simply evolution taking place where the strong survive and the weak are eliminated.

Consider murder, sex trafficking, child abuse, and rape. These things are just wrong and we all agree it is an awful thing. But again, why? There are many intelligent arguments for the existence of God. One of these is called "The Moral Argument."

The Moral Argument:

1. Every law has a law giver
2. There is a moral law
3. Therefore, there is a moral law giver

Read Romans 2:14-16

Again, *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* explains, “Paul was speaking of Gentiles in general who respond positively to their moral sense and the light they have in ways that correspond to God’s intentions, which correspond to the law Jews received.” Paul is telling us that this moral law, established by God, is more or less followed by those who don’t believe in God because God weaves it into their hearts. We understand it to be true, even if we disagree that a God exists.

The NIV Bible translation states it as “the law is written on our hearts.” We have a right and wrong hard-wired into our beings because a Creator God put it there.

What examples can you think of where people who don’t believe in God still believe in the moral law?

M O V E

There are many reasons people have for not believing in God. The moral argument is a strong and logical one that helps point people to consider the validity of the existence of God. Shawn talked about a second issue that people have with either the existence of God or believing that there could really be a good and loving God. The problem people have is that if God was good, there would not be evil or suffering in the world. If we are able to confidently verbalize that we believe there is evil and suffering, then we believe there should be another kind of world. We are saying that there is a better version. Evil and suffering in the world today, although confusing to us, don’t point us away from God. The fact that we can recognize moral failure, pain, and evil point us *toward* the existence of God. Just because we can’t think of a good reason for God to allow something painful to happen, doesn’t mean that there isn’t a reason that we just might not understand right now.

Until eternity, we won’t understand all the reasons a loving God would allow suffering in the world, but we know that because God allowed his own son to live among us, to suffer and to die for our sins, we know God is not indifferent, but cares deeply, even when we suffer. Our pain should not push us away from God, but should draw us to Him, to approach him boldly to speak honestly with him.

Hebrew 4:16

Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Do you think God can handle your pain and frustration?

According to scripture, what does God want to give us in our time of need?

Is there one question about God that you would ask the group to help you find some answers to this week?

P R A Y

Let’s take some time and pray for one another. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women’s groups to talk more freely.

T O G O

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:13