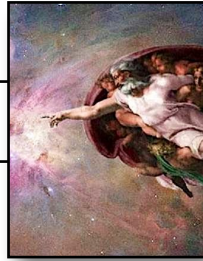


The Existence of God

*"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
Genesis 1:1 NLT*



- What do **George Perdakis**, founder of the Christian band, the Newsboys, **Joshua Harris**, megachurch pastor and author of the Christian book "I Kissed Dating Goodbye," **Bart Ehrman**, New Testament scholar who grew up in a fundamentalist church, and Christian recording artist, **Michael Gungor**, have in common? They all claim to be atheists!

Between 2003 and 2006, the Harris poll finds an increase in Americans who are not "absolutely certain" God exists, from 34% to 42%. Those certain include 93% of born-again Christians, 76% of Protestants, 64% of Catholics, and 30% of Jews. Carl Sagan said, "The cosmos is all that there is or ever was or ever will be." However, Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

The Central Lesson: God wants us to have a personal relationship with Him based on "faith" (Hebrews 11, esp. verse 6). The evidence for God is sufficient to have faith, but insufficient enough to require faith.

1. The Witness of the **HEART** (Romans 1:18-20).

"¹⁸ But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. ¹⁹ They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them (NASV - "evident within them" Greek ἐν αὐτοῖς "in them"). ²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God." Romans 1:18-20 NLT. The Amplified Bible translates this verse: "For that which is known about God is evident to them and made plain in their inner consciousness, because God [Himself] has shown it to them."

In short, Paul states that God has revealed Himself in creation and in the human heart or conscience. Disbelief is usually a **willful suppression** of the truth. Most people believe in God because their heart tells them He exists. Atheist Bertrand Russell was asked in a debate: "What will you do, Mr. Russell, if after you die you find out there is a God? What will you say to Him?" Russell answered, "I will tell Him He just did not give me enough evidence." Some people will never believe, regardless of the amount of evidence. As Paul pointed out in Romans 1:18, many people are guilty of **willful disbelief**. They **suppress the truth** because they love sin and are in rebellion against God (see 1:18-32). *How much evidence do you need? Do you hear the witness of your heart?*

2. The Witness of Changed **LIVES** - the transformation of the heart and life. "...anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT.

People worldwide and throughout history testify to their lives being changed and transformed due to accepting the Bible's teaching about sin, salvation, and trusting in Christ as their Savior. The Bible promises that anyone who trusts in Christ

becomes a **new person** (2 Corinthians 5:17). The transformation of lives in response to the gospel points to the God of the Bible.

3. The Witness of the Mind & **LOGIC** (philosophical Evidence).

— **Cosmological Argument** - means "the study of the world" and comes from the Greek words "cosmos" (world) and "logia" (study of). The cosmological argument is a "family" of arguments, not just one explanation. Throughout history, the cosmological argument has been presented by **Plato** (429-347 BC), **Aristotle** (384-322 BC), **Thomas Aquinas** (AD 1225-1274), and other ancient philosophers. One of the most popular approaches is the **Kalam Cosmological Argument**, which dates back to the 12th century to a Muslim philosopher named **Al Ghazali**. Today it has been made popular by Christian philosopher **William Lane Craig**. The Kalam Cosmological Argument is as follows:

- 1) **Whatever begins to exist has a cause.**
- 2) **The universe began to exist** - supported by the Big Bang theory—the universe is expanding and started from one central point, the Second Law of Thermodynamics—the universe is burning up its usable energy and if the universe did not have a beginning but is eternal, the usable energy would have run out in eternity past.
- 3) **Therefore, the universe has a cause.**
- 4) **The cause must be outside the created universe of time, space, and matter. It must be immaterial, timeless, all-powerful, highly intelligent, personal, etc.,** all qualities that describe God.

— **Teleological argument** - comes from the Greek word "telos" which means "design." The **design** and **fine-tuning** of the universe indicates a designer just as if you found a watch on the sidewalk. You may never have met a watchmaker, but the watch's design convinces you that a watchmaker exists. The details of creation point to a Creator.

Former atheist and now Christian, Lee Strobel, has said, "To continue in atheism, I'd need to believe nothing produces everything, non-life produces life, randomness produces fine-tuning, chaos produces information, and unconsciousness produces consciousness, and non-reason produces reason. I just didn't have that much faith."

4. The Witness of Universal **MORALS** in every culture.

"They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right." Romans 2:15 NLT. All people in all cultures have a sense of morals (it is wrong to steal, murder, rape, etc.). The existence of universal morals in people's hearts in all cultures points to a moral law-giver, God.

5. The Witness of History & the **RESURRECTION** of Christ - is evidence for an all-powerful redeeming God.

"God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this." Acts 2:32. Both secular history and the testimony of Christ's followers in the New Testament point to the historical fact of the Resurrection and God's existence.

Conclusion: God wants us to have a personal relationship with Him based on "faith" (Hebrews 11, esp. verse 6). The evidence for God is sufficient to have faith, but insufficient enough to require faith.

Action Steps: ► Receive Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to church. ► Attend a small group. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.