

life group study guide

5/31/2015 **NON-FICTION**

CREATION REVEALS A CREATOR

OPENING QUESTION:

DQ: Has there ever been a time in your life when you questioned the existence of God? If so, what were the circumstances surrounding that time and what were your questions?

BELIEF IN A CREATOR:

READ PSALM 19.1-6 & ROMANS 1:20

DQ:

- When was the last time creation drew your attention to God's glory?
- What was it specifically that captured your attention?
- Are you generally pretty attentive to nature, or are you someone who is more oblivious to nature's glory?

PSALM 19 -- "The heavens" are not divine, nor do they control or disclose anyone's destiny. What they do is testify to the existence of a Creator God. They also testify to the character and attributes of God -- his faithfulness, power, creativity and more! *Visible creation is the radiant and stately robe with which the invisible Creator has clothed himself to display his glory.*

ROMANS 1:20 -- No one who has not heard of the Bible or of Christ has an excuse for not honoring God, because the whole creation reveals the Creator.

- From this small, yet potent, verse it is explained that God expects us to believe in him based on comprehensible evidence.

DQ: What do you think it would take for everyone in the world to become completely convinced that God exists?

REMEMBER: *If we could prove God exists beyond all doubt – he wouldn't be much of a God because he would be subject to the time, space, and logic we live within.*

EVIDENCE FOR A CREATOR:

DQ: What do you believe about the beginning of the universe up to this point?

DQ: What have you been taught? How many have studied evolution at school? How has evolution been presented to you in the past in secular and Christian settings?

DQ: Why do you think the theory of evolution is so popular?

DQ: *How does one's belief regarding creation (or evolution) affect one's faith?*

Here are some pieces of evidence for a Creator God:

- 1) The beginning of the universe points to a **Divine Originator**
 - Whatever has a beginning has a cause.

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- Scientists pointing toward Big Bang Theory – event that begs the question – Who or what put the matter and energy into the universe? What cause produced this effect?
 - Even if believed in evolution theory of primordial soup – where did those beginning chemicals come from?
- 2) Design in the Universe points towards an **Intelligent Designer**,
- Mousetrap—take one piece out of this and it doesn't work (wood, spring, lever). And it's simple!!
 - If you find a watch on the ground, you immediately surmise it is not a fluke of nature. Watches, by virtue of their complexity and design, require a watchmaker.
 - Whenever something shows evidence of having been made for a purpose, it points us back instinctively to a cause behind it, or an intelligent designer.
- 3) Fine tuning in the universe points to an intentional **Fine Tuner**
- Lots of examples of areas in which the universe had to fall within extremely narrow tolerances for any kind of life to exist. (strength of gravity, oxygen, temperature, humidity, seismic activity, systems that replenish air, produce food, generate energy, dispose waste, etc.)
 - Size of the earth – just right; the closeness to the sun – just right;
 - Over the past thirty years or so, scientist have discovered that just about everything about the basic structure of the universe is balanced on a razor's edge for life to exist.
 - These are so precise that if anyone of them would vary the most minute faction – a millionth of a percent, no life would be possible.
 - The coincidences are far too fantastic to attribute this to mere chance or to claim that it needs no explanation.

DQ: Would the universe fall apart without the sustaining power of the Creator?

- 4) Information encoded into DNA points to a **Divine Encoder**
- In each cell in the human body – there is more information than in all 30 volumes of the Encyclopedia Britannica.
 - We've found the incredible scope of the real biological language in which information-literally, the library of instructions by which living organisms are put together – is contained and conveyed. Information is not recorded and communicated by mere chance.

DQ:

- Which of these points do you have about, before today?
- Which of these arguments for God's existence seem most helpful to you in explaining the plausibility of God's existence?
- Have you ever used this argument in a discussion with a non-believer?
 - Was it convincing to them?

CONVINCING OTHERS THAT THERE IS A CREATOR:

- Other ancient civilizations attributed creation and natural forces to a divine being, just not the One True God. For example, the Canaanite God, Baal was thought to be the divine power present in the thunderstorm. The Israelites and early Christians had to uphold the existence of the One True Creator God in the midst of polytheism. People recognized many gods as having a role in creation and natural phenomena.
- Although there are still some people-groups who believe in other gods in creation, most modern Christians find themselves arguing the existence of the One True Creator God in the arena with science. Many modern people believe science answers all questions regarding creation.
 - Scientific method began in the 16th century among people who were Christians. They were breaking with Greek's who viewed the universe as capricious and irregular and not capable of systematic study.
 - These Christians reasoned that the universe must be orderly and worthy of investigation because it was the work of an intelligent Creator. *In pursuing scientific research they were convinced that they were thinking God's thoughts after him.*

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- But recently, there has been a move from the use and application of scientific knowledge to an ideology of scientism.
- Explanation of scientism – only naturalistic explanations (as opposed to supernatural ones) will be considered as possible causes or explanations, regardless of the topic or the strength of the evidence presented.
- Instead of saying, “let’s use all the logic and experience we can and then determine whether this is God or not God.” They just decree that God and all things spiritual are ruled out in advance from being true or real.
- *Example: tumor disappears. A doctor using science and observation and logic and evidence could come up with the conclusion that it was natural or was an act of God. Or that doctor could believe from the outset that a miracle healing is not even an option – has to have a natural explanation.*

DQ:

- Which arena (polytheism or science) do you think is a harder arena to be in as a Christian? Which people are harder to convince?

GETTING TO KNOW THE CREATOR:

READ PSALM 104

This Psalm says more than just God created. It reveals even more about the God who created.

- What do vs. 7-9 tell us about God? *(that God is in control and the earth obeys his boundaries)*
- What do vs. 14-15 tell us about God? *(He creates and gives things that sustain, make us healthy and makes us glad)*
- What do vs. 19-23 tell us about God? *(He created days and seasons so that everything has its time and place. He is a God of order).*
- What do vs. 27 – 29 tell us about God? *(He sustains the earth and makes decisions about living, sustaining, dying)*
- What do vs. 31&32 tell us about God? *(He rejoices in his work, but he is also powerful and mighty over his creation—so much so that he could undo it with a touch or a look)*

BEING IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CREATOR:

DQ:

- Why did God create Eden the way that he did?
- Why does God sustain such a beautiful and diverse and abundant creation even in the midst of a sinful world?

God created a beautiful, varied, sustaining, creative, abundant creation at the beginning of time. Why? To fill the earth? To show off? Or could it have been all to bless Adam & Eve. It was for Adam & Eve’s pleasure and delight. But when Adam & Eve chose to sin, creation was affected—it suffered. The ground was cursed. The relationship between creation and humans changed. But notice, that even though creation was affected by our sin, God did not totally take away the blessings of the splendor of his created world. The original splendor is still visible. God planned that creation would be part of his revelation to a fallen world; part of the gospel; a tool to win back his beloved.

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BEING MOVED TO WORSHIP BY OUR CREATOR:

And our Creator is Extravagant!

Consider these facts:

NUMBER:

- Currently, scientists have named and successfully classified over 1.5 million species.
- It is estimated that there are as little as 2 million to as many as 50 million more species that have not yet been found and/or have been incorrectly classified
- Of all known forms of life, only about ten percent are still living today.

SMELLS:

- While we usually don't notice, our brain is continually deciphering between 50,000 distinct cataloged smells.
 - Do we really need to be able to distinguish 50,000 different smells?

COLORS:

- Functionally, there needed to be no bright colors. Human beings could have survived on a bleak planet of gray ground and colorless plants.
- Not all leaves (on trees) turn the same color. Some are radiant yellow, some are bright gold, some are scarlets. Some are pinkish brown. Some are red. An odd feature of the colors (on trees) is that they don't seem to have a special purpose. There is no adaptive reason for leaves to color so beautifully in the fall.

AND

- How about the billion stars at night? The endless different variations in the appearance of sunrise, sunset and the moon? The different climates, landscapes, seasons, etc.

God's abundance is all part of God's glory. And He is showing us his glory all day long, all week long, all year long, all of our lifetime, because that's who He is.

Creation leads the Psalmist to sing, praise, meditate, rejoice (Psalm 104:33-34).

DQ: Is believing in a Creator enough? Does nature and creation create awe in us? Does it drive us to praise our God the Creator?

Creation should move us to praise and worship as well. Especially when we consider that our Creator God created all he did, in the way that he did, in order to win back a lost world. In order to win back us, his beloved. That is awesome!

OTHER SCRIPTURE:

John 1.1-4; Genesis 1, Job 38, Psalm 29

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