EveryStudent.com

The Spiritual Adventure Pack

7 short messages exploring whether God is real, and what that could mean for you

Marilyn Adamson
director of EveryStudent.com

p.s. ©EveryStudent.com. You may share this PDF with others as long as it remains free and not changed in any way.

Message 1

Hi,

When I was an atheist, there was nothing more mysterious to me than this: “Having faith in God.”

I wondered, how does a rational person even begin to believe in God?

Is it something that just happens to a person? Is it brought on by a crisis where they’re forced to believe…they have no choice?

Or maybe it’s nothing that dramatic. Maybe some people just find it easy to believe in God, without needing much reason.

Problem was, I am more of the analytical type, and I had a mound of questions that couldn’t be shoved aside.

How about you? Would you like to believe in God, even have a personal connection with God…but you’re afraid of being duped?

I was terrified of the possibility of moving toward God only to find out that nothing was there – and I had jumped to a laughable, must-fail falsehood.

No thanks.

Why did I even care?

Because I was impressed by a friend of mine who was consistently loving toward others, smart and had a clear sense of purpose in life. All of which she attributed to God.

It made me wonder, “Could God be real?”

As we begin this exploration, I’d like to clear away some misconceptions.

1. Do you wonder if God is aloof and doesn’t really care about you? In this series, I’m going to show you why no one intimately knows you, or loves you, or desires a relationship with you more than God. Wait and see.

2. Are you hoping that someday you’ll be so convinced, so overwhelmed by the evidence for God, that you will have no choice but to believe? Hate to tell you, but that’s never going to happen.

No one, including myself, is 100% sure that God exists. (He is invisible, you know.) God asks you to come to him, but he will never overpower you to where you are forced to believe. If you're waiting for him to do that, good luck.

3. Faith in God is not a possession or an experience. It is a decision you make. It's based on reasons, facts, and desire, just like most of life's decisions.

You get on a plane, believing that the pilot is sober, the instruments work, and there's no terrorist on board. You have reason to believe this, but you can't be 100% sure. Still, you make a decision.

Or, how about marriage? Of all the people you could marry, could you be 100% sure that this person is THE one for you to marry? That they'll be faithful to you? That they won't murder you on your honeymoon? Well, no. But you have reason to believe that it's a good decision, or you wouldn't get married.

In much the same way, we will look at the reasons pointing to God's existence and character. We'll also look at the reasons against God (there are some!). And we'll consider some valid reasons to ask him into your life...or not.

There are people who prefer to hypothesize and philosophize forever about God, and never land on anything. Never make a decision. But what if it's important that you get on the plane?

Next we'll start looking at specific, concrete evidence for God.

Marilyn Adamson
director of EveryStudent.com

p.s. It somewhat unnerves people (Christians especially) for me to say I'm not 100% sure God exists. So let me add, I personally am convinced by both objective and subjective evidence that God exists. Otherwise, why would I be writing this?

Message 2

Hi.

I have already mentioned that it's a decision to believe in God or not.

And you will never be 100% sure....but you can be pretty confident based on the facts.

A few ground rules.

Some people like to play the game of *possibilities.* It feels safer. More room to squirm out of tight places. More room to rationalize. "Well, it might be possible that..."

I would like us to deal with reality, with probabilities. I think it makes more sense. Here's a great illustration that I heard from someone...

A prisoner was blindfolded and set before a 17-man firing squad for execution. At the moment of "Ready. Aim. Fire!" all 17 fired their weapons, all with live bullets. The man stood untouched.

Now, it's possible that these marksmen all missed. But it's more probable that something was rigged. Which are you going to believe?

See what I mean?

When it comes to evidence for God, some skeptics love to live in the land of possibilities. And they have a right to choose that.

However, to do so often requires a lot of imagination and reach.

The evidence might point toward one, supernatural Creator. That might seem like the most probable explanation.

But then you'll see someone flee to possibilities. And let me emphasize...possibilities that have no evidence supporting them.

Like this line of reasoning: "Well, maybe, it is possible that maybe we got here by aliens!"

And I will grant you, that is a possibility.

But it’s not the more probable, satisfying answer. Here’s why.

Even if you think aliens are the source of our being on planet Earth...where then did these smart aliens come from?

You see, it still doesn’t discount one eternal supernatural Creator.

Why do I keep saying, “One” Creator? Because science shows that all matter that exists, and time itself, and even space, came from one source.

Take a look:

> **Read the article →**
> everystudent.com/wires/universe.html

Next message in “The Spiritual Adventure Pack,” I’ll unload a whole truckload of evidences for God...the facts that led me to say, out loud to God, “Ok, you win.”

I’ll also tell you what God did in my life, after that moment.

Marilyn Adamson
director of EveryStudent.com

Message 3

Hi

In the last message we covered a little science...the start of the universe, physics, telescopes.

In this “Spiritual Adventure Pack” I promise that we will not spend forever on science.

My degree is in journalism.

Yet, oddly enough, God chose science and historical facts, to get my attention. I guess he knew I needed something I couldn’t wordsmith or philosophize my way around.

I’m about to show you the factual evidence, that brought me to my decision about God.

If you’re waiting for real-life answers to “why bother with God,” “what good is he,” “what’s God like, anyway”...we will get to those too.

However, before we get to the value of knowing God, I want you to have solid reasons to believe in God. The kind of reasons that don’t change. Objective reasons, not affected by how you feel on any given day.

God is either there, or he isn’t. Whether we believe in him or not.

Here is an article offering the reasons that I concluded that God must exist.

> **Read the article →**
> everystudent.com/features/is-there-a-god.html

If you’d rather watch a nine minute video, here you go:

> **Watch the video →**
> everystudent.com/videos/does-god-exist.html

And here is a short video that presents an additional reason:

> **Watch the video →**
> everystudent.com/videos/collins.html

Last of all, I want to say that I appreciate you hanging in there with me. I honor your desire to know what's true, what's workable.

God is the most secure reality in all of life. I personally believe he has surrounded us with evidence of himself for one reason.

It is because he wants a relationship with us. He wants us to know him.

Here is a fuller explanation of what caused me to begin a relationship with God, and what else I discovered about God, after I asked him into my life:

> **Read my story →**
> everystudent.com/wires/atheist.html

(This one even has my smiling face.)

Next message...evidences against God—valid ones that atheists have a right to point to. No side-stepping. We'll hit it head on.

I hope this series is serving you well.

Marilyn Adamson
director of EveryStudent.com

Message 4

Hi

Today we will focus on real, damaging evidence against God's existence. Caution: not going to hold back here.

I have frequent conversations with atheists, almost always at their initiative. Sometimes their arguments simply ignore the facts.

However, atheists do have one very rational argument against God.

Suffering.

Not just some suffering. Many people experience incredibly debilitating suffering. Some that lasts for years. Barely tolerable. Sometimes, not even.

Yes, it's true that much of human suffering is due to our choices.

We wish people all acted in human kindness, but then it'd be tough to explain the Wars. Murders. Child abuse. Corrupt governments. Rapes. Greed. Complacency toward poverty and hunger. Torture. Drug addictions fueled by cartels. Sex slavery.

However, we need to acknowledge there is suffering that lacks a human cause. Such as devastating earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, tornadoes, volcanoes, bringing death, pain, loss, and suffering.

This earth is not easy. It's not safe.

Add to this, world disease, cancers, mental disabilities, birth defects. Isn't this evidence against God's existence?

Yet, I am convinced by the evidence that God exists, and that life is only lived with meaning and sense by knowing him. So, what do I do with this?

Human suffering is not a deal breaker for me. Here's why.

God's existence seems certain by observing what exists. What becomes the question is, why would God allow suffering?

I'm going to give you links to other answers. But here's mine.

The evidence shows that God's level of intelligence is unlimited.

Do you know that your body produces 2 million new blood cells every second?

Every breath you take reaches millions of tiny air sacs in your lungs, covering a surface area roughly the size of a tennis court. Who could come up with something like that?

You know that we could list thousands of intricate examples of God's intelligence as we look at our bodies, or our universe, or the diversity of sea-plant-animal life, all the way down to amazing microscopic levels.

God's intelligence is ridiculously far above the human species.

As different as our intelligence is from a mosquito, God's intelligence is incomparably greater than ours.

When it comes to the question of suffering, therefore, it is easy for me to assume that he has a reason for what we are experiencing, that is beyond what we could understand.

I view it like a two-month-old baby receiving an immunization. The infant cannot understand why the mother stands by while this doctor is inflicting pain. Doesn't the mother love the child? Is the mother some kind of jerk?

Or does the mother have reasons that are impossible for the child to comprehend, if the mother even tried?

It seems fair to me to use a tad amount of humility and acknowledge that we are limited in our capacity to understand an answer that God knows.

The evidence for God's existence is compelling, scientific, logical and unable to dismiss.

So I conclude that the question of suffering cannot be completely, answerable to our satisfaction. (Try explaining heart surgery to a rabbit.)

Here is a short video that I like.

> **Watch the video →**
> everystudent.com/videos/is-god-good.html

Also, I told you we weren't going to hold back. Here's an answer to the question, "Why would you worship a God who allows a child to be raped?"

> **Read the answer →**
> everystudent.com/forum/why-do-we-worship.html

But there's more to this. God is not aloof. He is not uninvolved.

In fact, if you begin a relationship with him, you would find out that he is much more deeply, fully involved in caring for you than you could ever have imagined or hoped for.

Next...what is God like? Why would you want to know God?

This is where it gets fun.

Marilyn Adamson
director of EveryStudent.com

Message 5

Hi

What can we know about God?

I once read a book aptly titled, “Knowing God” by J.I. Packer. He brings up a good point.

The more complex an object, the tougher it is to say you really know it. To know a song, a book, a recipe is fairly easy.

Living things become more complicated. If you have a pet dog or cat, you can probably predict how it will likely behave at certain times. You know what it wants and what it is asking you to do.

Knowing a person is even more complicated. People will hide some of their thoughts or feelings. Therefore, how well you know someone largely depends on how much they are willing to reveal to you.

What about with God? How well can we know God? It entirely depends upon what God chooses to reveal about himself. Doesn’t it?

And whether he will let us have a relationship with him. All of this is at his discretion.

Here’s something quite astounding. God welcomes us to know him. And to be fully accepted by God. To begin a relationship with him that lasts eternally.

God invites us to enjoy intimate interaction with God, where we can be led by God, instructed by him, comforted by him, and strengthened by him.

After asking God to come into my life, I found myself reading the Bible, wanting to know more fully this God that I just *met*.

What surprised me most were so many statements about God’s love.

Page after page, I kept seeing the sincerity of his love.

Statements like this:

> *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.”*

> *"Whoever has my commandments and keep them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."*
>
> *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love."*

Is it really possible to know God's love like this?

Yes.

J.I. Packer goes on to say,

> *"We do not make friends with God; God makes friends with us, bringing us to know him by making his love known to us."*

That is exactly what I experienced...and continue to experience.

A few more quotes from Packer, because he says it so well:

> *"All my knowledge of him depends on his sustained initiative in knowing me. He knows me as a friend, one who loves me; and there is no moment when his eye is off me, or his attention distracted from me, and no moment, therefore, when his care falters."*

Packer says this because it is exactly what the Bible says is true of all those who have begun a relationship with God.

And best of all, we don't earn or have to qualify for that relationship. God offers it to us, which I'll explain in our series.

Wrapping up with Packer:

> *"There is tremendous relief in knowing that his love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery now can disillusion him about me, in the way I am so often disillusioned about myself..."*

This is grounded in what God has revealed about himself. From the Bible:

> *"Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.*
>
> *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us..."*

Here is a one-page summary of what God has revealed about his personality, and what we can experience, once we've begun a relationship with him.

> **Read the article →**
> everystudent.com/wires/who-is-god.html

Next message...like it or not, Jesus Christ is central to experiencing a relationship with God. There are solid factual reasons to believe. You'll see what I mean.

Thank you again for staying with me in all of this.

Marilyn Adamson
director of EveryStudent.com

Message 6

Hi

Once I realized that the evidence was pointing to God's existence, my next question was...which God?

In this series, I want to steer clear from taking shots at other religions. So let me just say, my search was for objective evidence in what God has revealed about himself.

Everything up till now seemed to show that God wants us to have sound reasons we can point to, leading us to believe in him.

When it comes to Jesus, there are a wealth of historical and logical reasons to believe in him, that are unmatched by anyone or any belief system.

I'd like to focus on that evidence about Jesus, but first let me clear up some points of confusion.

Jesus did not come about 2,000 years ago. He wasn't a man who became God. He was God who became man.

Here's what I mean. There is only one God. Yet, at the very beginning of the Bible, you see God described in the plural pronoun:

> *"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'"*

Jesus is spoken about throughout the Old Testament (the Jewish Bible), referred to as the Christ, the Messiah, Redeemer.

In Handel's "Messiah" sung at Christmas, Handel quotes from the book of Isaiah, written 700 years before Jesus, which says this:

> *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...and his name shall be called, 'Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'"*

I don't expect that will convince you of anything. I'm only mentioning it so you realize that Jesus was not a new religion, one of many.

In fact, Jesus was not wanting to set up any religion. He claimed something much greater than that.

John was a close friend of Jesus. He hung out with Jesus for several years. John wrote a biography of Jesus and in it said this about Jesus,

> *"[He] was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him."*

Why would John say such a thing? Because Jesus said it of himself, and gave proofs to support it.

Here are some of the reasons to believe in Jesus:

> **Read the article →**
> everystudent.com/features/faith.html

Next and last message...what God is specifically offering you, and how you can begin to know him, personally.

We're almost done. As you're going through this, I hope you'll take a minute and ask God directly, "Show me what's true about you."

He will answer that.

Marilyn Adamson
director of EveryStudent.com

p.s. Don't quite get Jesus and the Father as both God, yet only one God? This might help:

> **Read the article →**
> everystudent.com/forum/trinity.html

And, if you'd like a fast read from John's biography on the life of Jesus? Here you go. (Taken from the Gospel of John, one of Jesus' closest friends and follower.)

> **Read the article →**
> everystudent.com/wires/who-was-jesus.html

Message 7

Hi

This is our last message in the series, “The Spiritual Adventure Pack.”

I hope it’s been helpful to you. (I especially hope that you did not skip # 6. It’s an important one.)

In this message I’d like to describe what it is that God is offering you. And what it might be like for you, if you take him up on it.

When I was an atheist, I remember my friend saying that heaven was a free gift. I immediately challenged her on that.

“IF there is a God, heaven would definitely *not* be a free gift.”

I was so cocky. What did I know? I didn’t even believe in God’s existence and yet I’m arguing about his policies.

So again, we need to look at what God tells us. I’m going to list some of what he says he’s offering us. Ready?

> + we could be fully accepted by God, and all of our sins (past, present, future sins) would be completely forgiven because of Jesus’ death on the cross for us. He paid for *all* our sins. No more barrier between us and God.

> + we could no longer be under God’s judgment, but instead, begin a relationship with him, that lasts eternally. (My friend was right. A relationship with God and eternal life are free gifts offered to us.)

> + we would not go through this life on our own, he says, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

> + we would “not walk in darkness, but would have the light of life.”

> + we could experience his peace above and beyond what the circumstances warrant.

> + we could pray to God, know that he hears us, and actually see God take action.

> + we could be guided by him, and see him work in our lives to become a better person that we could be without him. Just like any significant relationship has an

> effect on us, knowing God changes us.

> + we could experience his love on a very personal level.

There's so much more, but that gives you a start. This is what he offers you.

Now, some disclaimers.

I don't want you to get the impression from this, that life becomes easy, or that you therefore escape problems, crises, heartache, pain. You won't.

You also won't suddenly become holy and sinless. You will still go through life often choosing to do things your way even when they are opposed to God's ways. You remain free to choose how you will think, feel, and act.

However, over time, as you get to know God better and spend time listening to what he says, your perspective will change, your values will likely change, and you will find a new motivation to live in a way that honors him.

Just like now, where you are not forced to believe in him, you will continue to have freedom to choose whether to trust him in moments of your life, or not.

When you grow to know someone, if they are trustworthy, you learn to trust them more. God is always trustworthy, so your trust in him will likely grow.

Ok, that's probably enough information for you. God is offering you a tremendous amount. You can see why I said that faith in God is primarily a decision.

You have to decide if you want a relationship with God.

Do you want him in your life? Do you want him as your God?

If so, you can begin a relationship with him now.

This explains how:

> **How to Know God Personally →**
> everystudent.com/features/know-God.html

I sincerely hope you ask him into your life. It is the most important decision you'll ever make.

Thank you again for going through "The Spiritual Adventure Pack" with me.

If you have a question you'd like to ask, you can email it here, and someone will send you a personal email reply:

> **Ask a question →**
> everystudent.com/question.html

If you want to send a message to me, just mention my name in your email and it will get to me.

Take care,
Marilyn Adamson
director of EveryStudent.com

p.s. If you'd like to go through a study of the Gospel of John with me, it's free. Here's where you can sign up for it:

> **Knowing God Better series →**
> everystudent.com/knowingGod.html

Keep exploring

More free articles and videos at

EveryStudent.com →
everystudent.com

Questions? Ask us →
everystudent.com/question.html