

Arguments for God's Existence

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson you'll learn:

1. 3 arguments for God's existence that are more readily grasped: cosmological, teleological, and moral arguments. (Highly intuitive)
2. 3 arguments that are harder to grasp and to use in talking about Christianity: ontological, argument from imagination argument, and Pascal's Wager. (Less intuitive)
3. Learn how these arguments should be used in talking about Christianity.

3 EASIER TO GRASP ARGUMENTS

Cosmological Argument- argument from the law of cause and effect

Some of the earliest forms of this argument was formulated by Muslim intellectuals.

Premise 1: The universe exists.

Premise 2: Either the universe had a beginning or it did not.

Premise 3: If the universe had a beginning, it was either caused or uncaused.

Premise 4: If the universe was caused, then the cause was personal or not personal.

Premise 5: The universe had a beginning.

Premise 6: The universe was caused.

Premise 7: The cause of the universe was personal.

Conclusion: There is a personal cause to the universe that is all powerful and all knowing.

Teleological Argument- argument from the design and order in the universe

This argument was what converted Anthony Flew from atheism to agnosticism.

Premise 1: Information that is ordered comes from an intelligent mind.

Premise 2: The universe contains an enormous amount of extremely complex information. (Like DNA, the varied galaxies.)

Premise 3: That information does not come from human minds.

Conclusion: Therefore, there must be a mind that designed this enormous amount of complex information.

Moral Argument – argument from the sense of right and wrong in all people

This argument seems ineffective in today's relativistic culture, but if presented right, it's one of the best arguments to share with the typical person who believes in social justice.

Premise 1: All people have an internal sense of right and wrong because they believe in a moral law.

Premise 2: This moral sense came about either through evolution or from a moral law giver.

Premise 3: A moral law implies the existence of a moral law giver.

Conclusion: There is a moral law giver that is above all people and cultures.

3 HARDER TO GRASP ARGUMENTS

Ontological Argument: Argument from Being that God must exist.

This is my favorite argument to think about, but may actually be one of the hardest to understand and use. See Alvin Plantinga's version using all possible worlds.

Argument by *Reductio Ad Absurdum*

Trying to prove that a God exists that is perfect (all knowing, all powerful, all loving, etc.) by assuming the opposite.

Premise 1: God is the greatest think you can think of.

Premise 2: God (the greatest thing you can think of) does not exist.

Premise 3: I can think of God.

Premise 4: I can think of a thing that is just like God, but also exists. Let's call it God+

Premise 5: But it is greater for something to exist than to just be an idea.

Premise 6: God+ is greater than God.

Conclusion: But that contradicts premise 1. Therefore it cannot be the case that God does not exist. Thus, God exists.

Argument from Imagination and Desire

This is one of the lesser known, but very appealing to our current cultural sentiments.

Premise 1: Every innate, natural desire has an object that exists to meet that desire.

Premise 2: People have an innate, natural desire for glory that nothing on earth can meet.

Premise 3: There must exist something else that can meet my desire for glory.

Conclusion: There must be something glorious beyond this world, that which we call "God."

Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for these desires exists. A baby feels hunger; well, there is such a thing as food. A ducking wants to swim; well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire; well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

Pascal's Wager

	God Exists	God does not Exist
Believe in God	Infinite gain	Infinite loss
Disbelieve in God	Some gain, some loss	Some gain

The "Skeptic's Prayer": "God, I don't know if you are real or not, but if you are, please show me who you are." (Adapted from Pascal)

HOW TO USE ARGUMENTS

This is a brief overview to give you some handles on apologetics. But know this: I rarely use the arguments for the existence of God in evangelism because today, those aren't the issues that most non-Christians have problems with. Next week, we begin a more developed overall approach to using apologetics, including learning to wrestle with some of the most common questions about Christianity.