



Questions Asked: "How Do I Know God is Real?"

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On a recent radio program, a caller phoned with the question, "How do I know God is real?" This is an excellent question that I also asked multiple times on my own search for God.

But the question has many sides to it. If someone were asking this question for himself, it would require a different response than if the person were asking this for writing an argument in a paper. The former is personal; the latter is more abstract. Let me attempt a short answer.

This question already assumes there is a real world out there. It is not The Matrix question of whether anything we experience is real. But the thing in question is the reality of God.

Many arguments can be put forward for God's existence. Alvin Plantinga, one of the leading Christian philosophers in the world, wrote a paper

where he discusses two-dozen (or so) arguments for God's existence. Historically, the classical arguments include, among others, the cosmological argument (that the world could not come from nothing), the teleological argument (that the world has purpose and design), and the moral argument (that moral laws require a Moral Law Giver, that justice requires a Judge). When the arguments are laid out and taken cumulatively, the fact that God is real far outweighs the idea that He is not.

But there is more. Is life even livable without God? I remember watching a major network television program years ago. On it, the host held up a book by Ravi Zacharias called *Can Man Live Without God?* The host of the program responded immediately, "Of course he can. He's been doing it for years." The rhetorical move pushed the audience to consider the next secular perspective, while never answering the real question. Is life really livable?

We can go to work, get married, have children, and celebrate birthdays without God. But the question is deeper than that. Can we do these things with ultimate meaningfulness without God? Can we live a moral life without a moral reference point? Can we ultimately trust that justice will be served? And,

most importantly, can man have spiritual life apart from God? As Malcolm Muggeridge has noted, if God is dead someone will take his place—either the power-monger or the hedonist. Augustine's words resound clearly and intuitively, "You have made us for Yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." I'll stake my soul on the resounding and coherent idea that God exists. He is real.

But even as believers we have our days of darkness and hours of doubt. Sometimes this is our own doing. Susanna Wesley stated that often our sin "obscures our sense of God." When we do not align ourselves with the character of God, then our idea about the goodness of God can often become confused in our minds. When his character is in doubt, his Realness is soon to follow.

But when we choose to follow Jesus Christ and walk in accordance with God's design, God becomes more real and relevant to our perception. As I responded to the radio caller, it is because of the coherence of his historical Word and the visiting of his Person in the Incarnation that makes purposes, goodness, and reality mean all the more. As C. S. Lewis described of the New Narnia, "Every rock and flower and blade of grass looked as if it meant more." I suggest glimpses

of this same experience come to us when we seek God. He promises we will find him, when we seek Him with all our hearts.

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