

Be Reformed – Open the bible: study, dig and ask what the main point of the passage is

Be Charismatic – Expect the Holy Spirit: ask God to speak, minister, build up and lead us to maturity

Be Community – Love God's people: share vulnerably, apply, pray and build each other up

Be Missional – Win the world: apply lessons to outreach, make content accessible to non-Christians

These questions were raised during a CG Leaders' meeting as questions commonly asked around this topic. The answers here are a quick reply to the questions.

Common Questions 24 Oct 2010 – How Can I Know God?



I am already in God – isn't God in everyone and everything?

God is present in everything (ie. All creation testifies of Him – Rom 1) but that is not the same as having a relationship with Him. God created everything but what He created is not God because it is creation. God is eternal – creation is not. God is perfect – creation is good. So while Rom 1 tells us that there is testimony and evidence of God in all things, this does not make us pantheists.

What is a religious experience?

Some people have experienced God in a personal and undeniable way. While this sort of experience is easily dismissed by others, it is utterly real. For example see Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus in Acts 9, noting verse 26.

While such religious experiences take many forms (there is no universal biblical prescription). A good test of a religious experience is its fruit (Gal 5, Eph 5:9, Philippians 4:17, James 3:17, Luke 6:43-44). The experience convicts one of God, changes one's life, results in enduring fruit of the spirit, gives glory to God and builds one's faith. Mere emotion is insufficient for this – a true religious experience results in one's life being oriented to God.

How do I experience peace? What is peace?

Peace, in its fundamental sense is not being at odds WITH GOD. That is the source of true peace, because God is the ultimate and eternal Lord. We are at peace with God because we are justified by faith through Jesus (Rom 5:1, Is 53:5, Eph 2:14-15). This is the true and everlasting peace.

When we are at peace with God, we become (in this world) at war with everything and everyone that is at war with God (Matt 10:34-35, Eph 6:12). This can even include ourselves (James 4:1, Rom 7:23) as we experience inner turmoil to bring our rebellious nature into submission before God. This is the true nature of the peace that Jesus brings.

How do you know the God that you preach is true?

We know that the God we preach is true because the bible testifies that it is so (2 Tim 3:16). We believe the bible is the word of God because God tells us that it is. This is axiomatic (circular reasoning), but every single system of belief (and unbelief) relies on axioms. Even science. Science is reliable because the process is scientific Logic is truth because it is logical that it is. Likewise, we simply believe and know that the God we preach is true. There are many types of evidence to support this – creation (Rom 1), experience, miracles, logical evidence, scientific evidence, historical evidence, but the bottom line is whether you believe or not.

How do I know which message is true? There are so many kinds!

Pontius Pilate asked Jesus "What is truth?" Truth must be absolute or else it is no truth at all. It must therefore be defined by an absolute. The only things that are absolute are things that never change no matter what (immutable). This essentially narrows the field of truth down to most monotheistic religions and natural laws.

Natural laws actually point to a creator or cause apart from themselves (laws of thermodynamics, see part 1). So really, it's down to Allah or Jehovah or some other definition of the two (cults, etc). So if you want to explore, go and look at the claims of these religions and their evidence and definition of God.

But if you're asking me, I'm just going to tell you it is God, through Jesus Christ.

What do I have to do?

Have faith in Jesus as your personal Lord and saviour (Heb 6:1, Acts 20:21). This is different from believing Jesus (that what He says is true) or believing about Jesus. This is a matter of making God God in your eyes. He must become your only God, the only one you trust, love, desire, fear, serve, and follow. This will result in a life that is changed. The changed life is evidence of faith (James 2:14-26).

All roads lead to Rome. Why can't there be more than one way to God?

God is not in Rome. (ie. He's not who you think He is, so the paths are wrong)

Jesus says so (John 14:6). So unless Jesus is a liar or is Himself deceived, there really is no other option. The only other way to repudiate this is for scripture to be unreliable. If scripture is unreliable, then we have no way of really knowing anything about God anyway, so we of all people would be the most pitiful.

There is more than one way to Jesus (compare Peter and Paul), but only one mediator between God and man.

Don't all religions teach God?

Most of them try to, and most of them are wrong about it. If you really want to know, study and compare all the claims of the different religions. As shown above, only monotheistic religions make the most sense. Start looking there. But if you are asking for my testimony, I absolutely declare that Jesus is the only way, the only truth and the only life.

Dispense with the idea of works - I'm not good enough yet.

If we're not good enough now we will never be good enough. The good news is that God is not asking for us to be good enough. Hosea 6:6, Hebrews 10:8, Acts 17:24 and 25 and more show us that God is not at all interested in the rituals or offerings we give, nor even in our time and talent and finances. Simply put, we have NOTHING to offer God. God, however, is offering us something. Reconciliation with Him by faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1). Everything that's on the table is from God.

Relativism - many ways lead to God - my way is mine, yours is yours.

Relativism is illogical. There cannot be many conflicting truths. Opposed concepts (Jesus is the only way to God vs Jesus is not the only way to God) MUST be resolved and only one concept can be true. Of course, some relativists just want to be stubborn.

Would God accept me? Why?

This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

"Do you think that I like to see wicked people die? says the Sovereign LORD. Of course not! I want them to turn from their wicked ways and live. Ezekiel 18:23

I don't want you to die, says the Sovereign LORD. Turn back and live! Ezekiel 18:32

The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake.

He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. 2 Peter 3:9

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16

I've done very bad things. Why would God want to talk to me?

See verses above.

Why doesn't He speak to me?

From AskAnything.sg

When we are not hearing from God, we should ask, 'Why?' There could be many reasons such as:

- 1) God is speaking but we are not hearing so we think God is not hearing us. If this is the case, we should remove any rebelliousness and start listening to Him and let Him speak to us in His terms.
- 2) God disciplines His children to make us more like Him. This is different from punishment. God disciplines those that He loves. If so, we should recognize it and ask God to forgive us for our sins and learn from the discipline.
- 3) Maybe we were looking at the wrong places to hear God as God speaks to us through His living word, the Bible. He can also speak to us through circumstances and people. If we are waiting only to hear by some supernatural means or from only one specific channel, we may be missing God speaking by another way.
- 4) God may want us to wait for His reply as the time is not yet right for the thing or knowledge that we ask for. We often want an answer immediately or within our own time frame but God's timing is the best for He knows what is best for us. If so, wait and keep praying, do not give up hope.

See our answer to "What do you do when you are not hearing from God?"

How can I speak to God or hear from God?

We speak to God in prayer and God speaks to us when we pray to Him. Prayer is personal communication with God. Prayer must be according to God's will (1 John 5:14). God also speaks to us through Scripture (2 Tim 3:1), creation (Romans 1:19-20), and the church (Eph 4:12-13) and the spiritual gifts given to the church (1 Cor 12-14).

I'm doing fine in my life now or I already have a God I pray to, so why do I need Jesus?

What is the definition of "fine"? If what the bible says is true (so just tell me to my face that Jesus is a liar), then we are all condemned to hell for our sin. Prayer, religion, ritual and good works mean nothing (see above). That's why we need Jesus.

If we reject God's message, then we do so at our soul's own peril, that much is guaranteed.

What is a temple/idol?

The bible describes idols/false gods as something other than God that we desire (Luke 12:29; Psalm 73:25, Rom 13:14, Gal 5:16-17), or that compels and motivates us (Gen 4: 7, 1 Cor. 4:5), or that masters and rules us (Ps. 119:133), or that we trust, devote ourselves to, fear, or serve (Isa. 42:17; Matt 6:24; Luke 12:4-5). This actually covers a LOT of things, including other deities, personal relationships, material things, aspirations, attitudes, hurts, achievements... just about any created thing or concept can be an idol.

What is worship?

Worship is defined as ascribing great or ultimate value or worth to something. It is not necessarily bound up in any form (song, liturgy, prayers, ritual) but is an attitude of the heart shown through the values one places on things in life.

What is so important about a personal relationship with God? People are used to the ceremonial/ritual part of religion so worship may seem foreign.

The bible tells us that God is interested in each one of us personally. He sustains us and even knows intimate details about us (Matt 10:29-31). A personal relationship with God is vital because ceremony and ritual are meaningless without it. Hosea 6:6, Hebrews 10:8, Acts 17:24 and 25 and more show us that God is not at all interested in the rituals or offerings we give, nor even in our time and talent and finances. Simply put, we have NOTHING to offer God. He does ask for us to know Him. 1 John 4:8 says that God is Love and this is how we know Him.

Final thoughts

Examine the proofs and claims of Jesus Christ and decide for yourself if He is a lunatic, Satan or God Himself.