

# **Your Greatest Doubts and Fears**

## **How to Keep the Faith When Facing Life's Toughest Questions**

#11: What do I do if Christianity Just isn't working for me?

### I. The Role of Our Affections

#### A. The Problem: What if Christ/Christianity No Longer Seems Satisfying?

- Some people stop believing not because they think Christianity is false, but because they think it doesn't work
- Postmodern people care less about truth and more about what they find fulfilling

#### B. Our Affections (What we Love and Enjoy) Play a Key Role in the Christian Life

- God cares not just about our actions, but our hearts (i.e., our motivations)
- What if we followed Christ not out of duty but out of delight? How does having affection for Jesus provide power to our obedience?
- Example: Does it matter to our spouse why we do nice things for them?

#### C. Clarifications about the Role of Affections

- Christianity is worthy of belief not because it makes us feel better but because it's true
- Sometimes truth makes life harder not easier (E.g., The Matrix)
- If we judge truth by "what works" then everyone gets to create their own truth
- Os Guinness: "The Christian faith is not true because it works. It works because its true."

### II. What is Satisfying/Fulfilling about Christianity?

#### A. Meaning and Purpose

- Christianity provides an ultimate purpose for life, and a reason to think that what we do matters
- People try to give their own lives meaning by joining causes: saving the environment, stopping sex trafficking, helping the poor
- But why does this not ultimately work?

#### B. Hope in the Midst of Suffering

- The test of every worldview is whether it can provide real hope in the midst of suffering
- Christianity promises that God works all things for Good, and that someday all will be put right
- What can the non-Christian systems offer in terms of hope?

### C. Genuine Joy

- From a historical perspective, most modern people have so many reasons to be joyful and satisfied: plenteous food, quality health care, modern conveniences, disposable wealth, unprecedented entertainment options
- But, people are as unhappy and depressed as ever
- But Christianity brings us in the presence of a joyful God who can bring joy into our lives

### D. Real Freedom from Serving Idols

- Modern humans say they want “freedom”—no constraints or rules
- Humans are prone to serve idols, but idols crush us under the weight of their expectations
- Christianity allows freedom within certain God-given boundaries and constraints

### E. A Coherent Basis for Morality

- Everyone has moral absolutes in their life, whether they admit or not
- Question is whether those absolutes are grounded in God
- What happens if we try to ground our morality in something else?

## III. But What About When Christianity Isn't “Working”?

### A. Reasons Christianity Doesn't Seem to Work

- The Christianity we experience does not always live up to the Bible
- The Christian life, church ministry, even Christian relationships can be very broken and unsatisfying

### B. So, What do you Do?

- Just because people misuse Christianity doesn't mean Christianity itself is wrong
- Keep Your Focus on the Beauty of Christ

### Class Schedule:

Jan 9: Doubting Christian: What Role do Doubts and Fear Play in the Christian Life?

Jan 16: [Class cancelled for snow]

Jan 23: If Christianity is True then Why do so Many Intelligent People reject it?

Jan 30: Does saying Jesus is the Only Way Make us Arrogant or Intolerant?

Feb 6: Does the existence of evil and suffering in the world mean that God doesn't exist?

Feb 13: Some parts of the Bible seem morally troubling—are we sure it's a “good” book?

Feb 20: How Do I Deal with Depression and Anxiety About the Future?

Feb 27: Missions Week, Combined Sunday School

Mar 6: If Christianity is true, then how we do explain the bad behavior of Christians?

Mar 13: Isn't Christianity just the same as all the other religions? What makes it different?

Mar 20: What if the Gospels are just made-up stories? Is it possible everything we believe is a lie?

Mar 27: Lots of Christians are “deconstructing” their faith? Does that mean Christianity isn't true?

April 3: What do I do if Christianity Just isn't working for me?

April 10: What if I am Not a Christian? How Can I Know for Sure?