

Discussion Questions



Introduction: Organic Jesus

1. How have you changed since you became a Christian? If you are not a Christian, how have you changed from ten years ago?
2. Do you see “holes” in Christianity? What are they?
3. What distractions keep you from growing?
4. The author mentions a children’s Bible is what eventually helped him get closer to God; what has helped you grow closer? If you aren’t a Christian, what have you read, watched, or participated in as you seek answers?
5. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “The kingdom of heaven belongs to children”?

Chapter 1: The Passion of the Jew

1. Do you think Jesus Christ is a Savior? A historic figure? Or something else?
2. There have been lots of artistic and cinematic portrayals of Jesus; what is your portrayal of him? What did he look like? How did he act? Pretend you are describing him to someone who has never heard of him.
3. What is your favorite portrayal of Jesus? It can be a film, song, painting, book, or something else entirely.
4. Is there anything you learned about Jesus as a child that you came to question as an adult? Where did your childhood understanding of Jesus come from?
5. Do you have or did you ever have doubts about God or Jesus? Did you or do you seek answers to those doubts? If you’ve never had doubts, then where do you think they come from for other people?

Chapter 2: Will the Real Jesus Please Step Up?

1. What gives you the faith to believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah? If you don't think he is, what makes you doubt?
2. How do we know Jesus is the Messiah and not just a great teacher?
3. Jesus said he was God, but not in that direct way. Why don't you think Christ ever said, "I am God"?
4. Do you believe Jesus is God? Why or why not?
5. C. S. Lewis famously said in *Mere Christianity* that some people believe Jesus was a great moral teacher but reject his claim to be God—he argues that those people basically believe a great teacher is also utterly insane. There have been plenty of scientists who are brilliant but also crazy; do you believe the same is true for a philosopher-teacher such as Jesus? Could he have been a great moral teacher while also being insane?

Chapter 3: Does God Have a Pinky Toe?

1. Have you ever asked yourself if you are crazy for believing in God? What helped put doubts aside?
2. First Peter 3:15 says that we should always be prepared to give a reason for the hope that we have. Do you feel prepared to give a reason for the hope you have? If not, what would it take for you to feel prepared?
3. How do you think science and God can coexist?
4. The author says, "It would not be far off to say that Christianity contributed more to the rise of atheism than any other cause. Science did not create atheism—Christians did." How true do you think that statement is? Do you know a non-believer whose doubts have been shaped by the poor actions of Christians?
5. The author says, "The Christian faith isn't so much a lifestyle as a journey." What does this mean to you? How is faith a journey?

Chapter 4: 50 Shades of Bible

1. Do you think the Bible can be a myth but also true? Explain.
2. Does the Bible feel dated to you? What, if anything, helps you make sense of it for life today?
3. The author mentions literary patterns in the Bible; do you think those patterns are important? Do they change the way you read or think about the Bible?
4. Why do you think the apocryphal books are or are not important?
5. What are some of your favorite Christian books or movies?

Chapter 5: History of the World, Part 2

1. Why are there thousands of different religions in the world today?
2. How do you know you believe in the right one?
3. Have you ever been on a mission trip—long or short? How did it change or shape you? If you have never been, what is holding you back? How can you make it happen?
4. Were you spiritually prepared for adulthood? If not, how could you have been more prepared?
5. Christ calls us to believe in him—why should we even bother going to church? We can worship God anywhere and there’s no “thou shall go to church” commandment.

Chapter 6: East of Eden

1. Do you believe this statement: “There is no greater advocate for satan than some Christians”? Explain.
2. The author asks this question in the book: “If Christianity is so great that the very Spirit of God indwells believers, then why are so many Christians so flawed?” Why do you think so many Christians are flawed?
3. If a Christian believes in Christ but does not do good deeds, are they saved? Explain.
4. Have you ever been disappointed by a Christian? To what

do you attribute their disappointing words or actions—is it a flaw in their religion, their faith, or their person?

5. What does it mean to you to have a relationship with God?

Chapter 7: Can You Put That Miracle in the Form of a Pill?

1. Have you ever personally witnessed or experienced something you cannot explain? If so, describe the situation. Are you content with leaving it unexplained?
2. The Bible says Jesus did all kinds of miracles, but it only tells us about thirty-seven. Why do you think there aren't written accounts of the other miracles?
3. Of the miracles written about in the Bible, which one do you most frequently think about? What is it about that miracle that makes it so memorable?
4. Why do you think God seems to answer some prayers but not others?
5. What is a “spiritual healing”?

Commercial Break: Interview with an Atheist

1. Have you ever talked to a nonbeliever about why they didn't believe? What reasons did they give?
2. Was there anything in the interview in the book that surprised or jumped out at you?
3. Roland believes that humans define moral code. Do you think this is possible? Why or why not?
4. Roland mentioned for him to believe in God it would basically take the actual presence of God descending like a hand from the sky. Why doesn't God reveal himself that way?
5. There are more atheists today than ever before. Why do you think that is?

Chapter 8: Natura-Diddily

1. What is the most difficult thing in your life that you have faced? How did you get through it?

2. Why do you think bad things happen?
3. In Matthew 21:21, Jesus says if our faith is strong then we can tell a mountain to move into the sea and it will obey. So why do bad things happen even when we pray for them not to?
4. If you know a friend is hurting, are you comfortable talking to them? Do you ever keep quiet for fear of saying the wrong thing?
5. Do you cling to the hurting as a way to make you appreciate your own life? Do you wait to see if the hurting say what they need, or do you help in some way without being asked, even at the risk of not being helpful?

Chapter 9: Would Jesus Take a Selfie?

1. What was church like for you as a child?
2. Who in your life has served as a type of mentor?
3. The author says that “there’s only one way, one path to salvation, and it has absolutely nothing to do with who you are, what you’ve done, or what you do.” Do you struggle with the idea of grace—that God gives you salvation in spite of anything you have or have not done?
4. Was there a pivotal moment in your life when you began to grow spiritually? What prompted the change?
5. Why do so many scandals begin in the church?

Chapter 10: Love in a Time of Cholera

1. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “I did not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Matt. 10:34)?
2. For a gospel that preaches love, why do you think there are so many Christian groups that preach a gospel of hate and condemnation?
3. Do you think Christianity is supposed to be “fun”? The author says that “sometimes we put so much emphasis on enjoying life that we forget what we were called to do.” How do you find balance between enjoying life and doing what

God has called you to do? How do you make what you are called to do enjoyable?

4. What does grace mean to you?
5. The author says that spiritual growth often happens when we start getting a little uncomfortable and doing things we don't normally do. How can you get a little uncomfortable spiritually?

Chapter 11: Christian Hard Rock

1. What do you think when you hear the words *Christian worship*?
2. How do you worship God?
3. The author describes a portrait of the early church that isn't completely like we know today; ideally, what do you think church should look like?
4. Regarding church worship, the author asks, "How do we know what's authentic and what just feels good? That the person onstage isn't leading us to experience something based on fakery? How do we know the church we attend has the same background and foreground?" How would you answer that?
5. In what ways do you worship God when you aren't at church?

Chapter 12: What the Faith!

1. What do you think about the end times?
2. Why do you think so many people are fascinated by end-time prophecy?
3. Do you believe in angels and demons? What role do you think they play?
4. Is there Christian theology that you struggle with or are confused by?
5. The author says we are all on a path to return to God, but everyone's path looks different; what does your path look like right now? Are you questioning? Doubting? Serving? Just trying to get by?

Chapter 13: Wise Blood

1. How would you describe the Holy Spirit?
2. How would you describe the Trinity?
3. God uses all things to his glory—can you think of something bad that happened that God used to his glory?
4. How do you think division in the church has made the church stronger?
5. Do you think we can ever really know God? Why or why not?

Chapter 14: Living on a Prayer

1. Are you comfortable praying aloud, by yourself? In a small group? Before a large group?
2. How would you describe your prayer life?
3. Were you ever taught to pray? If not, how did you learn?
4. How does prayer connect us to God?
5. Is it okay to pray for things we want?

Epilogue: Organic Faith

1. What aspects of death scare you?
2. How do you practice what the Bible says?
3. Have you ever sought God out in an attempt to prove to yourself that God is real? What did that look like? What was the result?
4. How can God make you an extraordinary Christian?
5. What does having a “personal relationship with Jesus Christ” mean?