

Momentum/Friction

Module: Foundations

Lesson I: Is There A God?

Objectives:

- Students will articulate why God exists.
- Student will describe some attributes of God.
- Students will answer some common questions about God.

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Large sheets of chart paper, markers
- ☐ Handout “the Philosophy of God” precut per student
- ☐ Bible per student
- ☐ Handout “What is God Like?” per groups of 2-3 students
- ☐ Handout “Questions about God” per groups of 2-3 students

Minds On

To begin this lesson you will lead your students through the placemat exercise. To do this, make sure you have enough large sheets of paper and pencils. You will need 1 sheet of paper for every 3 or 4 students. Depending on the number of students, divide your group into teams of three or four. Give each team 1 sheet of paper and pens for each student. Have them draw a circle in the middle of the sheet. From there, divide the sheet into 3 or 4 sections (depending on the number of students at each table). Give the students 5 minutes to write down everything that comes to mind when asked the question ‘how do you know there is a God’. Each student will write in their own section of the sheet for this exercise.

When they are done have each group spend 5 more minutes comparing what they wrote down with an aim of finding common threads. Once this exercise is done, have each group share their findings with the group.

Action

Say something like: *The greatest question ever asked is “Does God exist?” It is by far the most important answer you will ever need to know. Through this lesson we are going to seek to answer the question of God’s existence. As a starting point for this year’s series on sharing our faith we want to ensure that we can answer this most fundamental question as we share God with our friends. Is it important to be able to prove the existence of God? Yes! If we cannot demonstrate that God exists then nothing else can be known about Him!*

So, how do we answer the question? How can we talk to people about the existence of God? This is made even more difficult by the reality that, if people don’t believe in God they won’t believe in the Bible. Theologians for centuries have been asking the question of whether or not it is possible to prove the existence of God outside of the Bible.

Prepare ahead of time by making a copy of the attached sheet “the Philosophy of God.” Cut out each of the statements and have them available in a random order.

Say something like: *We want to spend a few minutes looking at several statements that philosophers have made over the centuries related to their attempts to prove the existence of God.*” Give your students 5 to 10 minutes to arrange the statements in a historical order of progression. Depending on the size of your group you may want to do this in smaller groups or all together. Students will have to decide which statement came first and then proceed from there through the history of thought about God. Use the following answer key to check their order **D B A E C**.

For background to this game read over this discourse ahead of time. You can choose whether or not you want to read any portion of this to your students. It may help you guide discussion related to each of the statements.

We are now going to go on a brief journey through the minds of some of the greatest thinkers that ever lived. We jump into history 2,300 years ago. Aristotle, in working through the logic of the existence of God, arrived at the conclusion that nothing finite can create itself. Therefore the universe could not have created itself. It is logical then to accept that something infinite was the originator of everything finite. Science would later go on to prove this point in the laws of thermodynamics.

We move ahead to the 13th century. Thomas Aquinas, wrestling with the same question, wanted to know if it was possible to know God at all. It was only through the answer to this question that Aquinas said we could ever prove God’s existence. Aquinas arrived at a reality that, if there is a cause for everything that exists, then at one point in the chain we have to arrive at a prime mover. That prime mover is the originator of everything. This prime mover is God. He stated ‘Hence the existence of God, in so far as it is not self-evident to us, can be demonstrated from those of His effects which are known to us.’

Aquinas then went to demonstrate that we can know God by His impact on the world around us. We can see His work in nature. This view was expressed by Einstein as well when he wrote that “The scientist is possessed by the sense of

universal causation....His religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an INTELLIGENCE of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection. This feeling is the guiding principle of his life and work, in so far as he succeeds in keeping himself from the shackles of selfish desire.” Einstein and Aquinas both realized that the order of nature is the visible impact of God’s existence.

Secondly, Aquinas argued that the existence of truth is in itself evidence of God’s existence. If we were to make the statement that truth does not exist, that statement would be in itself true. Therefore, since truth does exist, there must be a basis for all truth.

Say something like: *To summarize this trail, philosophers agree that there must be some originator of all that is. That originator is God. We cannot logically arrive at a point where we can create anything finite by itself. Therefore, we can safely say that God is the prime mover of all things.*

Ultimately you must decide on faith alone if there is a God. To help students assimilate this information have them pair up and give them a few minutes to articulate to their partner why they believe that God does exist. This will be a good opportunity for students to start thinking about how to respond when their friends ask them about God.

Once people come to the realization that God does exist the next most common question asked is “What is He like?” To help answer that question we turn to the Bible. Divide the students in groups of two or three and distribute the handout “What is God Like.” Give each group at least 10 minutes to work through the verses. Have the groups come together and share their findings with the larger group. Conclude this section with a summary of the nature of God from each of these verses.

Say something like: *Despite all of the verses describing God it is nearly impossible for us to fully explain who God is. Our next exercise will be to answer some of the more common questions people ask about God.* Distribute the handout “Questions about God.” Using the previous groups give the students 15 minutes to go through the handout.

Bring them back together and talk about these questions and answers. Spend some time asking for more questions that students may have about God. You may not be able to answer them on the spot. So, be honest with any question you cannot answer and spend time this coming week researching it. That will enable you to come back to your next meeting with a solid answer.

Consolidate/Debrief

As we wrap up this lesson you need to know that it is okay to question God. One of the verses we looked at states that as we “draw near to God, He will draw near to us.” It is important for us to look for God. He guarantees that you will find Him! Spend some time in prayer with your students. Pray that God will make Himself known to them. Pray that they will be able to make Him known to their friends!

The Philosophy of God

D Nothing finite can create itself. Therefore the universe could not have created itself. It is logical then to accept that something infinite was the originator of everything finite.

B If there is a cause for everything that exists, then at one point in the chain we have to arrive at a prime mover. That prime mover is the originator of everything. This prime mover is God.

A The existence of God, in so far as it is not self-evident to us, can be demonstrated from those of His effects which are known to us. We can know God by His impact on the world around us.

E The scientist is possessed by the sense of universal causation....His religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an INTELLIGENCE of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection.

C If we were to make the statement that truth does not exist, that statement would be in itself true. Therefore, since truth does exist, there must be a basis for all truth.

Handout- Lesson I

What is God Like?

Bible Reference	Attribute of God
Genesis 1:1-2	
John 4:24	
Deuteronomy 33:27	
Jeremiah 23:24	
Ephesians 1:19-20	
Revelation 4:8	
Psalms 63:3	
Romans 11:23	
Jonah 4:2	
Psalms 100:5	
Psalms 86:15	

Handout-

Questions about God

Questions	Answers
Where did he come from? - John 1:1, Genesis 1:1, Psalm 90:2	
What does God look like? - John 4:24, Luke 24:39, 1 Timothy 1:17, Romans 1:22-23	
How Big is God? - Isaiah 40:12,15,22	
What gender is God - Boy or Girl? - Gen 1:27	
What is the Trinity? - Three in One - Matt. 3:16-17 - God the Father - Gen 1:1 - God the Son – John 1:1, John 3:16 - God the Holy Spirit – Romans 8:26-27	
Is It Possible to Know God?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Others have spoke to him – Gen. 2- God will come to you – James 4:8- God hears you – Matthew 6:8
Can we have a personal relationship with God?	<p>Three aspects of a person are required for personal interaction. These all exist in God. These make relationships with God possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1. The ability to think and reason. Isaiah 1:18- The ability to originate choices. James 1:18- The ability to respond to what the mind thinks about. Zeph 3:17

<p>What is God doing today?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Matthew 24:36- Matthew 7:11- Acts 2:17- Matthew 6:3-6, 6:18- Jeremiah 17:10- Hebrews 4:13	
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Handout: Lesson 1

What is God Like?- Answer Key

Bible Reference	Attribute of God
Genesis 1:1-2	God is a spirit
John 4:24	God is a spirit
Deuteronomy 33:27	God is a safe refuge
Jeremiah 23:24	God is all seeing
Ephesians 1:19-20	God is all powerful
Revelation 4:8	God is holy
Psalms 63:3	God is merciful
Romans 11:23	God is able
Jonah 4:2	God is gracious
Psalms 100:5	God is good
Psalms 86:15	God is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abundant in loving kindness

Handout: Lesson I

Questions about God-Answer Key

Questions	Answers
Where did he come from? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- John 1:1, Genesis 1:1, Psalm 90:2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Always was
What does God look like? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- John 4:24, Luke 24:39, 1 Timothy 1:17, Romans 1:22-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- God is a spirit and, therefore, has no body.
How Big is God? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Isaiah 40:12,15,22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bigger than all that is
What gender is God - Boy or Girl? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Gen 1:27	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Both boy and girl
What is the Trinity? <ul style="list-style-type: none">-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Three in One - Matt. 3:16-17- God the Father - Gen 1:1- God the Son – John 1:1, John 3:16- God the Holy Spirit – Romans 8:26-27
Is It Possible to Know God?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Others have spoke to him – Gen. 2- God will come to you – James 4:8- God hears you – Matthew 6:8
Can we have a personal relationship with God?	<p>Three aspects of a person are required for personal interaction. These all exist in God. These make relationships with God possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1. The ability to think and reason. Isaiah 1:18- The ability to originate choices. James 1:18- The ability to respond to what the mind thinks about. Zeph 3:17
What is God doing today? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Matthew 24:36- Matthew 7:11- Acts 2:17- Matthew 6:3-6, 6:18- Jeremiah 17:10- Hebrews 4:13	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Waiting to return- Giving gifts to those who ask- Pouring out his spirit- Rewarding the faithful- Searching hearts of men- Watching all that is done