

Truth Series: Lesson 3

How Do We Know God Exists?

Life Question:

How do I know that God exists?

Scripture:

Psalm 14:1, Isaiah 44:24, Psalm 102:25, Genesis 1:1-2, Ephesians 2:4-5, Colossians 1:16-17

Key Passage:

Psalm 14:1

Reality Impact:

Students will learn about evidence that God exists.

Materials Needed:

Napoleon Dynamite video

I. Prayer

II. Introduction:

- a. **Review:** Let's review what we've learned these past two weeks:
 - i. Week 1: We learned that the Bible was recorded accurately.
 - ii. Week 2: We learned that the Bible is authentic. What it says happened actually happened.
 - iii. This week, we're going to learn more from our favorite scholar, Napoleon Dynamite.

- b. **Illustration:** Video Clip—Rico's Time Machine
Napoleon's out-of-work uncle bought a time machine off the internet hoping to travel back in time and relive his glory days as a college quarterback. Napoleon came home from school and saw the time machine sitting on the table. He decided to try it....

The time machine had two problems. First, it didn't work. Second, it shook so hard that it hurt the user's... um... delicate groin area. Sure enough, in the next scene Napoleon and Rico hobbled through a grocery store....

- i. **Application:** Only a fool would buy a time machine off the internet and actually expect it to work. Time machines don't exist.

- ii. What other kinds of things do fools believe? Scripture can tell us a thing or two:

Psalm 14:1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

- c. **Scripture:** Psalm 14:1
The Fool has said in his heart, “There is no God...”
- d. According to the Bible, only a fool would say, “There is no God.” Why? Because evidence of God’s existence surrounds us! This evidence includes:
 - i. The Ontological Argument
 - ii. First Cause Evidence
 - iii. Evidence of Design
 - iv. Scriptural Evidence
- e. **Transition:** Most of our questions about God’s existence begin in our minds so we will start there—with philosophical arguments, beginning with the ontological argument.

III. The Ontological Argument

- a. Logically, does God exist?
 - i. “There are certain claims that we can tell are false without even having to look into them to find out. The claim to have made a four-sided triangle, and the claim to be over six feet tall but less than five, for example, are both claims that are obviously false. We know that triangles have three sides. We know that being over six feet tall means being over five feet tall too. No one that understands what the words in these claims mean would think that they might be true. There’s no need to spend time looking for four-sided triangles or tall short people in order to know that there aren’t any.
 “The ontological argument claims that the idea that God doesn’t exist is just as absurd as the idea that a four-sided triangle does. According to the ontological argument, we can tell that the claim that God doesn’t exist is false without having to look into it in any detail. Just as knowing what “triangle” means makes it obvious that a four-sided triangle is impossible, the argument suggests, knowing what “God” means makes it obvious that God’s non-existence is impossible. The claim that God does not exist is self-contradictory.”¹
- b. The ontological argument is akin to the time machine argument. Time machines just don’t exist. God, however, must exist. *It just makes sense*. Something greater than us *must* exist.
 - i. The argument sounds simple, even slightly childish, but it’s difficult—if not impossible—to argue.
- c. **Illustration:** The Professor’s Brain

A college philosophy professor once presented the following argument to one of his classes: “Has anyone in this class heard God?”

Nobody spoke.

“Has anyone in this class touched God?”

Again, nobody spoke.

“Has anyone in this class seen God?” When nobody spoke for the third time, he stated, “Then there is no God.”

One student asked for permission to reply. The professor, curious to hear this bold student’s response, granted his wish. The student stood up and said, “Has anyone in this class heard our professor’s brain?”

Silence.

“Has anyone in this class touched our professor’s brain?”

Absolute silence.

“Has anyone in this class seen our professor’s brain?” When nobody in the class dared to speak, the student concluded, “Then, according to our professor’s own logic, it must be true that our professor has no brain!”

(...The student received an “A” in the class.)—Author unknown.

- i. **Application:** God is God in every way regardless if you can see or touch Him. He is all-powerful and a perfect God.
- d. St. Anselm, the inventor of the ontological argument, stated that God is, “that than which no greater can be conceived”, meaning it is impossible to conceive either:
 - i. Anything greater than God existing, or
 - ii. Imagining God being better than He already is.²
- e. This understanding is critical. The idea that He doesn’t exist implies His imperfection.
- f. **Scripture:** Isaiah 44:24
²⁴This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: “I am the LORD, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself...,” NIV
- g. **Transition:** The Ontological Argument proves that God exists, as does First Cause Evidence.

IV. First Cause Evidence

- a. Where did it all come from? The universe came into existence somehow. Did it just *POOF!*—there it was? Did it *BANG!*—and there you have it? Did that little piece of matter, which evolutionists insist exploded and created the entire working universe, just somehow create itself?

b. Scientists have tried to answer that question using the theory evolution. Most of you have studied evolution in school. Your teachers are probably unaware of the ghastly amount of scientific evidence that disproves evolution. Although we don't have time to delve into all the evidence, we can provide some basic evidence that the universe could not have created itself.

i. The world is too complex:

1. **Illustration:** The Biosphere³

On September 26, 1991, the first crew of Biospherians, 4 women and 4 men, entered Biosphere 2. Located in the Sonoran Desert about 30 miles north of Tucson, Arizona, Biosphere 2 was a 200 million dollar, 7.2 million cubic foot enclosure. This enclosed 3-acre ecological laboratory had a controlled habitat with a rain forest, savanna, desert, marsh, ocean and agricultural area with all the factors thought necessary to sustain life. The original crew planned to remain in the airtight container for two years. However, after the first year, oxygen levels had fallen so low that outside scientists had to add oxygen. Nineteen of twenty-five vertebrate species placed in the unit died off—as did most insects, including all the species that pollinated the plants. Water and air pollution became acute and temperature control was a problem. The crew lost so much weight that outside scientists smuggled food through the airlocks to those inside.

a. **Application:** Scientists couldn't make Biosphere 2 work despite the intelligence they put into its design. These same scientists still insist that the wonderfully integrated ecosystems of Earth just happened without intelligent design. This project's failure screams "GOD EXISTS!" yet so many refuse to listen.

b. On another note, none of the scientists ever said, "Hey Fred. I think we need a tree that can live in the desert. Go create a palm tree out of... nothing." They took the already created palm trees and planted them in their desert. *Something* had to create this stuff.

ii. Living Things

1. "Observed changes in living things head in the wrong direction to support evolution from protozoan to man (macro-evolution).

Selection from the genetic information already present in a population (for example, DDT resistance in mosquitoes) causes a net *loss* of genetic information in that population. A DDT-resistant mosquito is adapted to an environment where DDT is present, but

the population has lost genes present in the mosquitoes that were not resistant to DDT because they died and so did not pass on their genes. So natural selection and adaptation involve *loss* of genetic information.”⁴

iii. Cycle of Decay

1. Evolution defies the natural cycle of life. Things, left to themselves, decay. Bodies decay. Rocks erode. Glaciers melt. Yet somehow, evolutionists want us to believe that we worked our way up from protozoa to human.

iv. Fossils

1. Darwin’s theory of evolution hinges on the idea that species evolved—changed over time. Evolution requires hundreds of thousands of half-species—transitional species—to have walked the face of the earth. Darwin expected scientists to find millions of transitional fossils. Unfortunately for Darwin’s theory, scientists have found none—except for a few disputable ones. Even those who believe in evolution admit that transitional fossils don’t exist. Scientists have never found fossils of cat-dogs or dog-cats. Just dogs and cats—no transitional animals.
2. Evolutionist Dr. Colin Patterson of the British Museum of Natural History, in response to a question about why he failed to include illustrations of transitional fossils in his book on evolution, said, “I fully agree with your comments on the lack of direct illustration of evolutionary transitions in my book. If I knew of any, fossil or living, I would certainly have included them. You suggest that an artist should be used to visualize such transformations, but where would he get the information from? I could not, honestly, provide it, and if I were to leave it to artistic license, would that not mislead the reader?

“I wrote the text of my book four years ago. If I were to write it now, I think the book would be rather different. Gradualism is a concept I believe in, not just because of Darwin’s authority, but because my understanding of genetics seems to demand it. Yet Gould and the American Museum people are hard to contradict when they say there are no transitional fossils. As a paleontologist myself, I am much occupied with the philosophical problems of identifying ancestral forms in the fossil record. You say that I should at least ‘show a photo of the fossil from which each type of organism was derived.’ I will lay it on the line—there is not one such fossil for which one could make a watertight argument.”⁵

- a. Translation: “Um... Ah... the evidence that supports this theory we’ve been teaching just doesn’t exist.”

v. The Age of Things

1. The evidence for a “young” earth/universe is, by definition, evidence for biblical creation, as naturalistic evolution, if it were at all possible, would require eons. There is much evidence that the universe is relatively young, such as the decay of the earth’s magnetic field, including rapid paleomagnetic reversals, fragile organic molecules in fossils supposedly many millions of years old, not enough helium in the atmosphere, not enough salt in the sea, carbon-14 in coal and oil supposedly millions of years old, polystrate fossils that extend through strata supposedly representing many millions of years, inter-tonguing of non-sequential geological strata, small number of supernova remnants, magnetic fields on “cold” planets, and much more.⁶

vi. Cultural-anthropological evidence

1. “Hundreds of world-wide traditions among indigenous peoples about a global Flood, each with features in common with the biblical account, provide evidence of the reality of that account. Also widespread, but less so, are accounts of a time of language dispersal. Linguistic and biological evidence has recently revealed a hitherto unrealized genetic closeness among all the ‘races’ of people..., consistent with a recent origin from a small population source. This denies the previously widely held belief that human races evolved their characteristic features during long periods of isolation. Molecular studies suggest that, relatively recently, one woman provided the mitochondrial DNA which gave rise to the sequences in all people alive today. Such evidence may be squeezed into an evolutionary model, but it was not a direct prediction of it. However, it is directly consistent with biblical creation.”⁷
2. If a worldwide flood occurred, it would only make sense that other cultures would have included it in their lore and folktales.

vii. Design and complexity of life forms

1. We know of incredibly complex coordinated biological systems in which no conceivable part-coordinated, part-functioning, simpler arrangement would be other than a liability. Examples include: the blood-clotting mechanism, the bacterial flagellum (used for propulsion), the photosynthetic apparatus, and the pupal

transformation of caterpillars to butterflies. Examples abound in living things.⁸

2. Like the Biosphere, even each life form is too complex to just evolve without dying. Imagine how many prehistoric animals died before their complex eyes evolved to perfection! The complexity of organisms shows that evolution makes no sense!

c. Scientific evidence falls on the side of creation:

- i. “The universe consists of a series of events stretched across time in a long causal chain. Each one of these events is the cause of the event that comes after it, and the effect of the event that comes before it. The world as it is came from the world as it was, which came from the world as it was before.

“If we trace this series of events back in time, then what do we find? There seem, at first glance, to be two possibilities: either we eventually reach the first event in the series, the cause at the beginning of the universe that set everything going, or there is no first event in the series and the past stretches back into infinity. The first cause argument tells us that the second of these is not possible, that the past cannot stretch back into infinity but rather must have a beginning. The argument then proceeds by suggesting that if the universe has a beginning then there must be something outside it that brought it into existence. This being outside the universe, this Creator, the first cause argument tells us, is God.”⁹

d. When we see everything that God created, we cannot help but stand in amazement. He is God, the Creator of everything. He “CAUSED” it to happen.

- i. **Quote:** “This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being. This Being governs all things, not as the soul of the world, but as Lord over all; and on account of his dominion he is wont to be called Lord God.”—Isaac Newton¹⁰
- ii. **Scripture:** Psalm 102:25
In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. NIV
- iii. **Scripture:** Genesis 1:1-2
¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. NIV

- e. **Transition:** The Ontological Argument proves that God exists. First Cause Evidence proves that God exists. Evidence of Design also proves that God exists.

V. Devine Design Evidence

- a. **Illustration:** Design on the Beach
Pretend you are walking on the beach and you see “Billy Bob loves Jane” etched in the sand in big, bold letters. Would you think, “Wow, a group of seagulls must have run around and created this?” Or maybe, “The waves must have rolled in just right and somehow etched these letters into the sand?” Of course not! Letters written on the beach *imply* a writer!

What if you passed a sand castle? Would you think, “Wow! What great tidal flow?” No! Castles built in the sand *imply* a builder!

- b. **Illustration:** Who Baked the Cake?
On the same note, pretend you’ve just walk into your kitchen, and your eyes fall on a scrumptious birthday cake with butter-cream frosting, yellow and purple roses, and the words, “Happy Birthday” written across the top. Would you think, “A great wind must have come through this kitchen, opened the refrigerator, cracked the eggs, measured the flour, remembered the baking powder, mixed it up, threw it in the oven, whipped the milk, butter and powdered sugar into icing, and then took the cake out of the oven at the perfect time, iced it, added the pretty roses, AND spelled Happy Birthday correctly! Wow, what a great accident of nature!” Only a fool would think that! A baked cake implies a baker!
- i. **Application:** Design implies a designer. Our fully functioning bodies, which not only eliminate waste but also procreate, cry, laugh, eat, and love, show *evidence of design*. Just as no one would walk into a kitchen and say, “How did this cake bake itself,” no one should look at the human body and say, “How did this accident of nature occur?” Our design implies a designer!
- ii. Look at the design in our:
1. Universe
 2. Earth
 3. Atmosphere
 4. LIFE!
- iii. These complex things show evidence of design. They MUST have a designer!
1. Our cell structure: Too many things in our body must work together correctly, or we would die. As we learned earlier, we could not have evolved because we’d never make it past the

“formation of the eye stage” so we could see to catch our food!
But this complexity shows us something else. It shows evidence of design.

- iv. **Illustration:** From tornado to Lexus
The likelihood of a big bang creating the world is as reasonable as the likelihood of a tornado raging through a junkyard and assembling an entire LEXUS (brand new with the exact serial numbers)—that worked!
 - 1. **Application:** Fools! Tornados can't make cars! And who put the stuff in the junkyard to begin with?
- v. “What was the cause? We can know from the vast amount of matter and energy in the universe, and their complexity and order, that whatever caused it all had to be intelligent and more powerful than all the matter and energy in the universe combined. Throughout history philosophers and religious people have called this cause God. The Bible not only calls this cause God, but goes on further to say that it was God who did the causing, and did so with planning, reason and logic.”¹¹
- vi. Our universe abounds with evidence of a *creator*.¹²

c. Natural Law

- i. “There is a universal tendency for all systems of matter/energy to run down. Available energy is dissipated and order is lost. Without either a programmed mechanism or intelligent action, even open systems will tend from *order to disorder*, from information to non-information, and towards less availability of energy. This is the reason why heat flows from hot to cold, and why the sun's energy will not make a dead stick grow (as opposed to a green plant, which contains specific, pre-programmed machinery to direct the energy to create a special type of order known as *specified complexity*).”¹³
 - ii. The world is full of natural laws—from simple, such as gravity, to complex, such as Einstein's theory of relativity. Natural laws imply a lawmaker.
- d. **Transition:** WOW, if that isn't enough, the following can close the book on your doubt!

VI. Scriptural Evidence

- a. For the past two weeks, we've learned that the Bible is historically authentic and accurate. Our first lesson of this series showed the accuracy and authenticity of:

Psalm 14:1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

- i. The First Words
 - ii. The First Collection
 - iii. The Second Collection
 - iv. The Final Collection
- b. Our second lesson showed that the Bible is true:
- i. Historically
 - ii. Textually
 - iii. Archeologically
 - iv. Scientifically
- c. We know the Bible is accurate, and it tells us that God exists, and that He made us.
- i. **Scripture:** Ephesians 2:4-5
⁴God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us... ⁵made us alive together in Christ.

VII. Closing:

a. Lesson Recap:

- i. We know that God exists because:
 1. The Ontological Argument: It just makes sense.
 2. First Cause Evidence: Something had to cause the universe.
 3. Evidence of Design: All creation shows evidence of design, and design implies a designer.
 4. Scriptural Evidence: The Bible says God exists.

b. Life Lessons:

- i. How does the knowledge that God is real affect the way we live?
 1. **Illustration:** Changing Beliefs¹⁴
 Twenty-three-year-old Jenny was a pretty young woman with a seemingly pleasant personality. She had loving parents and came from a good church. But she had only experienced a depressive life and was torn up inside. She had bombed out of college and was on the verge of losing her job. She had suffered from eating disorders for several years and medical treatment for her problems seemed futile.
 A pastor who was planning an intensive one-month spiritual retreat for some seminary students somehow knew that Jenny needed to attend—even though she wasn't a seminary student. He invited her, and (to his surprise) she agreed.

Shortly after the start of the retreat, the pastor sat down with Jenny privately. “I didn’t invite you here to change your behavior, Jenny,” he said. “Your behavior isn’t your problem.”

“I’ve always been told that my behavior is my problem,” she answered in surprise.

“I’m not worried about your behavior. It’s your beliefs I’m interested in. I’m praying that you will change your beliefs about God and who you are in Christ. You’re not a failure. You are a child of God, no better and no worse than any other person at this retreat. I want you to start believing it because it’s the truth.”

This pastor was the first person to affirm Jenny as a valuable child of God. She began to believe it and experienced a miraculous transformation during the next 30 days. Her circumstances didn’t change, but she did.

- a. **Application:** Too often we try to change our behavior—or another’s behavior—without changing our beliefs. Life doesn’t work that way. Our behavior follows our beliefs. We must change our beliefs before we can make significant changes in our behavior.
- ii. Do you want to change your behavior? You need a true knowledge of God and an understanding that you are His child.

VIII. Action Steps:

- a. Why do we need to know God exists? Because we need Him. We need to BELIEVE and know that God is who He says He is.
- b. God desires a personal relationship with you, regardless of your background or baggage.
 - i. **Scripture:** Colossians 1:16-17
¹⁶For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. NIV

¹ <http://www.existence-of-god.com/ontological-argument.html>

² <http://www.existence-of-god.com/ontological-argument.html>

³ **Need Note**

⁴ <http://www.answersingenesis.org/Home/Area/AnswersBook/existence1.asp>

⁵ <http://www.answersingenesis.org/Home/Area/AnswersBook/existence1.asp>

⁶ <http://www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/faq/young.asp>

⁷ <http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs/5044.asp>

⁸ <http://www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/faq/design.asp>

⁹ <http://www.existence-of-god.com/first-cause-argument.html>

¹⁰ Need Source

¹¹ <http://www.gospeloutreach.net/doesgodexist.html>

¹² <http://www.answersingenesis.org/Home/Area/AnswersBook/existence1.asp>

¹³ <http://www.answersingenesis.org/Home/Area/AnswersBook/existence1.asp>

¹⁴ Dr. _____ Anderson, Freedom in Christ (City: Harvest House Publishers, date) pg#

Truth Series: Lesson 3

Small Group Questions

1. What four types of evidence show us that God exists?
2. Why do you think people keep grasping onto the theory of evolution, even though it has so many holes?
3. How does it make you feel to know that God designed you?
4. What behaviors in your own life do you think you need to change? How can you change your beliefs?