

*Discussion Questions*

# The Basics of the Faith



Discipleship  
Course

# Discussion Topics

Finding God: Journeys to Faith

What does it mean to be 'born *anóthen*'?

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# Finding God: Journeys To Faith

**Q1** Richard Dawkins and other atheists claim that Christians are deluded because their belief in God is blind faith without evidence. Are they right?

**Q2** What evidence does Paul say in **ROMANS 1:18-23** God has given of his existence? What reason does he give why many people do not believe in God? What are some of the obstacles to belief in God through faith in Jesus Christ?

**Q3** The Bible claims to be a record of some of the ways God has revealed himself to human beings in history. What are they?

**Q4** Stephen Hawking in his book *The Grand Design* wrote:

*"Because there is a law such as gravity, the Universe can and will create itself from nothing. ...Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing why the universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going."*

Peter Atkins, Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University claims:

*"There is no reason to suppose that science cannot deal with every aspect of existence. There is nothing that cannot be understood."*

Do you agree with these writers? If not, why not?

[For more on this see KNOW GOD: Science & Religious Beliefs: Challenges to faith]

**Q5** In JOURNEYS TO FAITH you can find examples of people who have found God. Can you identify with any of their experiences? What is common to all of them?

**Q6** In the *RESOURCES FOR GROUPS* section of the website, you will see a map of various routes to faith outlined like a map of tube stations.

Share your journey to faith so far and compare it with some of the routes shown on the map.

**Q7** How might one know that God is real?



### What does it mean to “be born again?”

*Can I be a Christian without being born again?*

**Q1** Read **JOHN 3:1-36** Nicodemus' visit to see Jesus.

What does Jesus tell Nicodemus has to happen before he can get into heaven?

**Q2** Why was Nicodemus confused when Jesus said: “*You must be born anothen?*”

**Q3** To become a Christian involves two things that only God can do and two things only I can do. What are they? (Look at **JOHN 16:8-11**)

**Q4** What did Jesus mean when he said: “*Flesh gives birth to flesh; the Spirit gives birth to spirit?*”

**Q5** What do the two Greek words bios and zoe mean?

**Q6** How did people in the New Testament and in Church history (for example, Paul, Cornelius, Martin Luther, John Wesley, and Charles Spurgeon) know they had been born again?

**Q7** What evidence would you expect to see in someone who has been born *anothen*?



### Baptism in water and in Spirit

*Why do I need to be baptised in both?*

**Q1** Read **MATTHEW 3:10-17** Jesus' Baptism in the River Jordan. Why was Jesus baptised?

**Q2** Read **ROMANS 6 :1-7** Baptism as a Picture of Death & Resurrection Paul uses believer's baptism by full immersion as a picture.

Going down under the water symbolises.....

Rising up out of the water symbolises.....

**Q3** Jesus' was baptised in water and in the Holy Spirit simultaneously. What happened when the Spirit descended on him? Why was this important?

**Q4** In The Book of ACTS we see different individuals at different times being baptised in water and in Holy Spirit in two other ways. What are they?

**Q5** Read **ACTS 10:1-48** A Roman Centurion and **ACTS 19:1-7** Twelve Elders at Ephesus. Was Cornelius baptised in water or the Spirit first?

What about the elders in Ephesus?

**Q6** What is the difference between baptism in water and baptism in Spirit? (vv4-6)

**Q7** Does it matter in what order a person is baptised in water and in Spirit? What is the important thing to notice?

### Walking with Jesus day by day

**Q1** What four spiritual disciplines did Jesus practise every day in order to maintain a close relationship with God as his heavenly Father? Do you practise any of them - every day - from time to time.

**Q2** How did Jesus listen to what God might be saying to him?

**Q3** In **JOHN 10:27** Jesus promises his sheep will hear his voice. Have you heard Jesus speaking to you? How did you know it was God?

[For more on LISTENING TO GOD, download the pdf from Resources]

**Q4** What does The Lord's Prayer teach us about the way we should pray to God?

**Q5** What are the two main methods of Bible reading?  
How often do you read the Bible?  
Every day, Regularly, Sometimes?

**Q6** What kind of Bible reading method do you use?

- Using Bible reading notes
- Choosing a passage for myself
- Following a Bible reading plan
- Systematic study of a book, theme or

**Q7** What is "Biblical meditation"? In what way is it different from New Age practices like Transcendental Meditation (TM) or Yoga

**Q8** Do you keep a spiritual journal? Why is it useful to keep one?

**Q9** What forms of praise and worship do you enjoy using to worship God?

**Q10** Why did Jesus say "when..." not "If you fast" to the disciples?  
Do you practise fasting at all?  
What are the purposes of fasting?

# The battle of the old vs the new nature

*Why is the Christian life such a battle?*

**Q1** What does Paul mean when he talks of The Flesh and The Spirit? Why does he say the Christian life is a battle in **ROMANS 7**?

**Q2** What are the three parts of an individual's Soul? Why are they not renewed at conversion?

**Q3** **1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-16** The Difference between The Soul & The Spirit

Can an unconverted person understand spiritual truth? If not, why not? What happens at conversion to a person's spirit?

**Q4** Look at *KNOW YOUR ENEMIES*

- a. What three main enemies confront us as Christians?
- b. What does it mean to
  - i. crucify the flesh,
  - ii. be renewed in your mind,
  - iii. submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee?

**Q5** What spiritual armour and weapons does Paul mention in **EPHESIANS 6:10-18**? Where are they all to be found?

**Q6** What is special about the warriors, weapons and warfare Paul mentions in **2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5**?

**Q7** How are The Law of Gravity and The Law of Aerodynamics pictures of the battle between the Flesh and the Spirit?



## Spiritual Warfare

### *The warfare, warriors & weapons*

**Q1** Read **1 JOHN 3:8** What was Jesus' mission?

Read **MARK 1:14-34**. What happened as soon as Jesus began his earthly ministry?

**Q2** Read **2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5** and **EPHESIANS 6:10-18**.

How does Paul describe the warfare, warriors and weapons Christians are engaged in?

Where are our armour and weapons to be found?  
What other weapons do we have?

**Q3** How did Jesus defeat satan in the desert? **MATTHEW 4:1-11**

**Q4** What are the enemies of our lives as Christians?

How does James say we can defeat them? (**JAMES 4:7**)

**Q5** What experience have members of the group had of the reality of spiritual warfare? How did you cope with enemy attacks?



# The problem of evil and suffering

*Why do bad things happen to good people?*

**Q1** Do you believe good and evil are absolutely real, or do they just depend on someone's personal point of view?

**Q2** Why is evil only a problem for someone who believes in God?

What is the classic statement of the problem of evil?

**Q3** How does the Bible describe the origin of evil and suffering?

Where did the problem start?

**Q4** What were three major consequences of Adam and Eve's disobedience?

How are we affected by them today?

**Q5** What is God's answer to the problem of evil?

What were the results of Jesus' death on the Cross?

**Q6** How has God demonstrated his answer through the death, resurrection & ascension of Jesus Christ?

**Q7** If Jesus' death and resurrection have defeated all the powers of hell, why are evil and suffering still a problem today?

**Q8 PSALM 62:1-2** describe two aspects of God's character

### Life after death:

*How do you know Jesus really rose from the dead?*

**Q1** Read **1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-7**. Paul summarises the fundamentals of our faith as Christians. What are they?

THEORY	MAIN POINTS
LEGEND	The accounts are myths
BODY STOLEN	Disciples hid the body
SWOON	Jesus was not really dead
HALLUCINATION	Hallucination through grief
WRONG TOMB	Women went to wrong tomb

**Q2** What theories have people put forward to cast doubt on the reality of Jesus' resurrection? What are the problems with each?

**Q3** What evidence is there that Jesus really did rise from the tomb?

**Q4** Read **JOHN 7:37-39**; **2 CORINTHIANS 1:22** and **5:5**; **EPHESIANS 1:13-14**

Paul uses the Greek word *arrabon* in these passages in talking of the Holy Spirit. What two meanings does the word have?

What did Jesus promise to all who are thirsty and come to him to take him into their lives?

**Q5** What else did Jesus promise his disciples in **JOHN 10:27** and **14:6**?

**Q6** Do you know that you are going to be with Jesus in heaven when you die?

### Two pictures of the church:

#### *The Church as The Body of Christ & The Family of God*

**Q1** What happens when someone is born again from above by the Spirit of God?

**Q2** What are the differences between the Visible and Invisible Church?

**Q3** What is meant by the difference between religion and relationship? What makes the difference? How can you see the difference in the life of John Wesley?

**Q4** Read **1 CORINTHIANS 12**.

How does Paul describe the Church? Who is the Head of the Church? What are we?

**Q5** What does Paul say needs to happen for the Body of Christ to be healthy?

**Q6** How might we discover our role(s), gift(s) and ministry in the Body? Do you know what your role is?

**Q7** Read **ACTS 2:42-47**. What features of a healthy fellowship do we see in the early Church? How many of these features do you see in your own fellowship?



## The Lord's supper: Holy communion

*Its meaning and importance in the life of the church*

**Q1** Read **LUKE 22:1-30** and **1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26**.

Why do we celebrate the Lord's Supper? What are its origins?

**Q2** What is the Jewish seder? In what way(s) is it linked to Holy Communion?

**Q3** When Jesus told his followers to celebrate the Lord's Supper, what did he say it was to be?

- a. A re-enactment of his death on the Cross?
- b. A sacrifice like the Old Testament sacrifices of the Old Covenant?
- c. A reminder/memorial of what it cost God to forgive our sins and save us from hell?

**Q4** What do the bread and wine symbolise?

**Q5** In **1 CORINTHIANS 11:27-28** Paul says we should do what when we come to celebrate the Lord's Supper? Why?

**Q6** Why is it important for Christians to come together to share the Lord's Supper?



## Sharing Christ's Compassion

- Q1** What is the origin of Christian missions?
- Q2** What is meant by 'The Love Cycle' of Christian missions?
- Q3** What did Jesus command his disciples to do?
- Q4** Why does Dallas Willard say the Church has been disobedient?
- Q5** How does Christian mission start?
- Q6** Choose a Christian organization and trace its growth from its beginning to the present day, noting
  - a. How it began
  - b. How does it show Christ's compassion?
  - c. Is it obedient to The Great Commission?
- Q7** Has anyone in the group experienced the call of God to mission? How did the call come?

# NOTES



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