

Atheist F.A.Q.

- Why do you not believe in God?
 - There is no credible evidence, just like there is no evidence for Gods you don't believe in (Thor, Zeus, the Flying Spaghetti Monster, etc).
- Where do your morals come from?
 - A combination of life experience, family, human nature, and the good sense to treat others the way I would like to be treated.
- What is the meaning of life?
 - There is no "ultimate meaning" to life. However, since we're here, we can give our own life meaning through our words and actions.
- Is atheism a religion?
 - No—it does not require faith or belief. It can become dogma for some people, but it's *not* a religion in the same way that bald is *not* a hair color.
- If you don't pray, what do you do during troubling times?
 - When it's possible, I try to take action to fix the situation. If that's not an option, I talk to people I trust and hope that things will get better.
- Should atheists be trying to convince others to stop believing in God?
 - Yes, but not because of spite or to "ruin the party." We should be encouraging critical thinking and intellectual honesty everywhere we see faith used as an explanation for believing something.
- Weren't some of the worst atrocities in the 20th century committed by atheists?
 - Some of them, yes (Stalin was one example). But these people did not commit their crimes *because* they were atheists. Rather, the radical political/racist ideologies they held drove them to commit their crimes.
- How could billions of people be wrong when it comes to belief in God?
 - Truth is not subject to popular vote, just like the majority of people were once wrong about the Earth being flat or the center of the universe. Much of the reason people believe in *some* God has to do with their religious upbringing; our beliefs are generally passed down through the generations.
- Why does the universe exist?
 - Just because it exists doesn't mean there's a "why?" explanation to it. It simply exists, period.
- How did life originate?
 - We don't know for sure yet. But the best current theories involve a self-replicating molecule (which occurred by chance) that eventually evolved to become more complex through the process of natural selection.

This list was created by the readers at FriendlyAtheist.com and edited by Hemant Mehta. A full list of responses can be found at <http://friendlyatheist.com/2007/07/20/keep-them-short-and-sweet/>.

- Is *all* religion harmful?
 - Only in the sense that religious fervor has the potential to become disastrous. By avoiding logic and promoting faith when making our decisions, *anything* can be justified, good or bad. While there are people who can separate religious beliefs from scientific truths and respect for all people, there are many that cannot.
- What's so bad about religious moderates?
 - They teach that faith is a virtue. They use the same reasoning patterns as religious extremists when justifying their beliefs. If faith is all they need to believe, today's moderates could become tomorrow's extremists.
- Is there *anything* redeeming about religion?
 - Religion can be used as a motivator for good. It can be a source of comfort in times of need. It has the ability to bring people together and unite them. It has been the inspiration for much of our world's beautiful music and architecture. However, all of these redeeming qualities can be found outside of religion as well.
- What if you're wrong about God (and He does exist)?
 - It depends on the nature of the God, but it's hard to imagine a God who would be upset with a person who honestly searched for evidence but found none that was satisfactory.
- Shouldn't all religious beliefs be respected?
 - No. Beliefs, ideas, and principles should all be respected based on their own merit.
- Are atheists smarter than theists?
 - Not necessarily. There are smart people on both sides of the religious spectrum. However, people who can think logically and critically are generally more intelligent than those who cannot. Many atheists fit that bill, as do a number of theists.
- How do you deal with the historical Jesus if you don't believe in his divinity?
 - If he was an actual person (and not an amalgamation of many people), he had some good ideas mixed in with some bad ones. We should be questioning the documents that refer to him, studying how they came to be, and asking ourselves if we would believe the miracles he performed if they happened today.
- Would the world be better off without any religion?
 - Only if people stopped behaving the way they currently do because of religion. Other potentially harmful ideologies could take its place. In a nutshell, though, we will always be better off without blind faith and dogma no matter what form they take.
- What happens when we die?
 - It's not a question we can answer. But from what we do know, our bodies decompose and we live on only through the memories we leave others.

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