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UnBelievable

Or Un-believing what you believed?

1 I do not believe that God exists

2 I do not believe that God exists

3 I do not believe that all things started with a Creator

4 I do not believe that a good God would allow evil and suffering

5 I do not believe that a good God would allow evil and suffering

6 I do not believe the Bible is more than just another religious book

7a I do not believe Jesus is more than just another religious leader

7b I do not believe Jesus is God, Allah is and Mohammed is his prophet

Explanations:

This is a group discussion series meant to engage intelligent people who oppose the Christian faith or have a sceptical view toward any religion or spirituality. The authors intended to give as much basic information about the Christian faith in the written content of each session, so that anybody even with a very limited knowledge of Christianity or who feels inadequate to answer hard questions about and arguments against Christianity, can facilitate the group discussion by merely reading the questions and showing the videos.

If you wish to keep the series to 6 group meetings, we recommend that you eliminate any of the first 3 units, depending on the context and interests of group participants.

There are 2 #7s. This is because 7a is directed at a more secular context, 7b at a Muslim context. However, 7a contains aspects also applicable to a Muslim context, and vice versa. Therefore, you may choose to use both 7a and 7b.

I Do Not Believe That God Exists! Part 1

„Everywhere I saw how readily men construct fables in order to avoid looking reality in the face. The invention of an afterlife would not matter so much were it not purchased at so high a price: disregard of the real...neglect of the only world there is. While religion is often at variance...with man's inherent nature, atheism is in harmony with the earth – life's other name.“

Michel Onfray, *The Atheist Manifesto: the Case against Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, 2011

Welcome!

- Thank you for coming...no matter who you are, where you come from and what your religious views are.
- Let's introduce ourselves: Name, where you grew up, where you live now, what you would like to get out of this group experience:

1. Looking at the quote from Onfray above, in what way does Onfray express what you believe? Or, what brought you to the conclusion that there cannot be a God out there? Or, what brought you to the conclusion that the God of Christianity cannot possibly exist?

2. Let's watch the video with Andy Bannister: "Is there evidence that there is a God?"

(<https://www.solas-cpc.org/shortanswers65/>)

He will speak of several fields that he believes give evidence to the existence of a relational God. As you watch the video, note them and then we can talk about them.

3. Now let's start to take apart what Bannister said:

❖ Argument from human spirituality and the existence of religions:

If there is no God, from where comes the longing to believe in something greater than self, to worship a higher Being...is it human stupidity or a built-in instinct? Is it a human fantasy or is it evidence of God's reality? Onfray (above) claims the former. The Bible argues for the latter with statements, like

- Ecclesiastes 3:11: "He has put eternity into man's heart..."
- Romans 1:19-24: Let's read this blistering indictment against humanity for suppressing the truth about God, which should have been "clearly perceived".

What do you think? Is the existence of religions an outgrowth of a divinely built-in longing to worship something higher than self OR is it the result of mankind's hunger for power, the evil desire to overpower and suppress others?

❖ Arguments from the Personal Self

Even if there is a „God“ or the „supernatural“, this does not mean that God is personal. But then we need to face the question: if there is no personal Being beyond our being, where does the ‚personal‘ come from? If we are all just dust molecules and the material world is all there is, where does the desire to know and love others and be known and loved by others come from? If survival of the fittest is the built-in and evolving dynamic in nature, from where comes our longing to be in meaningful and co-equal relationships?

❖ Argument from history

This is essentially the argument of the Bible: God came into the world through Jesus, who claimed to be God, and whose resurrection from the dead 3 days after his crucifixion proves he was God.

Here are a few opening phrases from the book of John:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1,14)

What kind of feelings does this argument from the Bible evoke in you?

I Do Not Believe That God Exists! Part 2

"There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every person which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator." Blaise Pascal, 17th century mathematician and philosopher (in Pensees)

Welcome!

- No matter who you are, what your belief or religious background: your opinion matters and you are welcome in this group. Here are some guarantees with which we will proceed:
- Introduce yourself: name, your favourite movie or book, and why?

1. Let's look at the video "Why isn't God more obvious?" by Gareth Black (<https://www.solas-cpc.org/why-isnt-god-more-obvious/>)

2. Black posits that humans either miss the obvious signs of God's existence or go to great lengths to suppress them. Let's take some of these "obvious" signs apart!

❖ Arguments from philosophy and the meaning of life:

Modern-day philosopher W. David Beck, in *Does God Exist? A History of Answers to the Questions*, (2021) traces exhaustively all arguments in the history of philosophy for and against the existence of God. He suggests that the argument that started with Aristotle and was popularized by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) is still one of the most conclusive arguments for the existence of God: the so-called 'cosmological argument' or 'the argument from cause-and-effect': every effect has a preceding cause, which, in turn, is the effect of a previous cause, and so on. Only, the "and so on" cannot go on infinitely. At some point there must be a first cause, an uncaused cause. This uncaused cause must of necessity be greater than that which it causes (i.e. creates). It is, therefore, God.

How does this fit into your reasoning?

❖ Arguments from Ethics and Justice

Where do our universal ethical foundations come from that we commonly all believe in? Such as:

- George Floyd – racism – racial equality
- It is wrong for my neighbour to stab me to death or for a man to rape a woman
- Every criminal should receive the justice that is his due
- Parents should love their children and not mistreat them

Oxford professor and one-time atheist, C.S. Lewis, argues like this in his famous book *Mere Christianity*: if there are universal laws that guide us (and our courts) and inform us what is just/unjust, right/wrong, guilt/innocence, then there must be a universal lawgiver.

Does this make sense to you or is it nonsense?

❖ the teleological argument, or argument from meaning.

Again, it is C.S. Lewis, who in the same book, argues that "atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning: just as, if there were no light in the universe and no creatures with eyes, we should never know it was dark. *Dark* would be a word without meaning."

In what way does this (or does this not) give evidence of a meaningful God who gave life and all things meaning?

❖ Argument from "presupposition"

Another argument popularized in the 20th century by Dutch philosopher, Cornelius van Til, suggests that you cannot discredit the existence of God unless there is a God who exists. This argument is underscored by the opening four words of the Bible: "*In the beginning God...*" (Genesis 1:1). The existence of God is presupposed. The "presuppositional argument" says that the concept of God must necessarily exist in the universe and in our minds in order to be discussed or discredited.

How would you care to respond to this line of reasoning?

3. What thought for or against the existence of God impacted you the most?

(For further exploration of this subject, we recommend Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*, Dutton, 2008)

I do not believe that all things started with a Creator

"It is inconsistent to say that the instincts that we have for religious stuff, love, morality are only bio-neurological developments brought about by natural selection...If evolution is true, then is not evolution itself a product of the survival of the fittest? If there is not God, we should not trust our cognitive faculties at all."

Timothy Keller in *The Reason For God* (p. 140)

Welcome: Please introduce yourself and tell us who your 3 favourite people in history are and why

1. The question we are discussing is not so much how old is the earth or how did things evolve but how did things begin. The 'Big Bang' theory, for example, was started in 1927 by an astronomer named Georges Lemaître, who posited that everything began at a single point, then through gases in the universe expanded and stretched to grow as large as it is right now (and could still be stretching). The theory has been discredited by many because it fails to answer the more basic question, 'where did that single point and those gases in an already existing universe come from?

What is your opinion: how did something start out of nothing?

2. The following is an article from the Washington Post, February 2, 2007, by Joel Rosenberg, following the 55th National Prayer Breakfast, with 4,000 business and political leaders in attendance : "...The highlight of the morning, however, was the keynote address by Dr. Francis S. Collins, the director of the Human Genome Project and thus arguably the most important doctor and scientist on the planet today. He and his colleagues have mapped out the 3 billion letters of the human genetic code imprinted into each of our cells. ("Three billion -- that's a very large number," he deadpanned, "even in Washington.") They are figuring out the Creator's "instruction book" for the human body, and thus racing to find cures for cancer, diabetes, and so many other horrible diseases. And for him, it is a journey of faith as well as science.

Dr. Francis explained that he was raised on a small farm in Virginia by a family for whom religion was not that important. He developed a fascination with medicine and science early in his life and along the way, like many of his colleagues, thought of himself as an agnostic, and eventually as an atheist.

But one day, an elderly woman who was a patient of his and dying of cancer, explained to him that she had no fear of dying because she had a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. She explained the good news that God loves us and has a wonderful plan for our lives, and offers us a way to eternal life through Jesus, and then she asked, "Doctor, what do you believe?" Dr. Collins said he fled the room as fast as he could. He was touched by the woman's story, and moved by her faith, but he didn't have a satisfying answer to her question, and he said it was as if all of a sudden "the atheistic ice under my feet was cracking." Though he was a scientist, he said he had never really considered the evidence for whether Jesus was the Messiah and Savior that He claimed to be. Why not? What was he afraid of? So he began to study the life of Jesus. He began to read the works of famed atheist-turned-believer C.S. Lewis, the brilliant British professor. He learned that the New Testament teaches that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," (Hebrews 11:1) so he began pursuing the evidence wherever it led. And along the way he said that he found Jesus a man unlike any other -- humble, caring, willing to love His enemies, ready to forgive sinners of any race, creed or color. "The evidence demanded a verdict," Dr. Collins explained, and the verdict, he concluded, was that Jesus really was who He said He was: "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6) So one day he bowed his head and prayed for God to forgive him and make him a fully devoted follower of Jesus, and it changed his life. "But you're a scientist," Dr. Collins said people say to him so often. "Doesn't [all this talk of Jesus] make your head explode? Doesn't this create a huge conflict for you between faith and reason?" His answer, simply, is "no." True, only 40% of scientists believe there is a God, but he said he sees science as a means both of discovery as well as worship. The more he learns of how God has created and wired us, the more he feels he has "caught a glimpse of God's mind...There's an unwritten taboo among scientists about talking of one's spiritual leanings," Dr. Collins conceded, but he urged this not to be the case. Collins follows the argument of intelligent design requiring an Intelligent Designer who created order and organisation.

What is your reaction to Dr. Collins' comments?

3. The Bible explicitly refers to God as Creator in almost all the 66 books it contains. Here is one of those references: *"My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth"* (Psalm 139:15). This verse brings the big subject of 'the origin of species' down to the personal level. My wife quoted this verse to me (Stephen Beck) when we heard that a grandchild of ours might be born with Downs Syndrome. What do you make of the fact that right now in the Discovery Group someone wants to know if that child was, in fact, born with Downs Syndrome? If everything evolved by chance and meaninglessness, why would anybody care?

How do the words in Psalm 139:15 affect you personally?

I do not believe that a good God would allow evil and suffering

Welcome!

As we enter carefully and compassionately into a discussion about pain, suffering, tragedy, if you wish, share with the group about something tragic that happened in your life

1. For many people (for you?) God died in the moment of a traumatic experience. It became impossible to believe in a good God any longer. This was the conclusion that Elie Wiesel drew in his book, 'Night' (1960). Wiesel and his father were Holocaust prisoners in Auschwitz and Buchenwald during World War II. In his novel, this Jewish author wrote of how a young Jewish boy was forced by Nazi soldiers to stand in front of a gallows and watch another boy being hung. For a few seconds the young Jewish prisoner watched as the boy's legs shook wildly, then twitched, then came to a dangling rest as the last breath went out of the victim. Behind him the onlooker heard a voice groaning:

"For God's sake!

Where is God?"

And from within me I heard a voice answer:

"Where He is? This is where – hanging here from this gallows."

➤ What has suffering done to your view of God?

2. Let's watch the video: "Why is there suffering?" by Andy Bannister (<https://www.solas-cpc.org/why-is-there-suffering/>).

Bannister referred to one of the great atheist-turned-Christian scholar of the 5th century, Augustine. This great thinker tackled the fall of the Roman empire in 410 A.D. that was accompanied with unparalleled death, destruction and personal suffering. It took him 16 years to write *The City of God*. Essentially, Augustine handled the problem of evil, suffering and the tragedy of the empire's fall by dividing up history into 4 epochs. In this, he essentially followed the Bible's outline of history. Here it is:

- Creation: God created all things from nothing. The world and life was as it should be and was meant to be. This epoch echoes to us our inbred concepts of harmony, perfection, completion, fulfillment.
- Fall: The world as it became through mankind's turn away from God. With this rebellion against God, everything "un-God" enter the world: evil, sin, chaos, fragmentation, hatred, racism, suffering, death.
- Restoration: The "Christ-event". Jesus, who is God from God, came into the world (ca. 4 B.C., Christmas) as the God-man, lived the perfect life everybody was created for (epoch 1) but nobody can live (epoch 2), and to make perfect payment to God (as fully God) for the guilt and sin of man (as fully man), then through his resurrection (Easter) to triumphantly turn humans and the world around to become what all was meant to become.
- Heaven: The world as it should be and will be, restored forever. Everything will be perfect, complete, fulfilled. Our souls will be filled with the joy of being in God's presence forever, with each other in harmony and perfect love, and our bodies unable to feel pain and suffering.

Augustine's argument from "Biblical history" turns the pointed finger around. No longer is the origin of evil and the fault for pain and suffering to be found in God but in humanity itself.

Do you find that fair or unfair? Logical or ridiculous?

3. The argument often raised at this point is: a good and great God did not prevent humanity from making the fateful decision that brought so much pain and suffering. Therefore, God must either not be good or not be great. This argument is answered: for God to prevent man from choosing freely would be unethical. Then he definitely would not be good. So much mystery remains around the question about a sovereign God and the entrance of evil and pain into the world. Here is how a severely handicapped person has applied his faith in God to his situation:

Nick Vujicic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6P2nPI6CTIc>

4. What insight impacted you the most?

I do not believe that a good God would allow evil and suffering

„Pain is a gift. Humanity, without pain, would know neither fear nor pity. Without fear, there could be no humility, and every man would be a monster. The recognition of pain and fear in others gives rise in us to pity, and in our pity is our humanity.“

Dean Koontz, *Velocity* (p. 331)

Welcome!

1. The quote above is from a novel (*Velocity*) by an author who makes no claim to be religious. How would you like to respond to his perspective to pain?

2. The Bible says a lot about suffering. It keeps the relationship between suffering and God in a bit of mystery but talks more about trusting God in suffering rather than losing faith and hope. Infact, one of the greatest sources on the subject is a book called 'Job', highly esteemed in Jewish literature for its handling of the topic of 'suffering'. Let's watch a video on Job and his suffering.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GswSg2ohqmA>)

3. Thinking back on the 4 epochs of "God's history" with a broken world (see unit #4) what happened in the crucifixion of Jesus, who was God of God, the God-man, the Saviour of the world, took all pain and suffering on himself that had been brought on by mankind's sin and rebellion against God. If that is true, if that really happened at the cross in 33 A.D., how would that as the beginning of the restoration period affect all other 3 periods?

4. Another aspect of the Bible's teaching on suffering and pain is the judgement of God that stands over wicked people who cause much pain and suffering. What do these Bible passages say to you?
Psalm 18:25-26: *"With the kind You show yourself kind; with the blameless You show yourself blameless; with the pure You show yourself pure; and with the crooked You show yourself twisted."*
Romans 3:5: *"But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He?"*

5. How can we cope with pain and suffering? Which Bible passages speak most to your heart? Why?
Philippians 1:29: *"For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake."*

Romans 8:28 *"We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose?"*

2 Corinthians 1:3-5: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ."*

2 Corinthians 12:7-10: *"to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me – to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."*

More Bible passages on suffering? 1 Peter 2:21, Isaiah 43:1-2; Genesis 50:20; Revelation 21:3-5.

6. The Bible does not try to get rid of pain and suffering, nor does it get rid of a good God due to pain and suffering. Instead, the Bible teaches that the goodness, greatness and grace of God are even more noticeable in light of our evil, pain and suffering. It is like: humanity did everything in our free will to bring pain and suffering into this world, God did nothing. We can do nothing to get rid of the pain and suffering in this world, God did everything!

King David suffered much. Yet he wrote the famous 23rd Psalm, this ancient Hebrew also known as the "Shepherd Psalm". Let's read it together, noting especially the words in verses 4-6.

7. What is the golden nugget you feel you are taking with you from our conversation today? Why?

I do not believe the Bible is more than just another religious book

Welcome!

What is your name and what are your experiences with the Bible so far?

1. A very brief introduction to the Bible:

The Bible is the account of God's action in the world, and his purpose with all creation. It is actually a collection of 66 books, written over sixteen centuries by forty different authors. Every author brings his own style. It provides many stories about the lives of people, about battles and journeys, about the life of Jesus, and about early church activity. It comes to us in narratives and dialogues, in proverbs and parables, in songs and allegories, in history and prophecy, and every genre comes with its own rules of interpretation. Yet it is clear that all authors intended their writing to be interpreted according to the author's original intent and not anyone's modern, cultural take on things. Rather than positing the Bible against science, the Bible is itself a part of science: It is the only ancient text with existing manuscripts that number in the thousands, that must be researched in their original languages of Hebrew and Aramaic (Old Testament – 39 books) and Greek (New Testament – 27 books). In ancient days, the authors of the Bible recorded its messages with whatever resources were available at the time. The Scriptures themselves reveal some of the materials used: engravings in clay, inscriptions on tablets of stone, ink and papyrus, vellum, parchment, leather, and metals. Scholars today repeatedly reference the harmony of the Bible: with such a number of authors and years involved in writing the Bible, there is an amazing harmony and lack of contradiction between the authors and books. And while there are thousands of subjects that are addressed, there appears to be one overriding theme that brings together all the books and runs like a golden thread through all the books: God made all things bright and beautiful, mankind in its utter selfishness made a huge and unimaginably catastrophic mess of everything, God has responded in grace through Jesus the Messiah to turn it all into a heaven on earth. (Summary of The International Bible Society)

What questions about the Bible would you like to get some answers on?

2. Let's watch "The Bible explored: Can I trust the Bible?"

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPaeo19sQXw>)

What do you think about accuracy, reliability and relevance of the Bible?

3. The controversy that rages around the Bible is the claim it makes for itself: The content of the original manuscripts came from God himself. He used human authors to essentially function as human translators of heavenly thoughts into human language humans can understand. And even though humans are fallible, God made sure that His revelation to humans would be transmitted infallibly and completely trustworthy, so that humans would come to know the true God in the mess we are in and would be without excuse to get out of the mess through the way God provided escape. Here are a few Bible passages that underscore this amazing claim:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

2 Peter 1:16-21

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Matthew 5:17-19

Psalms 119:11,18,72,103,127.

What do you think? Is this claim believable or unbelievable? Why?

4. A parting challenge: Would you be willing to start reading in the Bible in order to challenge its believability?

I do not believe Jesus is more than just another religious leader

Welcome!

1. What has been your opinion of Jesus and what/who influenced you to develop your opinion?

2. The historical Jesus: Did Jesus exist? Let's watch the video "Did Jesus actually exist?"

<https://www.solas-cpc.org/shortanswers66/>

3. Why was this man so controversial? We look at some of the claims made of him in his day:

- John 1:1; 14-18 (the perspective of one of the first 12 followers of Jesus: John)
- Colossians 1:19; 2:9; Philippians 2:9-11 (the perspective of Paul, a Roman Jew, who initially was strongly opposed to so-called 'Christ-ians')
- Hebrews 1:1-14 (the author is unknown but scholars figure this was written by one of the 12 disciples of Jesus or Paul or a co-worker of Paul before 70 A.D.)

What strikes you most in these Bible passages? Are there things said about Jesus that in the history of religions gives him a unique and therefore, controversial standing?

4. There are 2 Bible passages we can look at now, that record an explanation of the Christian faith by Paul, who originally was Saul of Tarsus, a Jewish scholar of the Old Testament (the Bible of the Jews) and an aggressive, even violent opponent of Christians. You may choose to look up one of the two passages as a group and discuss the questions, or you can divide up into 2 groups, each group analyzing the record, then reporting back to the whole group its findings.

A group of Greek philosophers in Athens, who believed in a pluralistic system of gods: Paul argues from history that there is only one true God: Acts 17:15-34

- a. According to Paul, how would you summarize God's role in the beginning and direction of history?
- b. What role does Jesus play in this development of history?

A Roman king, Agrippa, and a Roman governor, Festus, listen to Paul defend his integrity and the historicity of his faith, because religious and political leaders in Israel had accused Paul of stirring up unrest among Jews: Acts 26:1-32

- a. How does Paul present the role of Jesus in the history of religions as well as in his own conversion from anti-Christian to follower of Christ?
- b. How does Paul view his personal faith in Jesus in relationship to other faiths?

5. If the foundation of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus, the centre of the Christian faith is the crucifixion of Jesus. Why did Jesus have to die? Let's watch the video "Why did Jesus have to die?" <https://www.solas-cpc.org/shortanswers32/>

6. In this Discovery Group unit you have encountered arguments by early followers of Jesus, why they decided as rational adults to put their faith in Jesus. Let's look at common arguments used today against following Jesus in faith (which one(s) apply to you?)

- There are too many hypocrites, people who claim to be Christians but act to the contrary!
- All religions have the same evil at their core: the power and the ability to oppress and control others. In the case of Christianity, this is especially evident in the crusades of the Middle Ages.
- The religious culture or family I have grown up in would not allow me to convert to following Jesus without there being a high price to pay.
- All religions are the same but expressed in different cultural forms: all roads lead to the same end.
- The wrong done to me by someone claiming to be a Christian has proven to me how wrong Christianity is.

The above mentioned followers of Jesus, John and Paul (see #3), could have used the exact same arguments against their faith in Jesus. What for them cut through these arguments?

7. What in this entire conversation impacted you the most about the person of Jesus?

I do not believe Jesus is God! Allah is God and Mohammed is his prophet

ALLIE'S STORY, 2021

Allie, a student at a prominent university in Western Europe, was first exposed to the person of Jesus through ongoing campus ministry at her school. During this time she began to meet online with Emily, to hear more about the claims of Jesus. Week after week, the Holy Spirit began to stir a hope in Allie's heart that Jesus' claims might be real, but at the same time she also felt mounting concerns about what she feared most – the loss of her identity. She was Muslim! It was not just a religion, it was who she was. It was what tied her to her family, her friends, her community, and her past.

The dreaded decision that she feared making became an imminent reality the day her family discovered she was exploring Christianity. She was immediately kicked out of her home and disowned by her family. It was the most devastating thing that she could ever imagine.

With nowhere else to turn, she went to Emily's apartment. That day Allie sat with Emily and shared, "I don't know what is going to happen, or what the cost will be, but I think that I want to follow God." A month later, sitting on that same couch, Allie prayed a beautiful prayer that she had written to God. Through tears she thanked Him for His grace and forgiveness, committing her life to Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

Allie now regularly attends the university ministry and spends a lot of time with the local community of believers. She finally has the freedom to pray, read Scripture, talk about Jesus, and to ask all the questions that come up day after day as she explores her new faith. Allie has been filled with a new joy and is walking in anticipation and excitement of what the Lord has in store for her.

That is not to say that the transition has been easy for Allie. The pain of losing connection with her family, friends, and community will not disappear overnight, and though she loves her new friends and spiritual family, she knows that the costs of following Jesus will be something that will affect her life from here forward. Through the pain, Allie sees God's hand at work, and she chooses to be thankful for the difficult circumstances that led her to God.

In our discussion today we will explore the thoughts, insights and experiences that convinced Allie along the way to personally embrace Jesus as a Person in the one God-head and eternally begotten of Father-God (which is the real meaning of "Son of God". When the Koran says, "God does not have a son" in the fleshly sense of giving birth, the Christian faith completely agrees!) and her personal Saviour, who forgives us of all sin. These may not convince you, but you will find them helpful even if not persuaded.

1. Watch the video "Do Muslims and Christians worship the same God?" (<https://www.solas-cpc.org/do-muslims-and-christians-worship-the-same-god-andy-bannister/>)

2. Jesus was good, recognized by many (even as the Koran teaches) as a prophet. The fact is, he was very controversial? When you look at some of the claims made of him in his day you will see why:

- John 1:1; 14-18 (the perspective of one of the first 12 followers of Jesus: John)
- Colossians 1:19; 2:9; Philippians 2:9-11 (the perspective of Paul, a Roman Jew, who initially was strongly opposed to so-called 'Christ-ians')
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What strikes you most in these Bible passages? Are there things said about Jesus that in the history of religions gives him a unique and therefore, controversial standing?

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Would you like to start into another Discovery Group in which you can more closely focus on **"Who Was Jesus...And What Does It Matter?"**