



GOD QUESTIONS

LifeGroup Study

“Is There Really a God?”

April 28th, 2019

The question of God’s existence is a vital question everyone must answer. While one may not be able to “prove” the existence of God the evidence leans heavily toward indicating that He is for real. In today’s session we will examine some of the evidence by watching a talk that Ravi Zacharias gave at Princeton University entitled, “Why I’m Not an Atheist”. Ravi Zacharias is president of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries. Born in India, he has lectured in more than fifty countries and in several of the world’s most prominent universities.

ICBREAKER: If you could ask God one question, what would you want to ask Him?

MEMORY VERSE: *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*

Hebrews 11:6. NIV

STUDY:

For today’s study your group is going to watch a video of a talk that Ravi Zacharias, Christian apologist and author, gave at Princeton University, entitled, “Why I am Not an Atheist.”

Ravi packs a lot in his talk! Below are some of the quotes and stories he shares in his talk, as well as his four ramifications of being an atheist. As you watch the video, use these notes as a reference and write down other insights you have along the way.

VIDEO LINK: Ravi’s Talk at Princeton University.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6aDoOzYN-U>

VIDEO NOTES

Without God we have no point of testing what defines the most critical elements of life.

Story – Ravi speaking on a defense of theism at the Lenin Military Academy in Moscow. The head of the academy said to Ravi, “I’m afraid I think you are right. But it’s very difficult to change after 70 years of believing a lie.”

Two Positions of Belief about the Existence of God

Agnosticism – I don’t know if God exists or not.

Atheism – “The deliberate, definite, dogmatic denial of the existence of God. The absolute denial of the absolute.” Etienne Borne

Four Ramifications of Atheism

1) The Difficulty of Coming up with a Moral Law

7 Forms of Humanism – there is no consensus between those who try to find a basis for moral law outside of God.

Auschwitz story

“I want to raise a generation of young people devoid of a conscience, imperious, relentless and cruel.” Adolf Hitler

“If moral imperatives are not commanded by God’s will and if they are not in some sense absolute then what ought to be is a matter of what any one of us decides should be. There is no other source of judgment.” Richard Rorty

“I cannot live as though ethical values are simply a matter of my personal taste and therefore I have found my own views quite incredible. I don’t know what the answer is.” Bertrand Russell

King Crimson – Schizoid Man – sometimes the poets and artists are best at connecting the head to the heart.

“Why am I not an atheist? I simply cannot find a rationally defensible way for moral reasoning.” Ravi Zacharias

2) The Difficulty of Arriving at the Reality of Meaning

How do we arrive at the reality of meaning? Are we entitled to our own definition of meaning?

“We often assume meaningless in our lives comes from being weary of pain. The ultimate meaninglessness comes from being weary of pleasure.” Ravi Zacharias

Sense and Sensuality – Jesus talks to Oscar Wilde.

Ravi’s conversion story – man who bought him a bible

7th richest man in the world – “I’m lonely.”

“When he could buy everything he wanted he had never reached such a lonely moment as that.”

3) There is no Hope

Death becomes the ultimate equalizer. There is no ultimate difference between Mother Theresa and Adolf Hitler.

Thomas Aquinas – the disciples did not participate in group think. They each died alone for what they believed – not an hallucination.

Jean Paul Sartre – I found my philosophy unlivable.

4) Coming to the end of life and saying, “I’ve got to change my mind,” What Then?

End of life questions.

Jean Paul Sartre – I found my philosophy unlivable.

Frank Schaeffer – Huffington Post tribute to his mom. “Mom. You win. I believe.”

Anthony Flew – “If there is any absolute truth it will have to be in the person of Jesus Christ.”

Pascal’s Wager. Evangelical Christian – at the end of life if I’m wrong I have no regrets. But how inestimable is the life of one who rejects God and finds out he or she was wrong.

Matthew Paris – atheist from Malawi

“An ethical theory is not what Africa needs. It needs the Gospel of regeneration and the Gospel of redemption.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you find most compelling about Ravi’s talk?
- If you were an atheist, what question or objection might you have to Ravi’s presentation?
- Do you think this kind of talk might convince an atheist to change his or her position? Why or why not?
- Have you had a faith conversation recently with someone who holds a different theological position than you do? What was that like?

READ: Hebrews 11:1-6

- How would you describe Christian faith to someone in one sentence?
- Is it OK for a Christ follower to have doubts about God and faith? Why or why not?
- What key takeaway will you have from this session’s study?