

“Primetime (8): Can an Atheist Be Saved?”

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❖ Acts 17:16-34

❖ Seven guiding lessons for a conversation between Christians and atheists:

- Lesson #1 (Christians)—Be willing to _____ for God.
 - The Epicurean school of philosophy, founded by Epicurus (342-270 BCE), rejected the popular _____, and taught that _____ is the chief goal of a life free from pain and fear, without any higher moral law—a virtually _____ system.
 - The rival Stoic school of philosophy, founded by Zeno (340-265 BCE), taught disciplined indifference alike to pain and pleasure, maintaining the primacy of the rational faculty in man—a virtually _____ (universe-pervading divine mind) system.
 - But both systems of philosophy were antagonistic to the truth about God Paul was going to have to _____.
 - Remember: both _____ and the other person’s _____ are on your side.
 - This same Paul penned the stunning declaration in Romans 1:18-20 that there is enough evidence in nature for the _____, so that we are without _____ should we reject that evidence.
- Lesson #2 (Christians)—Be aware _____ of both sides.
 - Cosmological argument:
 1. Everything that exists has an explanation of its existence, either in the necessity of its own nature or in an external cause.
 2. If the universe has an explanation of its existence, that explanation is God.
 3. The universe exists.
 4. Therefore, the explanation of the universe’s existence is God.
 - Teleological (design) argument:
 1. The fine-tuning of the universe is due either to physical necessity, chance or design.
 2. It is not due to physical necessity or chance.
 3. Therefore, it is due to design.
 - Moral argument:
 1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.
 2. Objective moral values and duties do exist.
 3. Therefore, God exists.
- Lesson #3 (Atheists)—Be ready to admit that both worldviews are based upon _____.

- Thomas Nagel (atheist): “I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn’t just that I don’t believe in God and, naturally, hope that I’m right in my belief. It’s that I _____ there is no God! I don’t _____ there to be a God; I don’t want the universe to be like that.” (*The Last Word*, 130)
- Thomas D. Williams (theist): “We must get one thing clear from the start: atheism involves a _____ just as theism does. The exclusion of God is not the only possible reading of the facts, and reason does not compel a thinking person to deny God’s existence. Just as religious faith involves not only the reason but also the will, so, too, does the decision not to believe. Atheism evidences a *refusal* to admit the possibility of God’s existence. A simple analysis of the facts cannot compel a person to belief or unbelief. A choice must be made. But it is disingenuous for the atheists to assert that their choice is based simply on fact. . . . Richard Dawkins exhibits a boundless _____ in the power of science to heal all ills and answer all questions.” (*Greater Than You Think* 94, 95)
- Lesson #4 (Atheists)—Be willing to accept that there are bright theistic scientists, but there are no bright atheistic _____.
- Lesson #5 (Atheists)—Be open to the possibility that _____ and is appealing to both your mind and heart.
 - A prayer: *If You are out there and You are truly God, then I am willing to make contact with You in order to determine if I should trust You with my life.*
- Lesson #6 (Christians)—Be grateful for _____ .
- Lesson #7 (Christians)—Be sure that _____ exceeds _____.
 - I Peter 3:15--“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with *gentleness and respect*, keeping a clear conscience.”

Seeing is believing

state your case, polytheism, pleasure, atheistic, pantheistic, defend, logic, conscience, Creator, excuse, of the arguments, personal choice, hope, want, *choice*, faith, theologians, God exists, those who respond, your love, your logic