

LETTERS & DEVOTION

Bible: Worldview and Apologetics

Free sample: Unit 1, Lessons 1 to 8

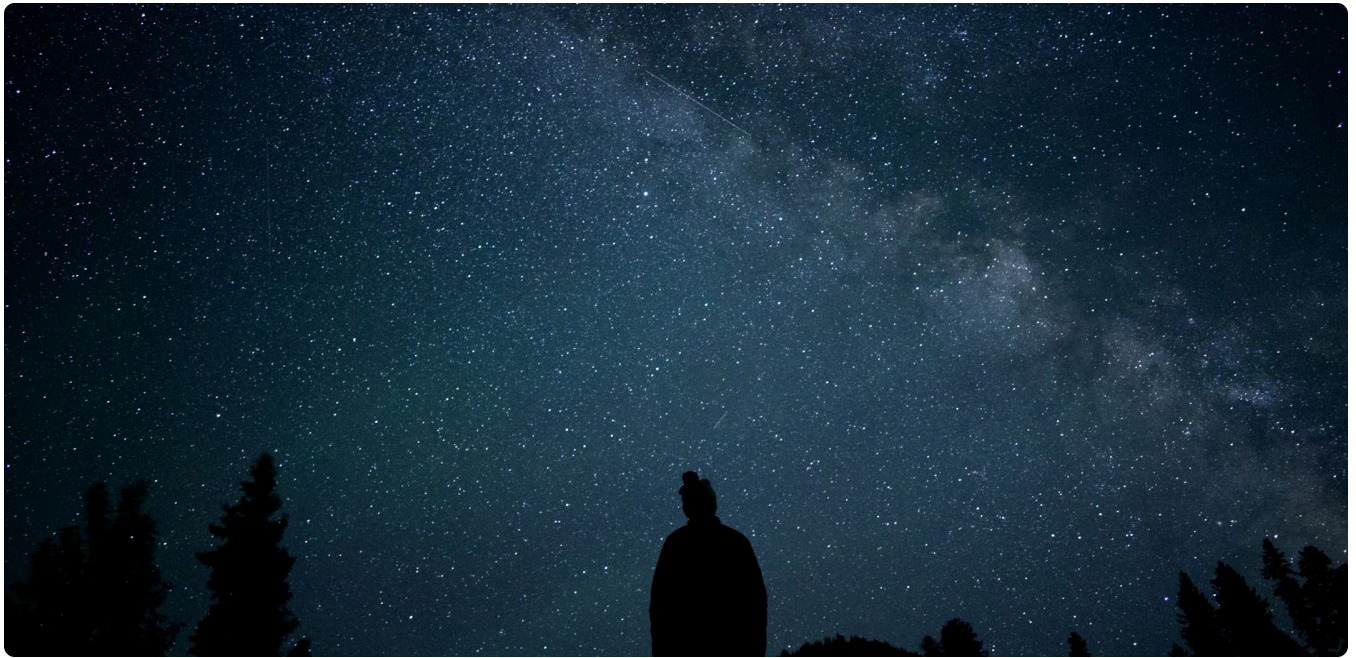
These are 8 lessons from *Bible: Worldview and Apologetics: Grade 11*, a Grade 11 year a parent runs at the kitchen table. Each lesson is a short script for you, a page to read together, and a practice sheet you may copy for your household. Answers are at the back.

Bible: Worldview and Apologetics: Grade 11. Sample edition.

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Letters & Devotion is a Christian curriculum: a Bible course in every grade from the King James text, and science taught as scientists teach it, including an old earth. Standards references: Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards.



BIBLE · UNIT 1

What a Worldview Is

Nine weeks defining what a worldview is and setting out the historic Christian answers to the four questions: origin, meaning, morality and destiny. Then how anyone knows anything, why nobody argues from a neutral standing point, and three tests for judging any worldview including this one.

In this unit

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|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Everyone is standing somewhere | 5. Morality |
| 2. The four questions | 6. Destiny |
| 3. Origin | 7. How anybody knows anything |
| 4. Meaning | 8. Nobody comes to the table empty |

Everyone is standing somewhere

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “Everyone is standing somewhere” (Acts 17:16-34), and say 1 Thessalonians 5:21 by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Everyone is standing somewhere

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Acts 17:16-34, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

A worldview is the set of answers a person is already carrying about what is real, what people are for, what is right, and how it ends. Almost nobody picks one deliberately. Most people absorb one and then defend it as though they had reasoned their way in. Watch what Paul does in Athens. He walks the city first. He reads their inscriptions and quotes their own poets back to them. He finds the single altar that admits a gap and he starts there.

That is the method this course uses, and it is not a courtesy. You cannot argue with a position you cannot state. Arguing with a caricature feels like winning and changes nothing, because the person across from you never held the thing you defeated. Notice how it ends. Some mocked, some said they would hear him again, some believed. Three outcomes out of one speech, and the account does not treat that as failure.

This year you will be asked to state atheism, Islam, Buddhism and the problem of evil well enough that an atheist, a Muslim, a Buddhist and a philosopher would each say yes, that is what I think. Only after that are you allowed to answer.

MEMORY WORK (1 Thessalonians 5:21):

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

DISCUSS:

1. Paul quotes Greek poets instead of Hebrew scripture here. What does that buy him, and what does it cost him?
2. Name three things you believe that you have never once had to defend out loud. Where did each of them come from?
3. Think of one person you actually disagree with. Could you state their view so well that they would recognize it as theirs?

WRITTEN WORK: Write one page titled What I Already Think. Answer four questions in order, from your head, without looking anything up: where did everything come from, what is a person for, how do I tell right from wrong, and what happens at the end. Date it, seal it in an envelope, and tape it inside the front cover of your notebook. Week 36 opens it. You may not edit it before then.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Everyone is standing somewhere

1. The essay defines a worldview. Which description matches it?

- ☐ A A religion in the formal sense, so anyone who does not belong to a church, synagogue, or mosque must be going through life without any worldview at all
- ☐ B The set of answers a person is already carrying about what is real, what people are for, what is right, and how it ends
- ☐ C A set of beliefs a person chooses deliberately after weighing the alternatives

2. In Acts 17 Paul is in Athens. What does the essay say he does before he argues with anyone?

- ☐ A He recites long passages of the Hebrew scriptures aloud so the philosophers listening will recognize his authority as a teacher
- ☐ B He denounces the statues in the marketplace to clear the ground
- ☐ C He walks the city, reads its inscriptions, and starts from the one altar that admits a gap

3. The memory verse gives two instructions in order. What are they?

- ☐ A Prove that you are good, then hold that standard over other people
- ☐ B Test everything, then keep hold of what turns out to be good
- ☐ C Hold on to what you were taught, and do not put it at risk by testing it

4. How does the essay describe the outcome of Paul's speech in Athens?

- ☐ A The whole city was persuaded by his reasoning, and a thriving church was founded there before he even left Athens
- ☐ B Nobody responded, which is why the essay calls the speech a failure
- ☐ C Three outcomes at once: some mocked, some said they would hear him again, some believed

The four questions

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “The four questions” (Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 and Ecclesiastes 12:9-14), and say Ecclesiastes 1:2 (part) by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: The four questions

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 and Ecclesiastes 12:9-14, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

Every worldview, religious or not, answers four questions. Origin: where did all this come from. Meaning: what is a person for. Morality: what makes an action right. Destiny: where is it going and what happens to me.

Ecclesiastes is the book that asks them without flinching. The Preacher runs the experiments in order: pleasure, work, wealth, learning. Each one delivers something and then runs out.

The Hebrew word translated vanity is closer to vapor or breath. Not worthless, but impossible to hold. That is a more interesting complaint than the usual one. His problem is not that life is bad; it is that it will not stay still.

The striking thing is that this book is in the canon. A worldview confident enough to be worth holding has room inside it for its own bleakest witness, uncensored, sitting next to the Psalms.

For the rest of this unit you will write out how historic Christianity answers those four questions. In unit two you will hear the strongest reasons to think those answers are wrong.

MEMORY WORK (Ecclesiastes 1:2 (part)):

vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

DISCUSS:

1. Which of the four questions do you think most people answer without ever noticing they answered it?
2. Why would a book this bleak be kept in the collection instead of quietly dropped?
3. Of the four questions, which one have you actually thought about, and which ones did you simply inherit?

WRITTEN WORK: Rule a four-column table across two facing pages of your notebook: origin, meaning, morality, destiny. It stays open all year. You will add a row for Christianity over the next seven weeks, a row for each of the five worldviews in unit four, and a final row for yourself. Fill in one row now: what your household appears to believe about each question judging by how it spends time and money, not by what it says.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

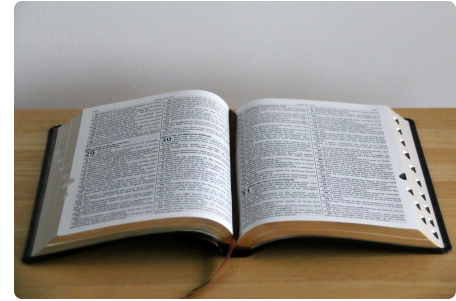
Practice: The four questions

1. The essay names the four questions every worldview answers. Which list is right?
☐ A Origin, science, religion, politics ☐ B Origin, meaning, morality, destiny
☐ C God, sin, salvation, church
2. The essay says the Preacher runs his experiments in order. Which four?
☐ A Prayer, fasting, sacrifice, pilgrimage ☐ B Pleasure, work, wealth, learning
☐ C Marriage, children, travel, fame
3. The memory verse repeats the word vanity. The essay says the Hebrew word is closer to vapor or breath. What does that change about the complaint?
☐ A The complaint is not that life is worthless but that it cannot be held still
☐ B The complaint is even stronger than it looks: everything is worth nothing at all
☐ C The complaint is about people being conceited rather than about life
4. The written work starts a four-column table and asks for one row now. What goes in that first row?
☐ A What your household appears to believe about each question, judging by how it spends time and money
☐ B What historic Christianity teaches about each of the four questions, since that is the standard the household will eventually be measured against
☐ C What your household says it believes, in its own words

Origin

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “Origin” (Genesis 1:1-2:3 and John 1:1-5), and say Genesis 1:1 by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Origin

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Genesis 1:1-2:3 and John 1:1-5, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

The Christian answer to the origin question is not first about mechanism. It is about contingency: the universe does not explain itself, it did not have to exist, and it is here because someone who did not have to make it decided to.

Three claims come with that, and each one was a fighting position when it was written. Matter is not eternal, so the world is not a rival god. Matter is not evil, so the body is not a prison. And the world is ordered, because a mind stands behind it rather than a struggle between older gods.

That third claim has a history worth knowing. The expectation that nature runs on consistent, discoverable rules was held by the people who built the early sciences, and several of them said plainly that they expected order because they expected a lawgiver. You do not have to make that into a proof to notice it is not an accident.

Genesis 1 is also arranged. Days one through three make three empty spaces and days four through six fill them in the same order. That is a deliberate literary structure, and noticing it is not a way of softening the text; it is reading the text as what it is.

Hold the distinction that unit two will test: this chapter is answering who made the world and whether it is good. Whether it is also answering how, and in what sense, is a

MEMORY WORK (Genesis 1:1):

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

DISCUSS:

1. What is the difference between saying the universe began and saying the universe is contingent?
2. Why would it matter to an ancient reader that the sun and the sea are listed as things that were made?
3. If you learned tomorrow that the universe had no beginning in time, what in your beliefs would have to change, and what would not?

WRITTEN WORK: Write one page setting out what Genesis 1 claims and one paragraph setting out what it does not claim. Then find a science text or reputable article on the early universe and list, in two columns, one thing each source tells you that the other does not attempt to say.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Origin

1. The essay says the Christian answer to the origin question is not first about mechanism. What is it first about?
 - ☐ A Method: the sequence of physical processes that produced the world
 - ☐ B Contingency: the universe does not explain itself and did not have to exist
 - ☐ C Chronology: pinning down the exact date on which the world began, since everything else follows from getting that number right
2. The essay says three claims come with the doctrine of creation, each a fighting position when it was written. Which is one of them?
 - ☐ A The world is disordered, so its workings cannot be discovered
 - ☐ B Matter is eternal, so the world has always been here
 - ☐ C Matter is not evil, so the body is not a prison
3. What arrangement does the essay point out inside Genesis 1?
 - ☐ A Days one through three make three empty spaces, and days four through six fill them in the same order
 - ☐ B Each of the six days is described in exactly the same words
 - ☐ C The days run in order from the most important creature God makes down to the least important, ending with mankind as an afterthought
4. The memory verse opens with the words In the beginning. Which of the essay's three claims does that phrase carry most directly?
 - ☐ A That matter is not eternal, since there is a beginning and God is before it
 - ☐ B That God begins at the same moment the world does
 - ☐ C That the world is ordered rather than chaotic, since only a being who exists in an orderly way could produce an orderly universe

Meaning

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “Meaning” (Psalm 8 and Genesis 1:26-31), and say Psalm 8:4 by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Meaning

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Psalm 8 and Genesis 1:26-31, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

Psalm 8 asks the meaning question in the honest order. It looks at the size of the sky first and only then asks what a person could possibly be worth against that.

The Christian answer is that human worth is conferred and not achieved. It is not a reward for being useful, or clever, or wanted. Genesis says it is a status given at the start, and status given at the start cannot be revoked by performance.

When that was written, the phrase image of God was used in the surrounding cultures for a king, or for a statue of a god in a temple. Applying it to every human being, including slaves and infants and foreigners, was the radical move. It is worth seeing how far that idea has traveled since.

Compare the alternatives fairly. If worth is what you produce, the old and the disabled lose theirs. If worth is what society agrees to grant, it can be voted away, and in living memory it has been. Conferred worth is the only version that does not have an exit. This is also the claim that costs Christians the most, because it applies to people they dislike. A worldview is tested where it is expensive, not where it is flattering.

MEMORY WORK (Psalm 8:4):

DISCUSS:

1. Psalm 8 puts the smallness of humans and their dignity in the same breath. Why does the argument need both halves?
2. Which competing account of human worth do you actually see operating around you, and where do you see it?
3. Name one person you find it hard to think of as made in God's image. What would change this week if you granted it anyway?

WRITTEN WORK: Write two paragraphs. First: state, in your own words and without Bible language, what the doctrine of the image of God claims about a human being. Second: take one real case where that claim is expensive, a person in a coma, a convicted murderer, an enemy soldier, and say what the doctrine requires and whether you actually believe it there.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Meaning

1. The essay says human worth in the Christian account is conferred rather than achieved. What does conferred mean here?
 - ☐ A It is a status given at the start, not a reward for being useful, clever or wanted
 - ☐ B It is earned by doing good and can be lost by doing evil
 - ☐ C It is granted by a society's agreement and can be revised whenever enough people decide the terms of that agreement should change
2. The essay says Psalm 8 asks the meaning question in the honest order. What order is that?
 - ☐ A It states human dignity first so that nothing said afterwards can shake it
 - ☐ B It looks at the size of the sky first, and only then asks what a person could be worth against that
 - ☐ C It asks what God himself is worth before it ever gets around to asking what a single human being could possibly be worth
3. What does the essay say the phrase image of God was used for in the cultures around Israel?
 - ☐ A For any human being at all, which is why the essay says nobody at the time would have found the phrase controversial or new
 - ☐ B For a king, or for a statue of a god standing in a temple
 - ☐ C For priests only, and never for anyone outside the temple
4. The memory verse asks a question rather than making a statement. What is being asked?
 - ☐ A What God is, that a human should be mindful of him
 - ☐ B Whether God even exists at all, given how impossibly large and overwhelming the night sky turns out to be
 - ☐ C What a human being is, that God should be mindful of him at all

Morality

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “Morality” (Romans 2:12-16 and Micah 6:6-8), and say Micah 6:8 (part) by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Morality

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Romans 2:12-16 and Micah 6:6-8, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

The Christian claim about morality has two parts, and people usually attack only the first. Part one: moral facts are real, not preferences, so cruelty is wrong the way arithmetic is wrong and not the way anchovies are unpleasant. Part two: those facts are grounded in the character of God rather than in a vote or in evolutionary usefulness. The classic objection is Plato's, and it is old and good. Is a thing right because God commands it, or does God command it because it is right? If the first, morality is arbitrary and he could have commanded cruelty. If the second, there is a standard above God and he is not ultimate.

The standard Christian reply is that both horns assume God consults something. Goodness is not a rule God obeys or a rule God invents; it is what he is, and his commands express his character. Decide for yourself whether that dissolves the dilemma or renames it. Philosophers still argue about it.

Romans 2 makes a claim you should test against people you know: those without the law still show the work of the law written in their hearts. That predicts that people who reject the whole framework will nonetheless know that torturing children is wrong, and they do.

That cuts both ways, which is the honest part. It means an atheist's moral knowledge is

not borrowed and does not need to be explained away. The Christian argument is about what best grounds that knowledge, not about who has it.

MEMORY WORK (Micah 6:8 (part)):

and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

DISCUSS:

1. State Plato's dilemma in your own words in two sentences, then state the standard reply. Which is stronger?
2. Micah lists three requirements. Why do you think 'walk humbly' is on a list with justice and mercy?
3. Where did you get your own moral certainty about something? Track one conviction back as far as you honestly can.

WRITTEN WORK: Write one page arguing the case that objective morality does not need God, as well as you can make it. Use real positions: moral facts as brute facts, contractualism, evolved cooperation. Then write one paragraph, separately, on the strongest problem you found with the case while writing it. Do not blend the two.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Morality

1. The essay says the Christian claim about morality has two parts. What are they?
 - ☐ A Morality is simply whatever a given society happens to agree on at the time, and God's role is only to bless whatever agreement people reach
 - ☐ B Moral rules are commands, and their content could have been anything at all
 - ☐ C Moral facts are real rather than preferences, and they are grounded in the character of God
2. State the dilemma the essay credits to Plato.
 - ☐ A Is a thing right because God commands it, or does God command it because it is right?
 - ☐ B Is God good because people call him good, or because he calls himself good?
 - ☐ C Can a good God command absolutely anything at all without limit, or must he instead stay completely silent and issue no commands?
3. What is the standard Christian reply to that dilemma, as the essay states it?
 - ☐ A God is simply above all criticism, so the question itself may not even be asked by someone who actually trusts him
 - ☐ B The first horn is simply accepted: God could have commanded cruelty
 - ☐ C Both horns assume God consults something; goodness is not a rule he obeys or a rule he invents, it is what he is
4. The memory verse lists what is required. Which three things does it name?
 - ☐ A To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God
 - ☐ B To do justly, to love God, and to keep the whole law
 - ☐ C To offer sacrifices at the temple, to fast regularly, and to pray with the right words at the right times

Destiny

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “Destiny” (Revelation 21:1-8 and 1 Corinthians 15:50-58), and say Revelation 21:5 (part) by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Destiny

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Revelation 21:1-8 and 1 Corinthians 15:50-58, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

Most people, including most churchgoers, would tell you the Christian answer to the destiny question is that good souls go to heaven. That is not what these two passages say, and the difference matters.

The direction of travel in Revelation 21 is downward: the city comes to earth. The hope is not escape from a material world but the repair of it, and 1 Corinthians 15 insists the body comes back, changed but real. Christianity is stubbornly physical about the end, as it was about the beginning.

That reframes what the hope is for. If matter is going to be repaired rather than discarded, then work, art, justice and bodies are not a waiting room. What happens here is continuous with what comes.

The other half of the destiny question is judgment, and it is the half that costs. Scripture is not vague about accountability. It is much less specific than most preaching about the mechanism and duration, and that gap is where Christians who read the same texts land in genuinely different places.

Three of those positions have long histories in the church: eternal conscious punishment, annihilation, and the hope that God finally reconciles all. Know which one

MEMORY WORK (Revelation 21:5 (part)):

Behold, I make all things new.

DISCUSS:

1. Why would it matter whether the end is escape from the world or repair of the world?
2. What in the Bible's picture of the end is more physical than you expected?
3. What are you doing this year that you would keep doing if you knew this world was going to be repaired rather than thrown away?

WRITTEN WORK: Write one page on hell that does three things in order: state what the New Testament says plainly, state where it is less specific than people assume, and lay out the three historic Christian positions with one text each. End with which one you find most likely and what would change your mind.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

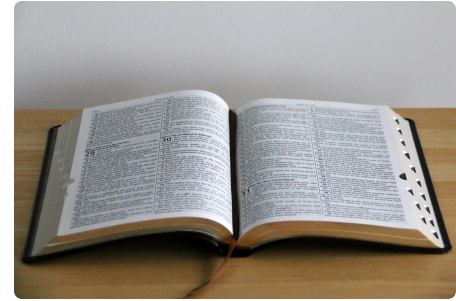
Practice: Destiny

1. The essay says most people, including most churchgoers, would give the wrong answer about Christian destiny. What direction does Revelation 21 actually travel?
 - ☐ A Sideways: this world is swapped for a different one with nothing carried over
 - ☐ B Downward: the city comes to earth, and the hope is repair of the world rather than escape from it
 - ☐ C Upward and away: good souls simply leave this whole material world behind them forever and never come back
2. What does the essay say 1 Corinthians 15 insists about the body?
 - ☐ A It is left unchanged, exactly as it was before death
 - ☐ B It comes back, changed but real
 - ☐ C It is discarded, and the soul continues without it
3. The memory verse says all things are made new. Given the direction Revelation 21 travels, how does the essay read that?
 - ☐ A Making all things new is the repair of what is here, not a replacement for it
 - ☐ B It promises a fresh world with nothing at all carried over from this one
 - ☐ C It refers only to the inner spiritual life of an individual believer, and says nothing at all about the physical world around him
4. The essay says scripture is not vague about accountability but is much less specific than most preaching about something. About what?
 - ☐ A The mechanism and the duration
 - ☐ B Whether there is any judgment at all
 - ☐ C Who does the judging

How anybody knows anything

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “How anybody knows anything” (Hebrews 11:1-6 and John 20:24-31), and say Hebrews 11:1 by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: How anybody knows anything

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Hebrews 11:1-6 and John 20:24-31, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

The popular definition of faith is believing things without evidence, or worse, believing them harder because there is no evidence. If that were what the word meant in these texts, the objection would be fatal and you should take it.

It is not what the word does here. Hebrews pairs faith with substance and evidence, words from the world of legal proof and property deeds. The picture is confidence resting on grounds, not confidence in place of grounds.

Thomas is the test case. He demands physical evidence, he is given exactly what he asked for, and he is not thrown out. The gentle line afterwards about those who have not seen is not a rebuke of investigation; it is about the people who will have to rely on testimony, which is how humans know most of what they know.

That is worth pressing, because the skeptical challenge often assumes a standard nobody meets. You did not verify the existence of Antarctica, the date of your birth, or the safety of the last bridge you crossed. Testimony from sources you have reason to trust is not a lesser kind of knowledge; it is the ordinary kind.

None of that shows Christianity is true. It shows that if it is false, it will have to be false for reasons, and a good reason cannot be that faith means believing without reasons.

MEMORY WORK (Hebrews 11:1):

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

DISCUSS:

1. What are the two definitions of faith in play here, and which one is the objection actually attacking?
2. How much of what you know today did you verify yourself? Try to estimate honestly.
3. Name one belief you hold on testimony alone. Whose testimony, and why do you trust that person?

WRITTEN WORK: Write a one-page dialogue between two students, one of whom says faith means believing without evidence. Give the skeptic the best lines. He should score real points. The other must answer using this week's distinction, and must concede whatever is worth conceding.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: How anybody knows anything

1. The essay names a popular definition of faith and says that if the word meant that, the objection built on it would be fatal. What is that definition?

- ☐ A Obeying a religious authority without ever asking questions or expecting a reason for what you are told
- ☐ B Trusting a person you have good reason to trust
- ☐ C Believing things without evidence, or believing them harder because there is no evidence

2. The essay says Hebrews pairs faith with two words that come from a particular world. Which pair, and which world?

- ☐ A Substance and evidence, words from legal proof and property deeds
- ☐ B Hope and feeling, words from the world of the emotions
- ☐ C Obedience and sacrifice, two words that come from the world of the temple and its rituals

3. What happens to Thomas in John 20, on the essay's reading?

- ☐ A He demands physical evidence, is given exactly what he asked for, and is not thrown out
- ☐ B He demands physical evidence, is refused outright, and is sharply rebuked by name for even asking
- ☐ C He believes without any evidence, which is why he is held up as an example

4. The essay says most of what any person knows comes to them a particular way. Which way?

- ☐ A By testimony from sources they have reason to trust
- ☐ B By reasoning it out from first principles
- ☐ C By personal verification of each claim before accepting it

Nobody comes to the table empty

Goal: Read, analyze and argue about “Nobody comes to the table empty” (Colossians 2:1-10 and Proverbs 14:12-18), and say Proverbs 14:15 by heart.

About 140 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Nobody comes to the table empty

Four sittings this week, about thirty-five minutes each: read the passage and the essay, then the discussion and the written work.

READ: Colossians 2:1-10 and Proverbs 14:12-18, from the King James Bible. Read it before the context below, not after.

THE ESSAY:

Every argument starts somewhere. Nobody derives everything they believe from nothing, because you would need beliefs already in hand to run the derivation. The starting points are called presuppositions and everyone has them.

That is why the setup of most public arguments about religion is quietly loaded. The believer is asked to prove his position from a neutral standing point, and the skeptic gets to sit in the standing point without defending it. But naturalism, the claim that the physical is all there is, is a substantive position too, and it also has to answer for what it can and cannot account for.

Be careful with this insight, because it is easy to abuse. Noticing that nobody is neutral does not mean all positions are equal or that argument is pointless. It means the honest conversation includes the starting points, out loud, on both sides.

Colossians warns against being taken captive by philosophy and empty deceit. That is not an instruction to avoid thinking; the letter is itself an extended argument. It is a warning about frameworks absorbed without examination, which is exactly what this week is about.

So the practical rule for the rest of the year is this: when an argument stalls, stop trading conclusions and go find the assumption underneath. That is usually where the

actual disagreement lives.

MEMORY WORK (Proverbs 14:15):

The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

DISCUSS:

1. What does the demand to argue from a neutral standing point assume, and is the assumption fair?
2. What is one presupposition of your own that you could state in a sentence and could not prove?
3. Think of a recent argument you had with someone. What was the assumption underneath it that neither of you said out loud?

WRITTEN WORK: Take one public argument you have seen this month, online or in person, and write a page identifying the unstated assumption on each side. Then write two sentences: what would have to be true for the other side's assumption to be the right one.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Nobody comes to the table empty

1. What does the essay mean by presuppositions?
 - ☐ A The conclusions a person reaches at the end of an argument
 - ☐ B The starting points a person already holds, since you would need beliefs in hand to derive anything at all
 - ☐ C Beliefs held only by religious people, which is why nonreligious thinkers do not need to examine any of their own

2. The essay says the setup of most public arguments about religion is quietly loaded. How?
 - ☐ A The believer must argue from a neutral standing point while the skeptic sits in that standing point without defending it
 - ☐ B The skeptic is asked to prove a negative, which cannot be done
 - ☐ C The believer is never allowed to speak first in the conversation, no matter how the topic actually comes up between them, which the essay treats as unfair in every setting

3. The essay calls naturalism a substantive position. What is the claim it names?
 - ☐ A That the physical is all there is
 - ☐ B That religion should be kept out of public argument
 - ☐ C That science is a reliable method for studying the physical world

4. The memory verse sets two people side by side. What separates them?
 - ☐ A One takes every word as it comes; the other watches carefully where he is going
 - ☐ B One of them is formally educated and the other has never had any schooling at all
 - ☐ C One believes and the other refuses to believe anything

Answer key

Bible

Lesson 1	1. B 2. C 3. B 4. C
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Lesson 2	1. B 2. B 3. A 4. A
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Lesson 3	1. B 2. C 3. A 4. A
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Lesson 4	1. A 2. B 3. B 4. C
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Lesson 5	1. C 2. A 3. C 4. A
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Lesson 6	1. B 2. B 3. A 4. A
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Lesson 7	1. C 2. A 3. A 4. A
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Lesson 8	1. B 2. A 3. A 4. A
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Unit 1 check-up	1. B 2. C 3. B 4. C 5. C 6. C 7. C 8. B 9. B 10. B 11. A 12. A 13. A 14. C 15. A 16. A
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