

CONVERSING WITH CRITICS

Discussion Guide

1. To what extent have you encountered people who hold an atheistic worldview? What do you think and feel in the presence of these people?
 2. Which of the Six Contentions posited by the New Atheists do you feel you have the most to say to from your own education or experience?
 3. Which of the Six Contentions advanced by the New Atheists create the most significant doubt for you?
 4. How would you describe “the reason” for your faith or skepticism?
 5. Of the two destructive patterns identified (Caricature and Dichotomizing) which is the most current for you.
 6. What phrase, verse, paragraph particularly speaks to you from the Scripture readings?
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Jude 1:3-4 ³ Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. ⁴ For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

1 Peter 3:15 ¹⁵ But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

2 Timothy 2:23-25 “Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth.”

Titus 3:1-9 ¹ Remind the people... ² to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. ³ At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. ⁴ But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. ⁸ This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. ⁹ But avoid foolish controversies... because these are unprofitable and useless.

Matthew 5:43-44 ⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.