

TO THE GROUP LEADER: This resource is designed to help you lead others to better understand one of the “Basics of the Faith” booklets published by P&R. The numbers in brackets indicate the page number in the booklet. Below each question is an answer based on what the author presents, or advice on how to discuss the question. You have the freedom to adapt the questions to best fit your group.

A good teaching technique is to distribute the questions to the group and have them write down how they would answer BEFORE reading the booklet. After reading, members can refine their answers based on their reading. As a group, members can discuss their views to affirm or modify what they wrote.

1. This question: “Why believe in God?” is an ever present question asked of us often. In one or two sentences, how would you answer this? (5-6)
Start the group study by asking each what they wrote down before reading the booklet. Then ask them if they made any changes after reading.
2. Where, in the Bible, can you take someone to show them where God Himself sets out to prove He exists? (6-10)
Herein lies this most important truth: God *never* sets out to prove He exists. He is God. He alone created everything that exists. It is not up to Him to prove He exists; it is up to people to prove He *doesn't* exist. And this, they will never be able to do!
3. Read Romans 1:18-23. How might you use Paul’s words to prove to someone God exists? (10-15)
There is a lot here to work with. Let the group slowly unfold all Paul is saying. Bring in the arguments presented in the booklet regarding what we know “instinctively.” Have someone read Rom.2:12-16. Go over this with them, using especially verses 14-15. Here Paul makes clear God has put these truths into our hearts, which is why He said in 1:18 that unsaved people “suppress the truth” which they know by nature or conscience.
4. What can a person “know” about God simply by observing nature? (16-20)
There has never been a people group found anywhere in the world, no matter how remote the location, that did not have a belief system in place. They believe there is something greater than themselves. Many of them make idols of what they think this greater power might look like. They have two other things in common as well: they all have a creation story, and they all have a flood story.
5. What *can* and what can we *not* know about God just from creation? (16-21)
It must be made clear, all a person can know about God through the creation itself is that God exists and He is powerful enough to make all there is. There are a few other truths, but those would be the big ones. What we cannot know about God from creation is His personal care for us and all He has done to restore a broken relationship with Him lost in the Fall. The whole story of Jesus cannot be known from creation. But, the great news is, if anyone will set out to know the truth, “You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.” (Jer.29:13)
6. What would you say is the first and primary reason God gave us the Bible? (21-26)
Get as many answer as possible, knowing that most of them will be things like: so we can know how to get saved or how we should live. All, or most, of the answers will be true, but the number one reason He gave us His Word, is as a revelation of Himself to us. The only way we can truly come to know Him is through what He tells us about Himself. Whenever you study the Bible it should always be done by **first asking the question: What is God teaching us in this passage about Himself? If we will start here each time, we will find all the rest of our questions answered about salvation, etc.**

7. Read 2 Corinthians 4:4. If this is partly how sinful people are kept from the Truth, what needs to be done to counter-act what Satan and sin are doing? (26-28)
 Have someone in the group read 1 Cor. 2:6-16. Ask it to be read slowly so it can be thought through.
 It is only by the illuminating work of God the Holy Spirit that we can ever understand the Bible and come to understand God: Who He is and all He wants to do. Left to ourselves, we do not have the ability to comprehend the mind of God, but when the Holy Spirit speaks, He gives us that ability.
8. How might the subject of the resurrection of Jesus be used in witnessing to people about the existence of God? (28-30)¹
 There are seven sermons in the book of Acts – all in an evangelistic context. There is only one theme that consistently runs through each – the resurrection. None of them try to prove God’s existence; they each proclaim God exists and what He has done in Christ to reconcile the world to Himself. Perhaps our efforts to try to prove His existence should be changed to argue as did the early church – we are separated from God because of our sin, and He Himself took care of this on the cross and proved everything to be true on the basis of bringing Christ back from the dead.
9. What difference does it make if God really exists?
 There are at least two responses to this question. The First, and most obvious answer is nothing would exist. Everything forming by chance just could not happen, even scientifically. Second, even if everything did exist, it would be meaningless. No one would have a purpose in being since there is nothing beyond this life. That leaves all of life as being hopeless, except for what we would make up, and that still would not help as each would make up his own purpose. There would be no difference between us and the animals. [We eat animals, why not eat people?] There would be no rules, except for the arbitrary rules we would make up and probably never all agree on. Who would want to live in a world like that?

After going through these questions, read the text and fill in the answers in preparation for class. Write down other questions you might have here...

APPLICATION

God’s greatest revelation of Himself was in Jesus. We get to know Jesus only by studying about Him in the book God gave us – the Bible. Whether you are a Christian or not, this exercise will help you understand Who God is and what He has done for us.

Do a focused study in the Book of John. Take notes on a sheet of paper divided as follows:

Chapter and verse	What does this account teach me about God, Jesus, and His Holy Spirit?	What does this account teach me about what God requires of the individual(s) in the story?	What is God expecting of me and my life? What, then, must I do?
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You can use this format to study any part of the Bible. This is how we should be studying the Bible, since it is God’s revelation of Himself to us. No matter where you are in life, these are the most important questions we need to be working through. Make it a habit.

For Further Study

Should You Believe in God? Christian Answers to Hard Questions Series, K. Scott Oliphint. P&R, 2013.
What is Faith? Basics of the Faith Series, Guy M. Richard. P&R, 2012.
Getting to Know John’s Gospel: A Fresh Look at its Main Ideas, Robert A. Peterson. P&R, 1989.

Find these and more at www.pcabookstore.com.

¹ The seven sermons in Acts: 2:14-36; 3:11-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-32; 7:1-53; 10:34-43; 13:16-41; 17:22-31