

Resources:

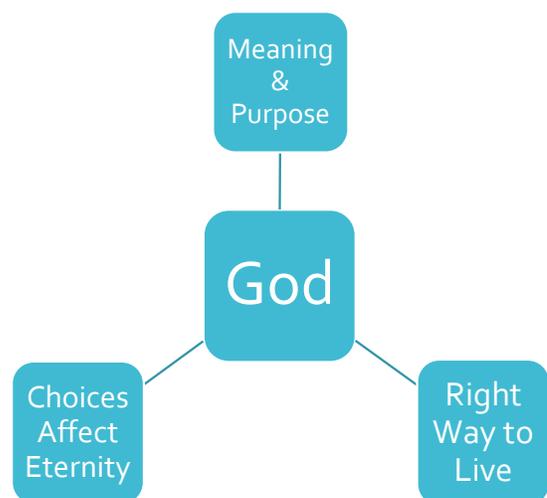
- Geisler, Norman L. and Frank Turek. **I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist**. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004.
- Turek, Frank. **Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to Make Their Case**. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014.

Introduction: Finding the Box Top to the Puzzle of Life

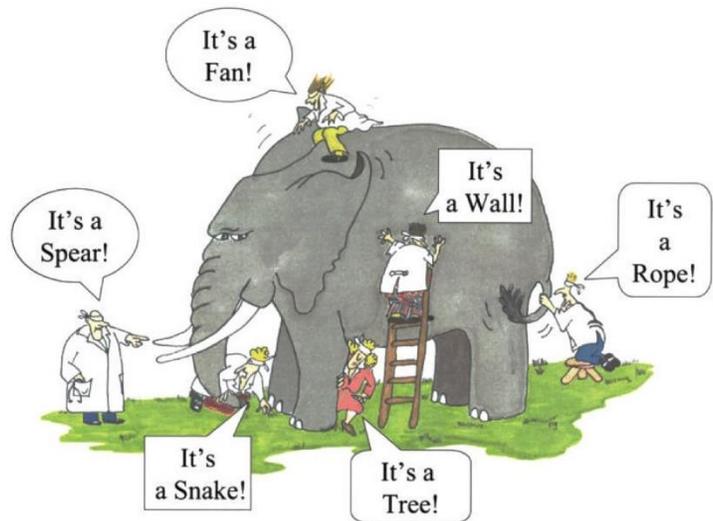
"One who claims to be a skeptic of one set of beliefs is actually a true believer in another set of beliefs." ~ PHILLIP E. JOHNSON

Q. What do the authors mean by "box top"?

- University = "**unity**" in "**diversity**"
 - How all the diverse fields of knowledge fit together to create a single picture of life
 - Instead, we have institutions that teach every viewpoint, no matter how ridiculous, his just as **valid** as any other
 - Except the viewpoint that just **one religion or worldview** could be true
- Despite what culture is telling us today, there is a way to discover unity in diversity, and it would be much like the top to a puzzle box
- **World religions** are often attempts to provide this big picture view of life
 - This picture usually begins with some sort of claim about **God**
 - More **consequences** flow from the subject of God than any other subject
- The 5 most consequential questions in life:
 - **Origin**: where did we come from?
 - **Identify**: who are we?
 - **Meaning**: why are we here?
 - **Morality**: how should we live?
 - **Destiny**: where are we going?
- The answers to each of these questions depend on the existence of God.



- Primary objections against Christianity
 - It's **unreasonable** to believe only one religion is true
 - Some pieces of life seem to defy explanation
 - Only **science** yields the truth
- There is a single, reasonable answer to the questions of God and life, which takes less faith to believe than any other possible answer, including that of an **atheist**



Q. What kind of God are we talking about?

- **Theist**: believes in a personal God who created the universe but is not part of it (*God made all*)
 - Christianity, Judaism, Islam
- **Pantheist**: believes in an impersonal God who is the universe (*God is all*)
 - Hinduism, some forms of Buddhism, New Age
- **Atheist**: believes in no type of God at all (*no God at all*)
- **Agnostic**: unsure about the question of God

The God of the Bible – the Source and Sustainer of all things

- **Self-existing**: not caused by another; the foundation of all being
- **Infinite**: unlimited
- **Simple**: undivided; not made up of parts
- **Immaterial**: spirit; not made of matter
- **Spaceless**: transcends space
- **Timeless**: transcends time; eternal; no beginning and end
- **Omnipotent**: all powerful; can do whatever is logically possible
- **Omnipresent**: everywhere present
- **Omniscient**: all knowing
- **Immutable**: changeless; the standard by which everything else is measured
- **Holy**: set apart; morally perfect; perfectly just and loving
- **Personal**: has mind, emotion, and will; makes choices

Q. Why is religion not simply just about faith?

- **Religion** does require faith, but it isn't only about faith
- **Facts** are central as well because all religions make truth claims
- Many of those claims can be evaluated through **scientific** and **historical** investigation
- Many religions make mutually **exclusive** claims that we must investigate to reasonably conclude to decide which is right and which is wrong
- **Science** and religion are not mutually exclusive as they attempt to answer many of the same questions about life

Q. What problems do non-believers have with Christianity?

- **Intellectual** reasons – the problem of evil, objections of scientists
- **Emotional** reasons – Christian exclusivity, hell, hypocrisy of believers
- **Volitional** reasons – Christian morality

How have you seen these objections played out with others in your life?

Q. How can it take more faith to be an atheist than a Christian?

- Every worldview requires **faith**, even the view that claims there is no God
- As humans we do not have **absolute** knowledge of anything
- We must draw our conclusions based on the **evidence** available
- Certainty of 95%+ is the best we can have for most questions (beyond a **reasonable** doubt)
 - Faith is what covers the **gaps** in our knowledge (*Less evidence -> more faith*)
- Atheists have bigger gaps in their knowledge because they have far less evidence for their beliefs than Christians have for theirs

The 4-Point Case for Christianity

1. Does **truth** exist?
 - a. The bible can't be true if there is no objective truth.
2. Does **God** exist?
 - a. There can't be a "Word of God" if there is no God. But if God exists, then it's possible the Bible is true.
3. Are **miracles** possible?
 - a. In an age of scientific enlightenment, can we really believe in miracles? If not, then we can't believe the Bible either.

4. Is the **Bible** historically reliable?

- a. If the documents are historically reliable, then one can make a good case that the entire Bible is true.

There is a difference between proving a proposition and accepting a proposition

“If someone could provide reasonable answers to the most significant questions and objections you have about Christianity – reasonable to the point that Christianity seems true beyond a reasonable doubt – would you then become a Christian?”

- If the honest answer is no, then rejection is **emotional** or **volitional**

If you're not willing to accept Christianity, you are free to reject it.

- Freedom to make **choices**, even to reject truth, is what makes us moral creatures capable of choosing our ultimate destiny
- If the Bible is true, God has provided each of us with the opportunity to make an eternal choice either to accept him or reject him
 - God has provided enough **evidence** in this life to convince anyone willing to believe, yet
 - He has also left some **uncertainty** so as not to compel the unwilling
- In this way he gives us the opportunity to love him or reject him without **violating** our freedom

Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to Make Their Case

Q. How are atheists stealing from God?

- Atheists are using aspects of reality to argue against God that wouldn't **exist** if atheism were true.
- They are stealing from God in order to argue **against** Him.

C = Causality

R = Reason*

I = Information and Intentionality

M = Morality

E = Evil*

S = Science*