

# Tackling the Tidal Wave: Atheism

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John 20:24-29

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**SAY WHAT? ⇨ "I don't believe there's a God."**

## The Rise of the "Nones"

"Over the same period (2007-2014), the percentage of Americans who are religiously unaffiliated - describing themselves as atheist, agnostic or 'nothing in particular' - has jumped more than six points, from 16.1% to 22.8%." -*America's Changing Religious Landscape*, Pew Research Center, May 2015

- **Atheist** "one who does not believe in God"
- **Agnostic** "one who is not sure if there is a God"

## A Man Behind the Rise

"If this book works as I intend, religious readers who open it will be atheists when they put it down." -*The God Delusion*, Richard Dawkins, 2006

**SO WHAT? ⇨ Pessimist Turned Proclaimer (John 20:24-29)**

## Causes of Atheism (vs. 25)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Cure for Atheism (26-27)

- \_\_\_\_\_

**NOW WHAT? ⇨ Tackling Atheism**

## Reality

- Inevitable
- Possibilities and Problems
- Responding

## Response

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

"Peace be with you." - Jesus (John 20:26)

## Connection Group Questions

Taken from the sermon on August 23, 2015

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### ■ Questions for “Group Discussion”

- Ice breaker: Thomas’ story (testimony), because of Jesus, can be summarized as “Pessimist turned Proclaimer.” How can your story be summarized?
- Have you gone through a season of doubt? Who or what helped you work through these doubts?
- How can we engage with someone who is struggling to have faith in Jesus because of a lack of proof, a past experience, or pride?

### ■ Questions for “Personal Growth”

- **Monday: Atheism in the Bible...** Please read Psalm 14:1-7; Romans 1:18-32; and 3:10-18. What do these verses tell you about atheism and what is the Bible’s answer to those who deny God’s existence? Here, one who denies God is called a “fool”, one who “is destitute of reason; deficient in intellect; one that acts absurdly, or pursues a course contrary to the dictates of wisdom.” As we begin to dig deeper into the topic of atheism, how would you defend this biblical truth; to deny God is to lack wisdom.
- **Tuesday: How “good” is good enough?** What if an atheist is a generous, honest, loving person who helps those in need? Aren’t their good deeds “good enough” to be acceptable to God? For your answer, please read John 3:16,18, 36; Romans 4:4-5 and Ephesians 2:8-9. In light of these passages, how would you answer this question? Now, please read Ephesians 2:10 and Revelation 20:12; 15. Simply, what is our eternal destiny determined by? How does knowing that God already knows the end of our story (whether we will believe in Him or not; if our names are written in the Book of Life) make you feel and/or change your perspective today?
- **Wednesday: No doubt about it...** At the root of “unbelief” is “doubt”. Please read James 1:6 and Mark 11:22-25. How would you define/ describe “doubt” and how it hinders us? Please turn to Romans 14:23. How does this verse confirm what you learned, yesterday, about “good deeds”? Now please read Jeremiah 29:11-13, Proverbs 3:5-8 and Romans 10:17. How can you begin to decrease your reliance on your own understanding and increase your trust in God and His guidance? To increase your faith, begin today, to spend more time in God’s Word.
- **Thursday: Believing without seeing...** Please read John 20:29. Thomas asked for a sign; he saw and believed. But what does Jesus say about those who believe without seeing? Please read Matthew 24:24-25 and 2 Corinthians 11:14-15. Why is it important that we truly know and abide in Christ, rather than relying on special signs and wonders as our basis for faith? Please meditate upon John 15:4-7 and seek to know God more fully by spending time in His word.
- **Friday: How will you respond?** Please turn to 1 Peter 3:15-16. If an atheist were to ask you, today, why you have put your faith in Christ Jesus, how would you answer? While you may talk in more detail as time permits, it is important that your initial answer be concise and one that makes the asker want to learn more. Prayerfully spend some time thinking through your answer and then write a 1-2 sentence response. Watch for the “divine appointments” that God creates for you and be ready and willing to share the gospel at all times!