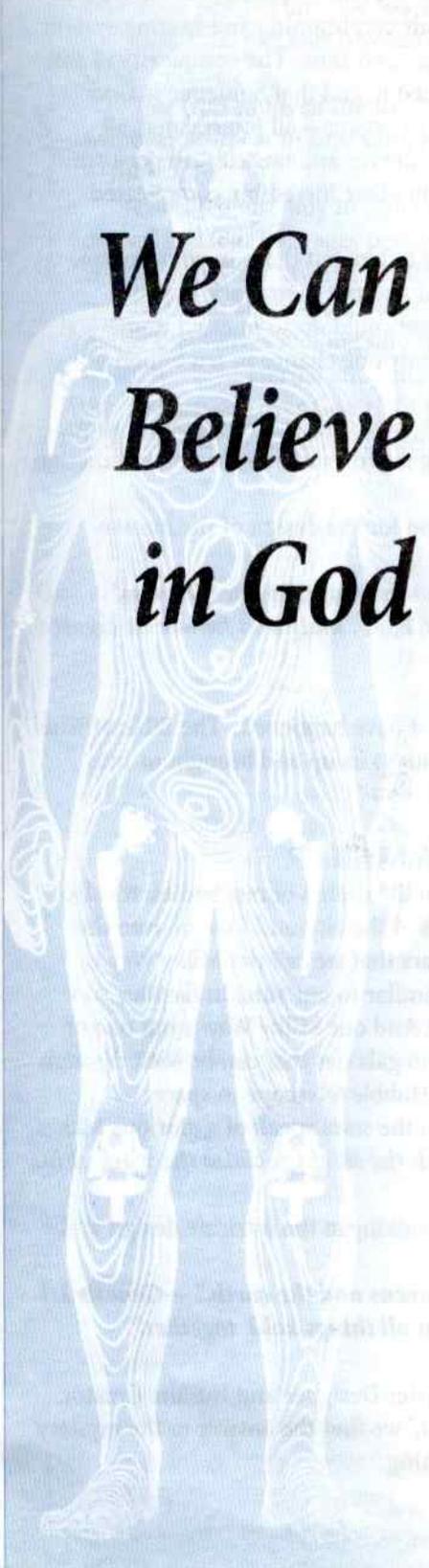


DISCOVER

Guide 1



We Can Believe in God

Jim once asked an atheist if he had ever wrestled, even for a few moments, with the thought that maybe God does exist.

"Absolutely!" the atheist said, to Jim's surprise. "Years ago when our first child was born I almost became a believer in God. As I looked down at that miniature-but-perfect little human being in the crib, as I watched the flexing of those tiny fingers and saw the dawning of recognition in those little eyes, I went through a period of several months during which I almost ceased to be an atheist. Looking at that child almost convinced me there had to be a God."

1. EVERYTHING DESIGNED HAS A DESIGNER

The design of the human body demands the existence of a designer. Scientists tell us that the brain stores and remembers thousands of mental images, integrates and solves problems, appreciates beauty, comprehends self, and desires to develop the best in each person. Electrical charges originating from the brain control all the muscular activity of our bodies.

Computers also function through electrical impulses. But it took a human mind to invent the computer and a human being to build the computer and tell it what to do.

No wonder the psalmist concluded that the human body speaks loud and clear of a wonderful Creator:

"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

your works are wonderful, I know that full well. —*Psalm 139:14.* We don't have to go far to find the "works" of God. The intricate design of the human brain and the other organs of our body are the "works" of God, and point to an infinitely skillful designer.

No pump built by man can compare with the human heart. No computer network can equal our nervous system. No television system is as efficient as the human voice, ear, and eye. No central air conditioning and heating system can match the work done by our nose, lungs, and skin. The complexity of the human body suggests that someone designed it, and that Someone is God.

The human body is a complete system of organs—all interrelated, all thoroughly designed. The lungs and heart, nerves and muscles, all perform incredibly complicated tasks that depend on other incredibly complicated tasks.

If you were to mark ten coins from one to ten, put them in your pocket, shake them around, and then pull them out and put them back in your pocket one by one, what is the likelihood you could do so in exact numerical sequence? By mathematical law you have only one chance in ten billion of taking them out in order from one to ten.

Now consider the chances of a stomach, brain, heart, liver, arteries, veins, kidneys, ears, eyes, and teeth all developing together and beginning to function at the same moment in time.

What is the most reasonable explanation for the design of the human body?

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness,' . . . SO GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE, . . . male and female he created them."

—*Genesis 1:26, 27.*

The first man and woman could not just have happened. The Bible affirms that God designed us in His image. He thought us up and brought us into being.

2. EVERYTHING MADE HAS A MAKER

But evidence for God is not confined to the design of our bodies; it's also spread across the heavens. Leave the lights of the city, and look up into the night sky. That milky cloud beyond the stars that we call the Milky Way is really a galaxy of billions of blazing suns similar to our sun. In fact our sun and its planets are a part of the Milky Way. And our Milky Way is but one of an estimated more than one hundred billion galaxies that can be seen through giant telescopes on earth and through the Hubble telescope in space.

No wonder the psalmist concluded that the stars speak of a glorious Maker:

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." —*Psalm 19:1-3.*

What may we reasonably conclude by looking at the intricate design and vast size of the universe?

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

"[God] is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

—*Colossians 1:17.*

All creation testifies about God the Master Designer and Infinite Creator. In the simple words, "in the beginning God," we find the answer to the mystery of life. There is a God who created everything.

Many great scientific minds today believe in God. Dr. Arthur Compton, Nobel Prize-winning physicist, commenting on this verse of Scripture, once said:

“For myself, faith begins with a realization that a supreme intelligence brought the universe into being and created man. It is not difficult for me to have this faith, for it is plain that where there is a plan there is a divine intelligence. An orderly, unfolding universe testifies to the truth of the most majestic statement ever uttered—‘In the beginning God.’”

The Bible does not attempt to prove God—it declares His existence. Dr. Arthur Conklin, a noted biologist, once wrote: “The probability of life originating from an accident is comparable to the probability of an unabridged dictionary resulting from an explosion in a print shop.”

We know that human beings can't make something from nothing. We may build things, invent things, put things together, but we have never brought into being from scratch even the tiniest frog or the simplest flower. The things about us cry out that God designed, God created, God sustains. The only believable answer to the origin of the universe, this world, and human beings—is God.

3. GOD COMES INTO PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE

The God who designed the starry heavens, who created the universe, seeks a personal relationship with us. He had a personal relationship with Moses: “The Lord would speak to Moses . . . as a man speaks with his friend” (Exodus 33:11). And God wants to enter into a personal relationship with you and become your Friend. Jesus promised those who follow Him: “You are my friends” (John 15:14).

We have all wrestled with the idea of God, for humans are naturally religious. No animal ever builds an altar for worship. Yet everywhere you find men and women, you find them worshipping. Deep within every human heart is a natural desire to worship, an awareness of God, a desire to become a friend of God. When we respond to our longing and find God, there is no longer a doubt about His existence and our need.

During the 1990s millions of atheists in Russia renounced atheism and turned to God. A university professor in St. Petersburg made a statement that typifies the comments made by many transformed atheists in the former Soviet Union:

“I have searched for a meaning to life in my scientific research, but found nothing to have confidence in. The scientists around me have the same empty feeling. As I looked at the vastness of the universe in my study of astronomy, and the emptiness of my soul, I felt there must be some meaning. Then, when I received the Bible you gave me and began reading it, the vacuum in my life was filled. I have found the Bible to be the only source of confidence to my soul. I have accepted Jesus as my Savior and have found true peace and satisfaction in life.”

A Christian believes in God because he or she has met Him and discovers that He satisfies the heart's deepest needs. The God whom Christians have joyfully found to exist, gives us a new perspective, new meaning, new motives, and new joys.

God doesn't promise a life free from trouble and conflict, but He does assure us that He will guide and sustain us if we come into a personal relationship with Him. And millions of Christians will testify that they would give up everything rather than go back to a life without God.

This is the greatest wonder of all—that the Almighty God who designed, created, and sustains the universe also desires a personal relationship with every

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man and woman, boy and girl. David marvelled at this, when he wrote:

“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him?”

— *Psalm 8:3, 4.*

Our Creator is “mindful” of each one of us. He takes as personal an interest in you as if you were the only being He had created.

So we can believe in God: (1) Because of the intricate design in everything He created about us. (2) Because of the longing for God within us that leaves us restless till we find our rest in Him. And, (3) Because when we seek and find Him, God satisfies our every need and longing—to the full!

4. WHAT KIND OF GOD IS HE?

It is only reasonable that a personal God would want to reveal Himself to His created beings just as a father desires that his children know him. And in the Bible God tells us who He is and what He is like.

What pattern did God use for creating men and women?

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him.” — *Genesis 1:27.*

Since we are made in God’s image, our abilities to reflect and feel, to remember and hope, to ponder and analyze—all are derived from Him.

What is God’s dominant trait?

“God is love.” — 1 John 4:8.

God relates to human beings out of His own heart of love. There is nothing He has done or ever will do which is not motivated by a selfless, sacrificial love.

5. HOW JESUS REVEALS WHAT GOD IS LIKE

In the Bible God repeatedly speaks of Himself as a father.

“Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us?”

— *Malachi 2:10.*

Some of the father images we see today are anything but desirable. There are neglectful dads, abusive dads. God is not like that. He is a caring, sensitive Father.

He is the kind of Dad who loves to play games with his son or daughter, the kind of Dad who charms his kids by telling wonderful bedtime stories.

Our loving Father wanted to do more than reveal Himself through the words of Scripture. He knew that a person we live with is much more real to us than someone we only hear about or read about in a book. So He came to our world as a real person—the person of Jesus.

“[Jesus] is the image of the invisible God.” — *Colossians 1:15.*

So if you have seen Jesus, you have seen God. He came down on our level—He became like us—so He could teach us how to live and be happy, and so we could see what God is really like. Jesus is God made visible. He Himself said, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

As you read the story of Jesus in the four Gospels, the first four books

of the New Testament, you will discover a fascinating portrait of our heavenly Father. Rough fishermen dropped their nets to follow Christ, and small children flocked to receive His blessing. He could comfort the most devastated sinner and disarm the most self-righteous hypocrite. He healed everything from blindness to leprosy. In all His actions Jesus demonstrated that God is love! He met human need in a way no one had ever done before Him—or has since!

Jesus' final glorious revelation of what God is like happened at the cross.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

—John 3:16.

Jesus died not only to give us a happier life now, but also to give us eternal life. For long ages people wondered, and hoped, and dreamed about God. They saw His handiwork in the sky and in the beauties of nature. Then at the cross, Jesus broke the silence of the ages, and people found themselves looking into the very face of God, seeing Him as He really is—love, eternal and immortal love!

You can discover God right now as Jesus reveals Him. That discovery will lead you to make a very personal affirmation: “Father, I love you!”

WE CAN BELIEVE IN GOD

When answering the questions below, you may refer back to your *DISCOVER Guide* to find the correct answer. The number of each question in your Answer Sheet indicates the number of the section in *Discover Guide 1* where the answer can be found.

1. Read again section 1 of *Discover Guide 1*, then place an X before each of the two correct statements:

- The design of the human body is evidence of a Creator.
- The human body is a result of millions of years of evolution.
- The design of the human body points to a skillful Designer.

Read again each section of the *Discover Guide* identified by the number in the left margin, then if a statement is True, circle the T; if False, circle the F.

2. T F The starry heavens are the work of God's hands.
T F The universe resulted from an accidental explosion.
T F God is the Master Designer and Creator of the universe.
T F Many great scientific minds believe in God.
3. T F God comes into a personal relationship with us.
4. T F God created people in His own image.
T F God's dominant trait is love.
5. T F God is a caring, sensitive Father.
T F God came to our world as a Person.
T F Jesus was only a man, not God.
T F Jesus was God made visible.
T F Jesus died to give us eternal life.

THOUGHT QUESTION:

Has this Discover Guide helped you to understand and believe in God?

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____