

Knowing God through Reasonable Reasons

Dr. David Shaw

1. Why the reasons for knowing God are important:

We live in a polarized society. If Christians want to reach out to others, it is important to understand our own beliefs as well as why others don't share our perspective. I have never yet met a Christian who did not have some doubts, and doubts must be dealt with if faith is to grow strong.

2. How do the reasons for belief in God and/or disbelief in God work? They occur on three levels.
 - Intellectual
 - Personal Reasons (what is going on in our life)
 - Social Reasons – Sociology of knowledge works on the basis of people of how people in your own social support structure operate

The reason all three of these levels come into play is because we are made in the image of God, and these three areas reflect His image.

2. What are the reasons that must be negotiated for a belief in God? (It is helpful to view these as rungs on a ladder).
 - The **first rung** – Disbelief takes as much faith as actual faith requires. There are many arguments against Christianity.
 - 1) The argument of evil and suffering. If God is good, why does He allow suffering? If God is all-powerful, why does He not stop suffering? It is "senseless." The fallacy with that argument is that the one who voices it presupposes that he/she can see and know what will ultimately prove to be senseless and what will not. When you press them on this point, they will say: "Well what possible reason could God have (as though they have a mind as big and as complex as God?)"
 - 2) Others will argue that those who call themselves Christians do bad things. I agree. They should not kill Doctors, even if they perform abortions. But have no Buddhists ever done anything wrong? What about Muslims? Have they ever sinned? The whole point to any religion is that it is followed because we need help.
 - 3) Others argue "You can't know if there is a God. These people are making a universal truth claim about something when they are obviously against universal truth claims or they would not have made one.
 - 4) Others say: "I'll believe in your God when you prove it." Of course, this assumes something about the nature of God, i.e., that He can be proved to our satisfaction according to our terms. I wonder if they can prove that He does not exist?

- The **second rung** of the ladder is this: “It takes more faith to disbelieve in God than it does to believe in God.
 - 1) This world is finely tuned to the production of a universe and a planet which is perfectly chosen for human existence. Of course, all this could be by mere chance. However, if I won the lottery today (I don’t play, so “No, you can’t have any of the money from this example); won it again in one week by purchasing the winning ticket at the same store at the exact same time; and this process was repeated every week for the next 52 weeks and 10 years without fail, that would also be “by chance.”

- The **third rung** of the ladder is this: Personal commitment which brings us to certainty.