

# OpenTheo

## How Would You Explain God's Omnipresence to a Six-Year-Old?

June 1, 2023



### #STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about how to explain God's omnipresence to a six-year-old, how it could make sense for God to identify as male if the definition of "male" is rooted in biology, why the thief's statement to Jesus on the cross got him into the kingdom, and a program for teaching logic.

- \* How would you explain God's omnipresence to a six-year-old?
- \* If the definition of male and female is rooted in biology, how does it make sense for God to identify as male?
- \* What is it in the statement the thief on the cross makes to Jesus in Luke 23:42 that triggers his entry into the kingdom?
- \* What's a good program to teach logic with a Christian flavor to high school students?

### Transcript

(upbeat music) (ding) - Welcome to "Stand to Reason" hashtag #STRaskpodcast. I'm Amy Hall, and with me is Greg Cokal, and we are here to answer your questions. - We are.

- So this first question comes from Brad from Australia. I've tried explaining God's omnipresence to my six-year-old daughter. Now she says things like, "God's in that wall, and God's in this apple." Do you have some suggestions to explain omnipresence to a child in a way that will give her a deeper understanding? - Yeah, I think there's an easy way to do that.

And when we say that God is omnipresent, we don't mean that he's in everything, but that he is present everywhere. So we are here in this room. We are not in the wall, in the door, or the microphone.

We are just here. Now we can go out of the door, out of the studio, and go be here in the office, and there's a sense in which we are there in the whole office. We are consciously present in the entire room that we're in, kind of thing.

That room is bigger than the room we now, it's a little bit of studio. And nevertheless, we are fully present in that whole room. We are aware of all that's going on there, and our presence in a certain sense fills the room.

God's presence in that sense fills everything. He is there everywhere. He is not in everything.

He is not the same as the wall. So I would say to my daughter, or Brad can say to his daughter, Honey, I didn't explain it quite as clearly as they could. I didn't mean that God was in everything as a part of everything, but he was present everywhere.

So God is here. If we go in the other room, God would be there too. If we go onto the moon, God would be there.

If we went into the grave, she'll, God would be there. I think that's the language one of the Psalms uses. No matter where I go, there you are.

So God is aware, he is here with us, no matter where we're at. He knows everything that we do. Consequently, we never get away with anything.

He knows everything we do. There's actually a Latin phrase called quorum, C-O-R-A-M-D-E-O. That means before the Lord or something to that effect.

I have it by my desk because it's a reminder to me that I'm living my life before God. Wherever I'm at, I am before God. And that's a good thing to know for two reasons.

One, that the things that we do that are not appropriate, we are doing them before God in the presence of God. But also the things that we go through that are hard, we are going through them in the presence of God. So there are two things that are applications to this concept of God's omnipresence properly understood that are good for kids to understand.

I don't know that I would be so concerned about doing bad things if I thought that God was in the door, part of the door kind of thing. But the fact that God is personally present with us is a salutatory effect in a lot of ways. - I think that's a great answer.

I don't even have anything to add to that, Greg. So let's go to a question from Alice. - Next.

- Greg said that the definition of male and female is rooted in biology in the April 14th podcast. I agree, but given that definition, how does it make sense for God to identify as male? - Well, it's clearly not biology. And he doesn't identify as male.

He identifies as father. Although there are a number of characterizations of God in scripture where clearly a feminine, a feminine figure of speech is in play. So Psalm 91 says something like he gathers us.

We're under his opinions, opinions are feathers. So the picture there, and I actually pray this about my family. I want to God spread his opinions over our family.

This is like a mother hen covering her brood with her wings in order to protect them. And so there are a number of other places where we have a feminine characteristics that are ascribed to God. So God is not a male or a female, but the chief way he characterizes himself to us is as a father.

And now some people are uncomfortable with that in modern days, more progressive types. And they want to say he, she, it and mother, God and all that. Well, what they are doing is describing God in a way that God does not describe himself.

Well, by the way, it just occurred to me, especially, well, he put it this way there, misgendering God. Right? So why don't we let God be what he wants? But to answer the question, obviously he is not a male or a female, but a father is a kind of a figure. And some people talk about father figures that are not their father, okay? And so fathers play a particular kind of a role.

In the world. And that's the way God ascribes himself. He's not male, he's not female, but there is a father and then there is one who is described as his son.

So there are ways of describing this relationship that God uses that are important, even though he is not male biologically or female biologically. Yeah, the definition of man and woman is rooted in biology, but those are obviously God is not a man, he's not a woman, he's not a human being. And I think what might be behind this question is the idea that well, we can feel male or we can feel female, but when we're talking about physical bodies that are created in a certain way for a certain purpose, we're talking about objective biology in that case.

So I like what you said, Greg, I think the idea that he's a father is what he's after here rather than I'm a man because he certainly says I'm not a man. Right, numbers. He's not a human being, but as human beings we are physical embodied creatures.

And so it's a completely different category from who God is. You made a comment about feeling male and female that people report. I'm not even sure that's a coherent comment though, and this is what, or like I feel like a woman because Matt Walsh will ask and it's very valid.

Okay, what is a woman that you feel like a woman? Well, a woman, well, it's hard to describe. It's actually never been hard to describe until now. A woman has always been a member of the human species that has the native natural capability even if it's not

functioning at that moment or used to function, it doesn't anymore or is not yet able to function or whatever, it still has the natural native capability of producing children.

And that requires a man to do that and the two together can be fruitful and multiply. All right, so when people say, "Well, I feel like a woman in a man's body," well, what is a woman that you feel like? There's no other way to characterize it than the way we just did in terms of biological terms. And there are feelings that go with being a woman, but they are tied to this biological reality.

And so the only way to say I feel like a woman in a way that makes sense is to say, "I feel like I have a giant and a uterus and I have breasts that can lactate and I can bear children." But of course, the minute you say that, which is, it seems to me, the only way to characterize an answer that makes any sense, it's clear how wrong that is. So you feel like you have a uterus, but you don't. You feel like you have ovaries, but you don't.

You feel like you can lactate, but you don't. Yeah, so that seems like a real problem, but they don't wanna say that, but then it's hard to know what exactly they are talking about. It's easy for us to just kind of accept that in our culture has that language, but I think that this is the way I position my response in street smarts in that section, that last chapter that deals with some of these issues.

In the dialogue there, with that question that Matt Walsh asks, and he's kind of famous for that question. In fact, I think he wrote a book called, "What is a Woman?" Or somebody did by that title. He did have documentary.

I'm not sure about the book. Okay, maybe that's it, maybe the documentary. But because it's such an appropriate question, and it is meant to demonstrate that these kinds of claims are at the bottom incoherent.

And I don't mean to be dismissive. I'm just saying that these kinds of claims that things people make to show that something is wrong. Something is really wrong.

Incidentally, that's what trans-tribs acknowledge. When a person says, "I'm a woman and a man's body," they say that I am psychologically one way, whatever that actually is. And I am physically another way.

There's a mismatch. That's a brokenness. That's something's amiss, which is why they want to dress differently.

Or have operations or whatever, transition. It's because they want to make their body look more like what their mind feels. But it's interesting.

What they're trying to do is make their body look like a woman. Because that's what a woman is. I never thought of this particular point before, but because they intuitively know that's what a woman is.

It's someone who has a body in this way. Well, I feel like I have a body in this way, but I don't have it a body in this way. So I'm going to surgically make my body look that way.

You all obviously, that's a broken person. - Okay, Greg, let's take a question from Steve. The center's prayer often gets critiqued, probably for good reason, but the thief on the cross is thought to be with Jesus in his kingdom.

So my question is, what is it in, quote, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom, end quote, in Luke 23:42, that triggers his entry to the kingdom? - Well, it's obviously this individual doesn't have a lot of theology, but he is aware of what Jesus has been doing for the last three and a half years. And the reason is pretty much everybody is aware of it. As Peter, rather Paul says later on in the book of Acts, these things have not happened in a corner.

He says to a gripper, I think, you know this, you know the prophets, and what I'm talking about have not happened in a corner. This is a big deal. And on the road to Emmaus in the end of Luke, as there's lament there on that Easter morning by these disciples as they're talking to Jesus without knowing that it's Jesus, they're saying, what's going on? Are you the only one in town that doesn't realize what's taken place? So these things, this is public.

A lot of this information, and certainly the thief is aware of some of this. It's interesting in the passion accounts. It does say that the thieves on the cross, those on the cross are mocking him, both of them.

It's plural, but at some point, one apparently relents. They were on the cross for a long time, okay? I mean, Jesus was on the cross with the thieves for at least three hours, maybe more, but it was three hours that darkness covered the cross, that covered Calvary. So there's a growing awareness by one of them that this person is unjustly punished, and he is the one who he claims to be.

And so he says, in a certain sense, in the parlance of that period and moment, he uses language that reflects his trust in Jesus. Remember me when you come into your kingdom, that is you are the king of the kingdom. So that is an acknowledgement of Jesus.

And it's not the center of prayer as we normally pray it. And this is part of the reason why I think the center's prayer is useful, but it's not all encompassing. There are different ways that people that people respond to the truth in a salvific way.

See, as Lewis never prayed a center's prayer, I'm reading his biography right now, and anybody who knows anything about it knows that when he came to, when he was converted, it was during a trip to the zoo. He climbs into the side cart of a motorcycle. His brother, Warren, he is driving, they drive to the zoo.

Lewis says, when I got into the side cart, we started the journey. I wasn't a Christian. When we arrived back home from the trip, I was a Christian.

There was a confidence or a belief in his heart that Jesus was who he claimed to be. And whatever details that entailed, okay? Now, so I think this shows, demonstrates a little bit of flexibility in the ways people trust Jesus for who he is and who he claimed to be that triggers their regeneration. And it's not necessarily this kind of cookie cutter prayer.

I don't like the prayer sometimes the way it's often given because it entails language people don't even really understand. And this week, this last weekend, at reality, I closed the session, and I just made it clear, you know, what was at stake to the students that if they came there and they weren't followers of Jesus, then they discovered something that maybe they'd never expected to see. I wanted them to know they weren't there by accident and to address the guilt in their own lives that they know they have.

Because one day they're gonna stand before Jesus and either perfect justice or perfect mercy is gonna happen, that's punishment for everything they've ever done wrong and God misses nothing or forgiveness for everything they've ever done wrong. And God, this is nothing. And I told, and I said, I suggest you don't waste any time.

You turn from your old life and follow Jesus. You beat your breast and say, God, immerse you on me a sinner. That's right out of the New Testament, the Gospels, and then follow him.

So, you know, there is kind of an altar call of sorts. It may not be classic, a chick track for spiritual laws, steps to peace with God, whatever sinner's prayer, but the details are there for somebody to respond to if the spirit is working in their life in that regard. There are different things that people have responded to over time and they'll give their testimonies and it's clear they've them regenerated, but they, you know, it's not always this filling, fulfilling this paradigm of salvation prayer.

And I think that's certainly the case with the thief on the cross. - Right, yeah, I agree with you. He's expressing trust in Jesus.

We don't know everything in his heart that he believed, but clearly by saying, remember me when you come into your kingdom, he thinks Jesus is Messiah, he thinks he's the king, he thinks he's the ability to bring him there. And I think even implied in there is belief that he's been forgiven because clearly he's guilty. So he knows that also.

So he thinks somehow Jesus can make him right and bring him into his kingdom. And I think that is all the elements we have of trusting in Jesus for our salvation. And again, we don't know even what was in his heart or how much he knew or what he knew from other things, but just from that, I think we can see that he trusted in him.

And salvation is about trusting Christ and being united to Christ. It's not about saying

specific magic words that will get us a certain thing. - Yeah.

- So yeah, all right, great. Let's squeeze one more in here. - All right.

- This one comes from Gary Heinz. - Gary. - What's a good program to teach logic to high school students with a Christian flavor? Gary from Oceanside.

- You know, I don't know, well, first of all, logic doesn't need to have a Christian flavor, first of all, because it is not, there is no, it's the right way of putting it. There's no necessary connection between Christian beliefs and logic. Now, I think there is a metaphysical connection to the way the world is that has things like the laws of logic and their grounding, which comes in a God who manifests those things, okay? But that's a separate issue.

You can learn about informal fallacies like the genetic fallacy or circular reasoning or a straw man or something like that by just by or name calling at hominem. You can learn that those are not sound ways to address an argument, even if you're not a Christian. And I wish more and more people would do that because it would make them easier, easier for them to see the truth of Christianity and not buy into these kind of foolish ways that they've adopted to reject it that are victimized by those informal fallacies.

So I don't know that you have to have a book like that. We sell a book or used to called the argument rule book or rule book arguments, yeah, which is a secular book. It's not done by Christian.

In fact, there are, I've read some and maybe even in that one where they use examples of bad religious arguments, you know, and nothing wrong with that. If the religious arguments that they are critiquing are indeed bad arguments. If I were teaching this, because I'd be teaching two Christians principally, to equip them to think better and manage defense of the faith more effectively, I'd want to give them examples of fallacies, informal fallacies, if that's what I was focusing in on, that people use against Christianity.

Like for example, well, with regards to the abortion question, well, you're a man. Yeah. (laughs) Well, you don't have anything to say about this 'cause you can't bear children.

We have a little dialogue coming up in street smarts on that very issue. And this is an example of the genetic fallacy, just 'cause a man, just 'cause the complaint or the argument or the issue comes forth from, has a degenerative in a male, doesn't mean that the point itself isn't legitimate with regards to the moral question of abortion, okay? That's like if somebody was complaining that I was abusing my wife. I said, "You married to her?" No, well, it shut up.

I'm the one who's married to her. You're not. So you don't have anything to say about how I treat my wife.

Okay. I mean, that's very obviously a bad way of thinking, a bad line of argument, same fallacy though, genetic fallacy. So I think you can teach that without having to appeal to have kind of a Christian foundation to logic.

But I think it is helpful to use illustrations of problems that are used against Christianity 'cause that's the second level of training that you're giving to young people. Now, there is a book that I have, and it's made for kids called the fallacy detective. It's got like a, you know, a hound dog on the front, a cartoon thing.

And the same author wrote another book about critical thinking and whatever. I don't know if that's actually a Christian or not, but I know that homeschoolers use it. So I'm sure it's Christian friendly.

But even a book that is not Christian friendly, in other words, they will use the illustrations of their teaching to against some kind of religious concepts. Those are still can be good instruction. Booklets, if they're playing fair and square with the rational rules, so to speak.

So I would start with that book, the fallacy detective, and then you can get that on Amazon, and then also look for the other book by the same author. - Do you think that would be too young for high school students though? - No. (laughs) Today, nowadays maybe 300 years ago, or 200 years ago or 100 years ago, but not today.

And anyway, it's not even too young for adults. If they are taking these concepts and throwing the ball so that middle schoolers or grade schoolers can catch it, an adult's gonna catch it. It's gonna be easy for them to understand.

And the easier it is for even an adult to understand the better heuristics or pedagogy or whatever you wanna call it, there is. They're gonna learn it more effectively. - And I'm just gonna throw out a couple more suggestions because once you learn the basics there, if you wanna see how those play out, then I'd recommend tactics because you, in tactics, even though you don't necessarily set out to explain every single fallacy, as you're teaching people how to think, you're using logic, you're teaching people how to use logic well.

- Which in play, it kind of absorbs off. - And another one that does something similar is called the Unaborted Socrates. - Oh yeah.

- And that one's about the prologue. - Oh, yeah, yeah. - So it's all these dialogues between, they're kind of, you know, so, "cratic type" dialogues.

- Right, and "patercraft" is the option. - Yes. And so that one, I think, would be another one you could read to see how this plays out.

- Yeah, right. - All right, that's it, Greg. That's all I have to say about that.



(laughs) - Thank you for listening. If you have a question, send it on Twitter with the hashtag #STRask or go through our website. Just find our podcast page for #STRask and follow the link there and send us a question.

Just make sure it's short about, you know, two sentences, don't really go over that if you could help it. So it's tweet-sized, and then we will consider your question. All right, thanks for listening.

This is Amy Hall and Greg Cocco for Stand to Reason. (bell dings)

(upbeat music)

(upbeat music)

(upbeat music)

(upbeat music)