



## Facing the Reasonable Questions of a Skeptical Culture

### WHY DO YOU EVEN CARE WHAT THIS OLD BOOK HAS TO SAY?

At the center of most religions is a book containing their sacred writings. The text from the founders describing the theology and details for living a life worthy of said religion. Islam has the Koran, Hindus look to the Bhagavad Gita, Mormons hold to The Book of Mormon, and Karl Marx even promoted The Communist Manifesto as the “ultimate truth.” While many books today claim to be a Word of God—all these works assume they are the ultimate source of truth—as Christians we have to defend why we hold the Bible to be the TRUE Word of God.

Imagine for a moment a Muslim, Hindu, Mormon and Christian all try to evangelize a possible convert. Each goes to their holy book to offer a piece of divine wisdom. At face value all texts offered seem reasonable. But after each evangelist speaks, the person asks a simple question: Why is your book the right book? Imagine playing the role of the Christian evangelist. How intimidated would you be at this moment? Do you have the ability to give a defense for why the Bible is the true Word of God?

A great irony of the Christian life is that the Bible is one of the most assumed tools in the Christian toolbox. We’re called to be people “of the book.” But if someone asks why you trust this book over other “holy books,” most of us struggle to offer a sufficient answer. Our trust in the Bible is almost exclusively implied in Christianity. We read, quote and apply the Bible. But rarely do we consider the

details for why it’s the true Word of God. If we ever do stop to think, we’re often looked down upon for lacking faith or maturity. For many, our answer to why we trust the Bible is based primarily upon what our grandmother, parents, Sunday school teacher and pastors have told us. We think, they believed it so it must be true. This is a perfect example of implied faith.

Our implied faith in Scripture is regularly exploited by skeptics. By offering statistics of all the “inconsistency,” “presumed errors,” and the so-called “irrational stories” in the Bible, they try to use our ignorance against us. In mocking tones skeptics ask: How could you allow these men, who comparatively knew so little about the world we live in, to influence what we believe and think? They look at us as being silly or simple-minded by following the teachings of something so outdated. For the skeptic, mankind has outgrown its need for the Bible. For Christians today the question being asked is less about verifying the historical accuracy of Scripture and more about proving the need for God’s divine influence in our life. The historicity of Scripture has been defended again and again. Thousands of pages have been filled offering historical evidence for why we should trust the Bible. But the question that can stump us the most is this, “Why do you even care what this old book has to say?” Why is the Bible still relevant today?

Some who are reading this lesson have never doubted

their need for God's word. Probably the Bible was introduced to you at a young age. There was never a time that you questioned the authority that it holds. The Bible is a normal part of your life. When doubts and struggles arise, you cling to the truths of Scripture that you hold so dear. For others, you may personally struggle with the idea that the Bible is God's eternal Word. It might seem counterintuitive to rest upon a book, written hundreds of years ago by men who knew so much less than you do today. When you're questioning what's happening in the world, the Bible might not naturally be your first stop. It may seem strange to believe such an antiquated work.

Quick note—we have a tendency to be condescending towards those who struggle to believe that Scripture is God's word. The assumption is, anyone who struggles must be immature and, most likely, unbelieving. Second, for those who just can't seem to stop doubting, it can seem that rest in The Word of God will never come. But, it will. You're not the first to doubt and you won't be the last.

So back to the question—why should you allow an antiquated work, which according to the skeptics contains errors, to intimately influence your daily life? The answer is this: We forget why Scripture was written. The reason you can trust that the Bible is true and relevant is because the ultimate need it addressed the day it was written is still our ultimate need today. The Bible is a record of how sinful people can be reconciled to a holy God; it's a description of God's plan of redemption. That description is timeless. The Gospel is just as true today as it was the first time pen was put to paper.

Skeptics try to make us doubt the truth of the Bible by pointing out the perceived errors. But regardless of how many "issues" they raise, it's undeniable: From beginning to end, the Bible agrees on the details of the Gospel. Sinful people can be reconciled to God through the work of Christ.

Now back to that well-meaning convert asking why they should believe the Bible against all the other "holy books." The answer is found in Christ. The "savior" in every other religion is dead and gone. But Christ is alive and well.

Yes, we read about his death in Scripture. But we also read about his resurrection. We do not worship and follow a dead prophet, but a risen Savior. Keep Paul's words in mind:

**1 Corinthians 15:3-11** *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. 11 Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.*

## Discussion Questions

When faced with a skeptic, why does it feel inadequate to present only "simple faith" as evidence for the Bible's truth? Why do we feel the need to add additional details (scientific evidence, historical detail, apologetics, etc.) to our answer of "faith"?

What's the best way to interact with someone who doubts the validity of the Bible?

What does it mean that Scripture is the *ultimate* truth and not the *only* truth?