



GOD'S ANSWERS: Appendix

What does this mean? The role of God's truths and our culture's worldviews in shaping our thoughts.

More examples throughout popular culture that can be used for each session. Some of these examples may be somewhat dated and the links may change from time to time. If you find a dead link, please let us know.

Session One:

Another tactic used to argue against the existence of God is to claim that there are inconsistencies in the Bible or the fact that not all Christians interpret the Bible means there cannot be one true God.

Watch the clip from the West Wing where the president tries to mock the Christian in the room by suggesting that the Bible says way too many things modern culture rejects to be considered authoritative on any issue. Note how this argument denies not only Scripture's truth but the existence of the One who reveals it. While this argument can be answered easily with a proper understanding of Old Testament Law, the point of this study is not to argue against specific arguments but to recognize how prevalent they are in our culture. Discuss the lies Satan tells in this speech.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSXJzybEeJM>

Yet another tactic used to argue against the existence of God is to claim that there simply is no real evidence that God exists.

Watch the clip from the movie "Contact." Note how the woman in the clip tries to argue that belief in God is ridiculous since there is no scientific proof of His existence in her mind. Discuss how many people fall into this lie in our day.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcqaHxI5-P8>

Still another tactic used to argue against the existence of God is to claim that God is just a creation of the mind. It is claimed that any experience traditionally sought through religion can be easily experienced on earth apart from God.

Listen to the song "Holy" by Florida Georgia Line. Note how language that is usually reserved for God is used instead for the singer's lover. Discuss how this song through its lyrics suggests that knowing God is no different than experiencing physical intimacy with another human. Discuss how many people leave behind God for pleasure seeking.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zB0ZdR5y0iM>

Another example is the song "Take me to Church."

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0imaSCnSuA>

Session 2:

Play “Follow Your Arrow” by Kacey Musgraves which can be found at <https://youtu.be/YUVDZk6nOOc> noting how it suggests that everyone should make decisions based on what seems right to them. Again, the underlying premise is that what each person feels is good is unquestionably good since people are good. This particular song mentions things such as homosexuality and drug use. Its appropriateness to even use as a bad example should be made based on the participants.

Then read at least one of the following verses that tell us what God teaches:

- “And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil” (John 3:19).
- “I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness” (John 12:46).
- “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” (Matthew 6:22-23).

Play “Follow your heart” from Cinderella II which can be found at <https://youtu.be/LhFBuMn80x0> noting how it extols the virtue of following wherever the heart suggests. Again the assumption is that good naturally flows from the heart of humans.

Then read at least one of the following verses that tell us what God teaches:

- “But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander” (Matthew 15:18-19).
- “And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God” (Ezekiel 11:19-20).

Session 3:

Play the clip from Jesus Christ Superstar found that can be at <https://youtu.be/pqoeM18vCaU>. Note how this clip uses a song by Judas to suggest that Jesus did not teach or believe Himself to be God at the beginning of His ministry, but came to believe this because of people’s love for Him.

Talk about how many other religions will give Jesus some place in their religion, but that they all deny Him status as God. Islam teaches He is a prophet. Buddhism will say that Jesus’s teachings are in many ways similar to the Buddha and therefore perhaps will call Jesus wise. However, to claim that He is God is forbidden by all other religions.

Session 4:

Play the clip from the television show Seinfeld which can be found at <https://youtu.be/ie1XGTYueHw>. Note how the funny exchanges between characters reinforce the idea that nothing truly valuable could ever be given freely and without condition.

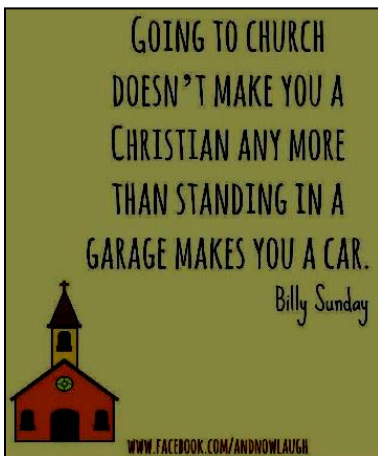
Play the clip from Catholic Minute by Catholic speaker Ken Yasinski found at <https://youtu.be/G0uVWgIH410>. Note how this video though presented by a young, modern looking catholic presents the old Roman Catholic doctrine that Jesus' work on the cross and at the tomb is not enough for salvation. While many of the things he presents are very close to the truth, lauding faith, repentance, and the Word and the sacraments, and even obedience, he teaches that these things must be added by us to what Jesus has done. In the end, without us, there is no salvation. This strikes against the teaching taught in the Bible.

Session 5:

Play the clip from Oprah's online web show Super Soul Sunday found at <https://youtu.be/ZGbJyfJibLA>. Note how Oprah's guest, Reza Aslan, a religious scholar, suggests that experiencing God is simply a matter of personal preference and decision. He contends that there is no specific way one must experience God. They must simply choose something that feels right to them. Talk about how cruel it would be for God to exist and want to have a relationship with humanity but not reveal how one is to experience Him. Remind those being taught that God is experienced where He says He will be found, in His Word and Sacraments.

Play the clip from respected bible teacher Charles Stanley found at <https://youtu.be/V4ocm31RJ7g>. Note how his emailer desires that God would speak personally to her, apart from Scriptures, about normal every day decisions. Stanley encourages such a desire by rattling off times where he feels that God has spoken to him about items as inconsequential as which size of turkey to buy for a meal. While we do not want to deny that God does in the Scriptures occasionally speak directly to people, it is not to be thought of as something better than God's normal way of speaking through His Word to His people. Teaching otherwise has led many people to not value gathering in Church because they would rather wait at home to receive some direct personal revelation instead.

Show or describe the meme below that has been shared on Facebook many times. Note how this surely well intentioned quote by its nature downplays what God does in the gathering of His people. There is a trickle of truth running down this canyon of deception. It is true that your act of going to church does not turn you into a Christian. No work of ours gives us our identity as Christians. But it is precisely in going to church that one is made a Christian. First at the font. Then in the assembly. Later at the table. God does His work of making and keeping us Christians in His Church. It is why the phrase "I believe in the Holy Spirit" is followed quickly by talk of the Holy Christian Church in the Apostles' Creed. As Luther says, "the Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, sanctifies and keeps us in the true faith." We are only made Christians by the Gospel and the gifts of God. And those are given out in the Church. So in this sense, it is precisely by going to church that you are made a Christian and remain one.



Session 6:

Play the clip of then presidential candidate Donald Trump found at <https://youtu.be/9vnQT3vQiCl>. He is seeking to motivate people to give to his campaign by promising them a place on his “wall of fame.” Talk about how often we are motivated to do things in life to get recognition before man. Then talk about how we often think the same about God. We think that if we do something for Him, He owes us His appreciation to be shown in some tangible way in our life. This example is not given at all to make any commentary on President Trump but just to show a quick example of how easily people are motivated by recognition or rewards. You could use any number of other examples.

Talk about the idea of participation awards. Point out that our world often likes to give the idea that being on the team is enough, even if you do not necessarily do anything that is asked of you. While it is true that our works do not earn us anything before God, we do want to be clear that being on the team means having things to do. God intends to use everyone He saves to do good works He has planned for them.

Talk about the idea of “Sunday-only Christianity.” Talk about how some people believe and live as if their faith only matters when they are gathered in church on Sundays. They forget that being saved gives us a whole new life which is lived out in all of the places we are called to live each day. Again, God has not only saved us for a future life with Him, but a present life of service to Him shown in serving others.

Session 7:

Play the clip from the movie Hail Caesar! which can be found at <https://youtu.be/KJEiDRi4Itc>. Note how this film suggests that theological differences while they may be discussed with some level of conviction in the end should be yielded. There is an assumption that holding to one’s convictions may not be practically useful. This basic idea has been embraced not only in the culture but within the Church. Many suggest that theological differences should be ignored in order that the church can give the appearance of unity. While desiring unity, we ought to work toward true unity around the Word rather than acting like there is unity where it does not exist.

Play the clip of the song Be Yourself by Audioslave that can be found <https://youtu.be/XC6URZ-cCB0>. Note how this song again suggests that unity is not a goal which should be sought after. Each person should trust their own feelings, experiences, and opinions. The suggestion is that there is no objective truth to know so any pursuit of such truth is useless. Again, this idea can often be embraced in the Church as well as culture.

Speak about how the idea of American individualism often tells us that diversity and not unity is to be preferred. While this may be true in some contexts of life, it is never true when dealing with the things Jesus has revealed to us. There we must be unified around His Word and His Sacraments alone. There is no value in false teaching or false understanding of God’s gifts.