

How an Atheist Found God

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A personal account from an atheist who was convinced no god exists, and what facts led to God.

By Marilyn Adamson

It seemed to bother religious people when I'd ask them, "How do you know that God exists?"

Perhaps they wondered about my motives. Or maybe they had no idea how to answer. Most of their responses were, "Well, you *just know*."

I wasn't trying to be difficult. But I certainly did not "just know." And I was hoping someone did!

After many months of this, I thought, "Here are the people who say they believe in God, but no one knows why!" It was like learning the truth about Santa Claus. It seemed obvious that God was completely fabricated. Maybe some people needed to believe in God but clearly there was no proof. No objective evidence. I came to the most stark conclusion...God did not actually exist.

I held this belief for years, not expecting it to ever change. But then I met someone who caused me to become interested in the *possibility* of God. She was caring, kind, and very intelligent. It bothered me that someone that intelligent could believe in God.

She talked about God like he was her closest friend. She was convinced he deeply loved her. I knew her life well. Any concern she would take to God, trusting him to work out a way or care for her in some way. She would tell me, quite candidly, that she was merely praying that God would act upon her concerns. For over a year, I regularly saw what seemed to be answers to her prayers. I watched her life through a myriad of circumstances, and her faith in God was unwavering.

So, I wanted to believe in God on one hand, because I admired her life and her love for others. But I couldn't believe in something against my intellect, against my better judgment. God did not exist. A nice idea, but that was all. Wanting something to be true, doesn't make it true.

During this time I was developing a personally built philosophy.

I tried something that I'm not sure many people do. Every few weeks, I would study a particular philosopher's take on life ...Nietzsche, Hume, Dostoevsky, Sartre, Plato, etc. and then try to apply it to my own life. I was looking for the perfect, workable philosophy for life. I found over and over, that either their philosophies seemed lacking, or were too impractical to actually implement. But I kept searching.

I was challenging my friend with every question that came to mind about God. I would find myself writing out questions late in the evening. This went on for well over a year. One day she handed me a book that briefly answered questions like, is there a God; is Jesus God; what about the Bible. It presented facts. No comments like, "you have to believe."

I saw some evidence for God that was solidly logical. The parts particularly convincing to me were the chemical properties of water and the earth's position to the sun. It was all too perfectly designed, too perfectly put together. My faith in "nothing behind it all" seemed weaker than the possibility of God. I had fewer reasons to be certain of



nothing, and more reasons to conclude that God might be there.

I then encountered a situation that fully challenged my current philosophy on life. What I had been putting my faith in proved to be completely insufficient. It shocked me to see that I was at a loss for an approach to life that was fully reliable. However, the situation resolved itself and I moved ahead. I have a pretty steady personality. Throughout my life, I never really felt "needy." No on-going crisis. No big gaps or struggles. And certainly nothing I felt guilty about.

But the concept of God was something I couldn't get off my mind.... was he there? does he exist? maybe there's a God.....

One night I was talking to my friend again, and she knew I had all the information I needed. She knew that I had run out of questions to ask. Yet I was still trying to debate. In one clear, abrupt moment, my friend turned to me and said, "You know, I can't make this decision for you, and God's not going to wait forever."

And I immediately knew she was right. I was playing around with a very important decision. So I went home and decided that I was going to decide. I was going to either ask God to come into my life, or I was going to end the subject forever and never allow myself to consider the possibility of God again. I was tired of dealing with this decision. I was tired of thinking about it.

So, for the next three or four hours, I reviewed everything I had read and observed. I evaluated it all.

I concluded that the evidence for God was so strong that it made more sense to believe in God than to believe he wasn't there. Then I had to act on that conclusion.

I knew that just intellectually concluding God existed, was way too light. It would be like deciding...airplanes exist. Faith in an airplane means nothing. However, if you need to get somewhere and an airplane is the way, you have to decide to act and actually get on the plane.

I needed to make the decision to actually talk to God. I needed to ask him to come into my life.

After a few hours of thought I addressed God, "Ok you win. I ask you to come into my life, and you may do with it whatever you'd like." (It seemed reasonable to me, that since God exists, God had every right to influence and direct my life, if he wanted to.)

I went to bed and the next morning wondered if God was still there. And honestly, I kind of "sensed" that he was. One thing I knew for sure. I immediately had a huge desire to get to know this God whom I now believed in.

I wanted to read the Bible. When I did, it seemed that God was spelling out who he is and how he viewed this relationship with him. It was amazing. What really surprised me is how often he talked about his love. I hadn't expected that. In my mind, I was simply acknowledging God's existence. I had no expectations of him, but as I read the Bible, he chose to communicate his love to me. That was a surprise.

Now, my basic, skeptical nature was still there. The first few months or year, I would ask myself, "Am I really believing in God? And, *why am I?*" And I would methodically review five objective reasons why I believed God existed. So my "faith" in God did not rest on feelings, but on facts, on reasons.

To me, it's like the foundation of a building. The facts/reasons support my faith. It's like someone driving across the Golden Gate Bridge. They can feel whatever they'd like about the bridge. But it's the construction/design/materials of the bridge itself that allows them to safely get from one end to the other. In the same way, the objective reality of God--the logical, historical, scientific reasons to believe in his existence, are important to me. There are people who don't seem to need that. But I hate being fooled, and I have little regard for wishful thinking. The substantiating reasons for God's existence mattered to me.



My Experience, Part 2 – Further Evidence of God

Since that time, now that I've been a Christian for a number of years----why do I now believe in God? What reasons do I have for continuing to believe in God?

I'm not sure any of these are going to be believable to you. But I'll try to put that concern aside and be candid with you. Previously my questions were about God's existence. After beginning a relationship with God, I saw additional evidence that God is real. Such as...

1. When I have questions, concerns, or would like insight on a matter, God speaks to me through the Bible. What he shows me is always perfectly suited to my question, and a better, more satisfying answer than I expected. Here's an example.

One day, my schedule, deadlines, and obligations were crawling up my neck and tightening their hold. You know that feeling when you're so overwhelmed, you don't know what to do first?

So I got out a piece of paper and pen, and asked God: "Just tell me what you want me to do, and I'll do it." I was fully prepared for shouldering 100% responsibility, and was basically asking God to just set the priorities, tell me how to approach it all, and I would.

I then opened my Bible and immediately read where Jesus was talking with a man who was blind. Jesus was asking him, "What do you want me to do for you?"

I read it again. Jesus asked: "What do you want me to do for you?" Rather amazed, I picked up my pen and began writing an entirely different list...to God. This, I have found, is characteristic of God. Reminding us that he is there. That he cares, and he's capable.

I choose that example because it's brief. But I could cite hundreds of examples where I was asking God a question and he perfectly, thoroughly answered me. It probably is the characteristic of God that I most appreciate and value--that he is willing to answer my questions.

This isn't something I learned from other Christians. It's just how my relationship with God operates. I ask a question, with an attitude that I really want to give him freedom to tell me whatever he wants to....to correct my thinking, to point out an area in my life that isn't right, to show me where I'm not trusting him, whatever. And he always graciously speaks to me.

2. Similarly, when I need direction for a decision, he gives it. I believe that God cares about our decisions. I believe he has a plan for our lives, that he cares about who I marry, what kind of job I have, and some decisions smaller than that. I don't believe he cares what toothpaste I buy, or lots of mundane decisions. But decisions that will affect my life or what he wants to accomplish through my life...I think he cares.

When has God given me clear direction?

One time I needed to decide about a trip to the Middle East. There was risk involved, and I was willing to go only if God wanted me to go. It was important to me that I knew what he wanted.

Two different times I asked God about a job. Both times his leading on it was so clear, that anyone watching would have concluded the same. Let me try one thin slice of an example.

During my senior year of college, I had decided to take a job with a Christian organization after graduation, that would require a move to California.

It was Christmas break, and I was now visiting my parents. One evening, I was alone and thinking through a long list of friends. I was wondering who I could talk into moving to California with me to be roommates. One person named Christy, came to mind, who had already graduated and settled in a job in Iowa. I thought she'd be the perfect roommate, but I hadn't talked to her in several months. Just 30 minutes later, at my parents home, Christy calls me on the phone.

Her first sentence was, "I heard you are taking a job with this Christian organization." I was floored because I had only told one friend, in Ohio.

Her next statement was, "Ok, I've got the pots and pans and dishes." I said, "WHAT?!" She was moving to the same town in California and was calling to see if I would room with her.

Ok, so you see my point.

You might ask, why such a big deal, to even need God's help in this decision? I knew that my parents would be completely opposed to this job. I thought it might cost me my relationship with my parents forever. So it was not a light decision. I asked God to guide me toward what he wanted. And he did. There were about ten other events related to this job, just as clear.

Other reasons I still believe in God...

3. In terms of explanations about life--why we're here, what the purpose is, what is important in life, what to value or strive for--God has better answers than anything I've ever read anywhere. I have studied multiple philosophies and religions and other life approaches. What I read in the Bible, what I see from God's perspective, all the pieces of the puzzle fit.

There is still a lot I'll read in the Bible and close the Bible saying, "I don't get it." So I don't mean to suggest I fully understand everything in the Bible. Instead, I'm saying that life only makes sense from the perspective of what God has revealed. It's like reading the operating manual to life on earth, only we are not left to merely follow the manual. The inventor is explaining to us how it all works, and then offers to personally guide us through it, on a daily basis.

4. The intimacy with God is deeper than intimacy with any human being. I say that married, with two children, and tons of very close friends. His love is perfect. He's incredibly gracious. He takes me right where I'm at, and as I said, speaks to me. He intervenes with actions that leave me amazed as the observer. He is not a belief or doctrine. I see him act in my life.

5. He has done more with my life than I would have done on my own. This is not a statement of inferiority or lack of self confidence. I'm speaking in terms of accomplishments that far exceeded what I ever had in mind. He provides ideas, direction, solutions, wisdom, and better motives than I could aspire to on my own.

Well, there is more, but I think that gives you enough. I'm not sure any of it is believable to you, but I've been as honest as I know how to be.

If you would like to see some of the evidence that moved me from my atheist experience to believing in God, please see these two articles:

[Is There a God?](#)

[Beyond Blind Faith](#)

And, if you would like to understand how a person can arrive at faith in God, I would invite you to sign up for a 7-email series that I wrote, "The Spiritual Adventure Pack." I explain proof, doubt, legitimate evidence for God's existence and against God's existence. You can discontinue anytime. And it's free. Please go [here](#) to sign up for it.

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