

# **Ten Objections to Christianity & How To Respond**

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Recently someone approached me with the following problem: "Nobody can talk me out of being a Christian, but I can't talk anyone else into it. Can you help me?"

Perhaps she thought she was the only one struggling with this, but I've been asked this question hundreds of times. You see, I was once an atheist who set out to prove Christianity was untrue. But during my investigation, I discovered overwhelming evidence that demonstrates the validity of Christianity. And because of a dedicated Christian who was prepared to answer my questions, my heart was reached.

Are you prepared to answer the spiritual seekers in your world? Are you wondering if Christianity's really true? Here's a look at 10 objections skeptics pose toward Christianity and how to respond.

## **1. Christians are hypocrites.**

A hypocrite is an actor, a person who pretends to be something he or she isn't. Jesus' harshest words were reserved for hypocrites. The reality is, there always have been and always will be some hypocrites in the Church. But Jesus doesn't ask us to follow others; he asks us to follow him.

Although Christians can represent Jesus either poorly or well, the real question isn't whether there are hypocrites in the Church, but whether Jesus is a hypocrite. If someone can prove that Jesus was a hypocrite, then the whole structure of Christianity falls into ruin. The Bible, God's Word, presents Jesus as nothing less than without fault or sin. Jesus' disciples testified that Jesus was without sin (1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5). Even Jesus himself challenged others to prove that he'd ever sinned (John 8:46).

## **2. What about the atrocities Christians have committed?**

Some blame Christianity for religious wars, the Crusades, burning witches, the Inquisition, slavery, even the Holocaust. The issue of atrocities is simply an extension of the question of hypocrites. So-called believers who didn't practice true Christianity have perpetrated evil. In reality, these people were Christian in name only.

Focusing on their atrocities is a smoke screen to avoid the real issue. Christianity has far more positive achievements than negative influences. It's been instrumental in the formation of countless hospitals, schools, colleges, orphanages, relief agencies, and charity agencies. No other religion in history can compare.

## **3. Christianity is a crutch.**

Karl Marx, author of *The Communist Manifesto*, said, "Religion is the opiate of the masses." Critics such as Marx have charged that religion is an invention designed for people incapable of coping with life's pressures. Some critics respond that they don't need this type of emotional comfort, as though that fact falsifies Christianity. Such individuals often claim to be "stronger" because they're brave enough to face life without a "crutch." To imply non-religious people don't need a crutch is misleading. Dependence on drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, money, power, other people, and material possessions demonstrates some people's need for a crutch. Atheism, the belief that there is no God can become a crutch for those addicted to a lifestyle contrary to God's standards of morality.

Rather than being weak, Christians are strong not because they depend on themselves, but because they depend on Jesus. Everyone needs assistance. The question is, what will you lean on? Christianity provides what atheism or other religions never can: spiritual fulfillment, peace, and forgiveness.

#### **4. It's narrow-minded to think Jesus is the only way to God.**

Jesus claimed he was the only way to God (John 14:6). Such a claim is either totally true or totally false. Critics argue this view is exclusory. The real issue is whether or not it is valid.  $2 + 2 = 4$  and only 4 is exclusory as well. Once again, the real issue is whether or not it stands up to reality. Jesus points to mankind's need for a savior that lived a perfect life and died a sacrificial death in order to pay for the sins of the world.

Only three options are available. Either what Jesus said is true and the world needs a savior of which He claims to be. Or, Jesus was a liar claiming to be the son of God and savior of the world but knowing he wasn't. Or, Jesus thought he was but wasn't which leads us to conclude he was more a lunatic and can't be trusted or taken seriously. Even though it is 'narrow' to say that Jesus is the only one who claimed to be the God the Son and Savior of the world. Jesus' resurrection proved he was who he claimed to be.

#### **5. Being a good person is all that really matters.**

Some argue that even if a person's religion is false, what really matters is that she's sincere about being a good person. This notion is based on the mistaken belief that God is pleased by "religion."

Sincerity doesn't determine truth, however. One can be sincerely convinced of the truth and be sincerely wrong. For example, many evil men such as Hitler were very sincere in their beliefs. God judges people based on truth, not opinions - and that truth is Jesus Christ.

#### **6. What about those who've never heard about Jesus?**

Such a question implies that God lacks compassion because he's imposed his plan of salvation on us. Often such inquirers seem to imply that they're more compassionate than God! An important Biblical principle to understand is that no one has ever remained lost who wanted to be found. Just as God sent the apostle Philip to the seeking Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-39), Jesus promises all who seek will find (Matthew 7:7-8).

#### **7. The Bible is filled with errors.**

Because the Bible is God's Word and God cannot lie (Isaiah 55:10-11; John 17:17; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 4:12), it's totally trustworthy, free from any error. God's Word is described as "the word of truth" (2 Corinthians 6:7; Colossians 1:5; 2 Timothy 2:15; James 1:18). Inerrancy isn't a theory about the Bible; it's the teaching of the Bible itself.

What most people claim as errors in the Bible aren't errors but difficulties. People think they've stumbled upon apparent inconsistencies when they haven't taken the time to find out all the facts, or study the passage. Many Bible questions have been answered as new discoveries have been made in fields such as language, history, archeology, and other sciences.

Regardless of the kind of difficulty found, not a single irreconcilable error can be found in the Bible's pages.

## 8. If God is so good, why is there evil?

The thrust of this charge is that evil's presence disproves God's power. But is the presence of evil consistent with the God of the Bible? Consider:

- God didn't create evil. Sin entered the world through Adam's disobedience (Genesis 3).
- Evil is necessary for a free world. Freedom, or free will, gives humans the opportunity to make wrong choices.
- God hesitates to stop evil for an important reason. Just as parents often allow their children to make mistakes and suffer the consequences, God acts in a parental fashion with his creation.
- God has the solution for evil. Jesus accomplished the ultimate defeat of evil on the cross. But just as we don't yet have eternal bodies, evil has yet to be removed from the world.

## 9. Why is there suffering?

Many hold that pain is evidence against God's concern for humankind. However, pain can be used for good and bad purposes. Not all pain is bad. Pain is an essential mechanism for survival. Without pain, the body is stripped of vital protection. Pain is an important signal to warn of even greater danger.

Suffering is a signal. It also can be a spiritual signal that reminds us of the fragile balance of life and our mortality. In *The Problem of Pain*, apologist C.S. Lewis writes, "God whispers to us in our pleasure, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts to us in our pain; it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

Some suffering actually helps to bring greater good. This is best seen in Jesus' own suffering. Jesus traveled down the road of pain, loneliness, and death a road that led to the cross. Jesus isn't just a Savior, he's our suffering Savior. The cross is the ultimate example of innocent suffering.

At the heart of this issue is the underlying challenge that God isn't fair. The problem is, society holds pleasure as its chief goal in life. This philosophy is known as hedonism, and those who live by this philosophy find any form of suffering offensive. To say God isn't fair is an extremely dangerous charge.

If God gave us what we deserve, we'd be in trouble. It would be foolish to ask God for justice; what we need is mercy. God's mercy and grace are so taken for granted that suffering and pain shock us.

## 10. If there's a hell, why would a loving God send people there?

God hates evil, and one day, evil will cease. While evil and suffering and pain are very real, they are also very temporary.

The day God deals with evil, he will deal with all evil. In the meantime, God strives for as many people as possible to accept Jesus' death and resurrection as payment for their sins, so they can live eternally with him. The sad fact is, many will make the decision not to be a part of God's heaven. God won't send them to hell; they'll send themselves.

For God to force people to go to heaven against their wishes wouldn't be heaven it would be hell. Atheist author Jean-Paul Sartre noted that the gates of hell are locked from the inside by the free choice of men and women.

## Digging Deeper

If you would like more help with related questions, check out the following books and web sites:

### Helpful Books:

<u>Answering the Tough Ones,</u>	by David Dewitt
<u>Answers to Tough Questions,</u>	by Josh McDowell and Don Stewart
<u>The Case for Christ,</u>	by Lee Strobel
<u>Defending Your Faith,</u>	by Dan Story
<u>Evidence That Demands a Verdict,</u>	by Josh McDowell
<u>Give Me an Answer,</u>	by Cliffe Knechtle
<u>Handbook of Christian Apologetics,</u>	by Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli
<u>I'm Glad You Asked,</u>	by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moody
<u>In Defense of the Faith,</u>	by Dave Hunt
<u>Know What You Believe,</u>	by Paul Little
<u>Know Why You Believe,</u>	by Paul Little
<u>Mere Christianity,</u>	by C.S. Lewis
<u>Reason To Believe,</u>	by R.C. Sproul
<u>Reasons For Believing,</u>	by Frank Harber
<u>Tough Questions series,</u>	by Garry Poole and Judson Poling

### Helpful Web Sites:

Christian Research Institute	<u><a href="http://www.Equip.org">www.Equip.org</a></u>
Stand To Reason:	<u><a href="http://www.str.org">www.str.org</a></u>
Ravi Zacharias International Ministries:	<u><a href="http://www.gospelcom.net/rzim">www.gospelcom.net/rzim</a></u>
Answers in Action:	<u><a href="http://www.answers.org">www.answers.org</a></u>
Eden Communications:	<u><a href="http://www.ChristianAnswers.net">www.ChristianAnswers.net</a></u>
Christian Apologetics and Research Ministries:	<u><a href="http://www.carm.org">www.carm.org</a></u>