

## Is that really your question?

You can imagine that I receive quite a few questions regarding the Christian worldview, given the fact that I travel full-time speaking on that subject. The questions come from not just audience members, but also those who happen to browse our website, see our resources or just stumble upon one of our videos on YouTube, etc.



Over the past 32 years, I have become much better at addressing these questions, as would be expected. I distinctly remember, early on, anytime someone asked me a question to which I had no real answer, I felt uncomfortably compelled to just start talking – about anything! I also remember thinking to myself, as I was responding, “What am I talking about? I don’t know the answer. Why don’t I just admit it?” I believe it was primarily a pride issue, not wanting to look bad, ever. I mistakenly felt that if I didn’t have an answer to a particular question, it would mean my whole case was weak or seriously flawed.

Just one of the many lessons I learned, by God’s grace, is related to doing a better job of analyzing not only the questions themselves, but also the person posing them. This week I received a forwarded question from a friend whose son has a highly intelligent, but very skeptical friend. Here was the question. “If God said in the beginning that everything was good after his creation, how was the serpent who tempted Eve able to manifest himself in the garden of Eden?”

Now, that’s actually a very good question and you certainly can’t blame anyone for asking it. It’s actually a very logical question. I spent about two seconds thinking about how I was going to develop my answer, but then I felt God sending me in a different direction. It’s very natural to just answer the question, but you need to be sensitive to God’s leading in case he wants you to do something other than what you are currently planning. There have been times when I am with a group of non-believers and someone makes a very bold, even arrogant statement about evolution being a fact and that no one doubts it, and I said literally nothing in return. Why? Did I not have anything pertinent to share? That certainly wasn’t the case. I simply felt God pulling on the reigns, telling me, “Not now – just let it go.” That would not have been my choice or natural response, but God knows better and He’s been around the block a few more times than me (to make the world’s biggest understatement).

Regarding the question I received this week, the approach I took was this – before answering the question directly (which is probably just one of many they have), find out more about this person. Qualify them. What’s that? My wife, in addition to doing interior design, also does professional counseling and she has helped me in this area. In this particular case, what it means is that I wanted to find out whether or not this specific question was really one they were struggling with or just something they use as somewhat of a weapon to keep Christians at bay and justify their own disbelief. In other words, is this one of their top 3-5 questions that keeps them from believing the Bible. If not, then let’s table that question for now and focus on the ones they themselves admit are more significant. Otherwise, once you address the question, they can easily say, “Yeah, but what about...”

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(some other issue)". And when you answer that second question, they will respond in a similar fashion indicating it doesn't really make a difference and move on to another question, simply to keep you "chasing your tail", with no real interest in any of your answers, no matter how sound they are.

On the other hand, if they indicate the question on the table truly is one of the biggest reasons for their skepticism, then you have your work cut out for you (i.e. you need to address it directly). One caveat, however. Before you answer, ask them what difference will it make to them if you are able to share an answer that's at least reasonable. And will they be willing to hear more about Jesus and the Bible if you are able to offer a rational response. If they say, "No", then they really aren't looking for truth and you'll have to pray about whether or not God wants you to "hang in there" or "cut your losses" and move on to someone else who really is sincerely looking for truth. If they say "Yes", then you need to be diligent in following through with that person and continue to show grace throughout your interaction with them.

In summary, you should get into the practice of "qualifying" people before just launching into a response to whatever particular question they raise. It also goes a long way to affirm them by saying, "That's a really good question and I can see why it might cause you to question whether or not the Bible is true."

I hope sharing what God has taught me along the way has been helpful to you in thinking about how to respond to the skeptics on your own life.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don't hesitate to [contact us!](#)