



**THE GOD QUESTION**  
Is God real? If so, is He relevant?  
Psalm 19 & Psalm 3

The Church at Canyon Creek, Austin, Texas  
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[VIDEO] Those are the opinions of people when asked, "Do you believe in God?"

- "I don't think there's any evidence for God."
- "I don't believe in God, but I am a spiritual person."
- "There must be a higher power."
- "I'm more of a scientific person."
- "My life functions well without the belief in God."
- "All the theories are confusing. I don't know what to believe."
- "I believe in God because I don't think evolution can explain it all."
- "I believe something is there, but I don't know what."

Surveys show year after year, that 90% of Americans believe in some kind of God. The percentage is overwhelming. That may be the God of the Bible, or Allah, or some higher power. For 90% of Americans, there is probably something or someone out there.

However, averaging surveys over the last few years, only 40% of Americans say they attend church regularly. Actual attendance is even lower, at about 31%.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, statistics show a gap between belief and practice. The vast majority of Americans believe in God, but church and religion is increasingly irrelevant. That was the point of a recent Huffington Post article that raised the question, "Is God Relevant Today?" I don't know if the reporter is a Christian or not, but he reached the same conclusion proved by statistics, when he writes, "Belief without coherent positive behavior makes a belief in God irrelevant. There is so often a disconnection between peoples' stated belief and their "lived" life that many doubt the relevance of God in everyday life."<sup>2</sup>

That's why two questions must be asked together. ***Is God real, and if He is, is He relevant?***

This is one of the human questions, questions everyone wonders about. This is the God question.<sup>3</sup> Whether you are a Christian or not, spiritual or secular, you've wondered about God. Is He real? If He is, can I know Him? Does He see me? Does He care about me? Is He relevant to my life? Or, is God just a man-made delusion to make life and death more bearable.

Is God real, and if He is, is He relevant? Relevance is king today. We care about what works and what benefits us. Religion and philosophy is less important than pragmatism. We care about what works. Since 90% of Americans believe in some form of God, I'm not going to argue for the existence of God. I want us to focus on the relevance of God. ***Is God relevant today? Is God relevant to you?***

If you say you believe in God, how does that play out in your life? How are your choices and decisions affected by your belief in God? If you say you believe in some kind of higher power,

how does that shape your values and your character? If you say you believe in some form of God, what difference does that make, what relevance does that have, in your life?

I want to look at two psalms written by David, Psalm 19 and Psalm 3. David was a shepherd boy in Bethlehem, who looked at the stars at night and wondered about God. He was also the teenager who stood up to the giant Goliath who insulted his God. David took his slingshot and hurled a stone at Goliath's head and killed him. David also became the great king of Israel. In Psalm 19 and Psalm 3, King David explains his faith and explains why he believed God was both real and relevant. From these two psalms, I hear David say, "***When I look at the stars, I see the power of God. When I pray on my knees, I feel the love of God.***"

### IS GOD REAL?

***Is God real? Does He exist?*** This is what the experts say.

Stephen Hawking is the world's leading cosmologist and physicist, and says, "I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There is no heaven or afterlife for broken down computers; that is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark ... Why the universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God."<sup>4</sup>

The late Christopher Hitchens was the most militant voice among the New Atheists. In his book *God Is Not Great, How Religion Poisons Everything*, he "opposes and dismisses all belief in God as harmful, dangerous, subversive, and delusional," and he calls religion "the most malignant force in the world."<sup>5</sup>

Richard Dawkins, the author of *The God Delusion*, insists that the person who believes in God is "ignorant, stupid or insane."<sup>6</sup>

Phil Zuckerman, author of *Living the Secular Life: New Answers to Old Questions*, explains his view of life and why he has no need for God.

I live this live in the here and now, and as the days and nights pass, I occasionally experience a profound sense of transcendent, swelling awe. And I simply enjoy that feeling. My awe stops there ... I make little attempt to identify the source of my feelings of awe, and furthermore, I am perfectly content to explain my occasional sense of deep wonder or happiness or poignant joy in strictly naturalistic, neurological, or psychological terms. The source, in fact, is irrelevant to me."<sup>7</sup>

But for a lot of people in the world, atheism is just not a satisfying answer. That's why 4 out of 5 people on the planet believe in some kind of God. That's why human history is filled with all kinds of religions. Is that because human beings are foolish and delusional, or is it because the human default is a built-in longing for our Creator?

The human heart longs for God. We want there to be someone out there. And it's ironic that scientists believe other life-forms exist in the universe, but call Christians foolish for believing in God. Whether you're a Christian or not, spiritual or secular in your thinking, you've wondered about God. Is God real, and if He is, is He relevant?

To King David and Psalm 19. When David looked at the stars at night, he said, “The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known” (Psalm 19:1-2, NLT). David is saying, “**When I look at the stars, I see the power of God.**” In Psalm 8 he wrote, “O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens ... When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers – the moon and the stars you set in place – what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them?” (Psalm 8:1, 3-4, NLT). Why did David believe in God? When he looked at the stars, he saw the power of God.

Timothy Keller used this reasoning in his book *Making Sense of God*. It is a book written to skeptics, as a dialogue with the person who finds it hard to believe in God. Keller argues that belief in God makes better sense of the world. That the reality of God is the best explanation of the reality of the world. If we do not believe God, then we look at the world, and look at ourselves, and come to certain conclusions and explanations about origin, purpose, meaning, morality, and destiny. If we do believe in God, then we look at the world, and look at ourselves, and come to completely different conclusions and explanations about origin, purpose, meaning, morality, and destiny. And Keller agrees with King David, belief in God makes better sense of the world.

Why is that? Because “the heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known” (Psalm 19:1-2, NLT).

### IS GOD RELEVANT?

Since most people believe in some form of God, then let’s agree that He is real. Which leads to the other question – *Is God relevant?*

I think David’s answer in Psalm 3 is so compelling. Listen to David explain how God was relevant in his life.

<sup>1</sup>O Lord, I have so many enemies; so many are against me. <sup>2</sup>So many are saying, “God will never rescue him!” <sup>3</sup>But you, O Lord, are a shield around me; you are my glory, the one who lifts my head. <sup>4</sup>I cried out to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy mountain. <sup>5</sup>I lay down and slept, yet I woke up in safety, for the Lord was watching over me. <sup>6</sup>I am not afraid of tens of thousands of enemies who surround me on every side. <sup>7</sup>Arise, O Lord! Rescue me, my God! For you slap all my enemies in the face! You shatter the teeth of the wicked! <sup>8</sup>Salvation comes from you, O Lord. May your blessing be on your people. (Psalm 3).

The historical context of Psalm 3 is a revolt led by David’s own son Absalom.<sup>8</sup> Absalom turned the hearts of the people against David in a plot to take the throne from his father. The initial revolt was so successful that David had to run for his life and hide in caves. Once faithful counselors betrayed David, once loyal generals betrayed David, and his own son betrayed him. Imagine the sting of that.

David cried out, “O Lord, I have so many enemies; so many are against me. So many are saying, ‘God will never rescue him!’” (Psalm 3:1-2). His enemies boasted that not even God could save him. They were saying that God was irrelevant. The culture tells us that all the time; that God is irrelevant. David’s enemies boasted that God could not help and that David’s faith was worthless. Perhaps David wondered that too. “Lord, have you betrayed me too? Will You refuse to help me? Is my faith worthless?”

No! That’s not what David thought. Psalm 3 is a picture of what David thought. David not only believed that God was real, he believed that God was profoundly relevant. And there is a phrase in verse 3 that stands out, when he said, “**You are my glory**” (Psalm 3:3). There’s such faith and confidence in that statement. David was outnumbered, and yet had such confidence. On another occasion, he said, “You are my hope; O Lord God, You are my confidence from my youth” (Psalm 71:5, NAS). “You are my glory.” The Lord was his confidence and his boast. “Some boast in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the Lord, our God” (Psalm 20:7, NAS). The Lord was his delight and his joy. His anchor and his protection. His strength and his provision. “You are my glory” was David’s declaration of faith and confidence and hope in God.

“But you, O Lord, are a shield around me; you are my glory, the one who lifts my head” (Psalm 3:3). Time and time again in his writings, David referred to God as his shield and protector.<sup>9</sup> He believed the Lord would defend him from his foes. And time and time again, David referred the Lord as “the one who lifts my head.” When he was overwhelmed, when his face was downcast, the Lord lifted his head and gave him hope. To encourage me, Kathy always says, “Speak truth to yourself. Don’t listen to the thoughts that discourage, rather speak truth to yourself.” That’s what David was doing. “You are my shield, and You will lift my head.” Another time, David asked himself, “Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, the help of my countenance” (Psalm 43:5, NAS).

Time and time again, the Lord had heard David’s prayers. “I cried out to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy mountain” (Psalm 3:4). I love the book of Psalms because it is filled with the prayers of David. And, it teaches us how to pray. “Please, Lord, rescue me! Come quickly, Lord, and help me” (Psalm 40:13, NLT). “On the day I called, You answered me; You made me bold with strength in my soul” (Psalm 138:3, NAS). “I love the Lord because he hears” (Psalm 116:1, NLT). If you want to experience the relevance of God in your life, just start praying.

In verse 5 David said, “I lay down and slept, yet I woke up in safety, for the Lord was watching over me” (Psalm 3:5). David was hiding in a cave; he was not sleeping on his royal bed. He was on the run from his own military led by his own son Absalom. They wanted to kill him. And David slept through the night and woke up the next morning safe and sound. That’s how relevant God was in David’s life. He was overwhelmed and outnumbered, and he slept, because he trusted God.

David believed that God with him. “I am not afraid of tens of thousands of enemies who surround me on every side. Arise, O Lord! Rescue me, my God! For You slap all my enemies in the face! You shatter the teeth of the wicked!” (Psalm 3:6-7). I guess it’s okay to prayer like that, for God to break the teeth of people we don’t like! David believed that if he stood on righteous ground, the righteous God would fight for him. The Lord once said to another king, King Jehoshaphat, “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours,

but God's" (2 Chronicles 20:15, NIV). David believed God was fighting for him, and we can believe that God is fighting for us. Whatever your battle, your battle belongs to God.

And with such confidence, David ended his prayer. "Salvation comes from you, O Lord. May your blessing be on your people" (Psalm 3:8). In the end, the revolt failed and David was secure on his throne.

With all his heart, David believed that God was real and that God was relevant in his life. In Psalm 19, he says, "***When I look at the stars, I see His power.***" And in Psalm 3, he says, "***When I pray on my knees, I feel His love.***"

### IS GOD REAL & RELEVANT TO YOU?

Is God real and relevant to you? Can you say what David said? ***When I look at the stars, I see His power. When I pray on my knees, I feel His love.*** Is God real and relevant to you?

When your kitchen sink clogs up, like it did for us last week, the most relevant person in the world is a plumber. When you've got a toothache, the most relevant person in the world is a dentist. But beyond that, in most areas of life, the most relevant person in the world is God!

How is God relevant to us?

- God is power and we can lean on Him for strength when we're weary or tired, overwhelmed or outnumbered.
- God is peace and we can rest in Him. He will calm our anxiety and worry, our frustration and anger.
- God is love and we can know, no matter what we feel about ourselves, that He loves us and accepts us and that we are His children.
- God is holy and we must allow His holiness to shape our values and the standards by which we live, to shape our character so that our lives would honor Him.
- God is merciful and we can come to Him time and time again and He will forgive us.
- God is comfort and He will console us anytime we hurt and anytime we cry.
- God is truth and He will teach us what we need to know.
- God is spirit, and He fills us with His Holy Spirit, who helps us say no to temptation and avoid regretful choices, who fills us with kindness and patience and forgiveness toward others, who guides us and goes with us into the next moment and the next moment.
- God is personal and we can experience an intimate, day-by-day, moment-by-moment relationship with Him.

David says what I believe and what I feel.

When I look the stars, I see the power of God. “The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known” (Psalm 19:1-2, NLT). I believe it all points to God. I believe God is real.

And I believe God is relevant. I believe God makes better sense of the world I see. God’s word explains what I see in the world. It explains what’s wrong in the world. It explains where I came from. It explains what going on in my life and in my soul. It explains happens when we die. Again, David says what I believe and what I feel.

***When I look at the stars, I see His power. When I pray on knees, I feel His love.***

If you’re not a believer in God, I urge you to think about these things. If you don’t believe in God, when you look at the world, and look at yourself, you have come to certain conclusions and explanations about origin, purpose, meaning, morality, and destiny. I ask you, are you satisfied with those conclusions? I think belief in God makes better sense of the world. I urge to consider what you’ve heard this morning. And if you’re willing to talk, I’d love to meet you and get to know you. To hear your story. To dialogue over your questions.

To those of us who are believers. We are convinced that God is real. But I ask you that second question. If God is real, ***is He relevant to your life?*** Does what you believe about God shape who you are, what you believe, and how you live your life?

If you believe in Him, then live like you believe in Him.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> That statistic comes from Barna research. Three qualifiers were used to identify this group – (1) a person self-identifies as a Christian, (2) a person attends church at least monthly, and (3) a person says faith is “very important” in their lives.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Strano, “Is God Relevant Today?” *Huffington Post*, January 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Keller’s book *Making Sense of God*, speaks to the secular thinker about the reasonableness and relevance of God. He fairly outlines the secular view and then exposes weaknesses in comparison to the Christian view. He explains why the Christian view is better, and more satisfying and coherent than the secular view.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Tenety, “Stephen Hawking: ‘There Is No Heaven,’ ” *The Washington Post, On Faith*, 5/16/2011.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great, Why Religion Poisons Everything*, back cover.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Dawkins, [www.brainyquote.com](http://www.brainyquote.com).

<sup>7</sup> Phil Zuckerman, *Living the Secular Life: New Answers to Old Questions* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2014), pages 200, 212. Zuckerman works through the labels atheist, agnostic, and secular humanist; yet believes these labels fall short in fully describing who he is really is. He coined the phrase “aweist” to describe himself. In short, he relishes in the wonder and mystery of the universe, but has no need for God to explain it.

<sup>8</sup> See 2 Samuel 15-18.

<sup>9</sup> Other verses where David used “shield” to describe God’s care – Psalm 18:2, 18:30, 28:7, 33:20, 59:11, 84:9, 91:4, 115:9, 119:114.