



Homes of H.O.P.E. Prayer and Study Guide #3
Based on sermon: “God Doesn’t Make Sense”
Preached Jan. 3, 2009

Thank you for being willing to establish a “neighborhood watch” center in your home. The purpose of Homes of H.O.P.E. is primarily to get God’s people together to pray and encourage one another in our spiritual journey home.

Study of the Word is important, but not the primary focus of these gatherings. There should be sharing of testimonies and struggles, fellowship and plenty of prayer. Try not to let the gathering become another Sabbath School class—just a meeting of minds and not hearts. Use the following as a means of opening discussion and targeting issues to pray about. You do not have to use every question here.

Introduction

1. Have you ever doubted if God exists? (Allow everyone who is willing to briefly share their doubts.)

2. What resolved your doubts? Why do you believe? Or do you believe despite your doubts? (Again, allow open sharing.)

3. Discuss this statement by Dr. William B. Provine, professor of the History of Biology at Cornell University: *“It starts by giving up an active diety; then it gives up the hope of life after death, and when you give those two up the rest follows fairly easily. You give up the hope that there’s an imminent morality and finally, there’s no human free will. If you believe in evolution you can’t hope for there to be any free will. There’s no hope whatsoever of there being any deep meaning in human life. We live, we die and we’re gone—absolutely gone when we die.”*

4. What are the implications of a world with no human free will or “imminent morality”?

5. There are more than 100 highly precise and interdependent environmental conditions called “anthropic constants” (such as oxygen level, atmospheric transparency, Moon-Earth gravitational interaction, carbon dioxide levels, and gravity) that make human life possible.

Astrophysicist Hugh Ross has calculated the probability that these and other constants—122 in all—would exist today for any planet in the universe by natural selection (without divine design). His answer is: **one chance in 10^{138}** —that’s one chance in one with 138 zeros after it! Anything beyond 10^{50} is considered “impossible.” Yet chance of a DNA molecule coming into being on its own is **one in 10^{384}** !

In light of the above, do you agree or disagree with the following statement: If you remove God from the universe, you must believe that the anthropic constants that support life on earth came about on their own.

6. Read John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16, 17. How do these texts inform your thinking?

7. Atheists object to the idea of an un-created Creator. If there is evidence of Intelligent Design in the universe, who designed the Designer? Read Jeremiah 10:2-5, 10-16; Hab. 2:18 and discuss the implications of a created Creator.

8. Does science reject the possibility of an un-created universe? Some *thing* that is eternal? Consider Carl Sagan's statement: "The cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be."

9. Richard Dawkins, himself a materialist, believes that matter, energy, and the "laws of nature" were already there. Discuss how Dawkins could be right in light of Psalm 90:2; 102:24-27.

10. Consider this statement:

"Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life, has no purpose in mind It has no mind It does not plan for the future ... it is the blind watchmaker."—Dawkins

If this is true, how do you explain the existence of love and morality?

11. Russian essayist and philosopher Dostoyevsky said, "If God doesn't exist everything is permissible." If that is true, discuss how Hitler may have been right. In a world without God, can we call any action (i.e., the Holocaust, the Cambodian Killing fields, the Inquisition, the European witch trials, the Rwandan genocide, 9/11, or suicide bombers) "evil"? On what basis?

12. Read Hebrews 11:1. What is the "substance" and "evidence" of your faith? What gives you hope that there *is* purpose to existence and meaning to life?

13. What's the best way for a Christian to minister to an atheist? How should believers treat unbelievers?

Pray together about what the Holy Spirit has revealed to your group. Remind members to pray for the Community Conversations Live meetings and encourage them to invite someone. God bless you!