

OpenTheo

What if Someone Says He Believes in Science, Not God?

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about what to say to someone who says he “believes in science, not God” and how to respond to the slogan “Love Is Love” without using the Bible.

- * How would you respond to someone who says he “believes in science, not God”?
- * How would you respond to the slogan “Love Is Love” without using the Bible?

Transcript

You're listening to Stand to Reason's #STRask podcast, and this is the podcast where you send in your question, you can do it through Twitter, you can do it through our website, and then we answer. And hopefully, not in too long of a time, so we can fit two or three questions in a single “beliife. We respond.

We don't always answer. But maybe don't answer adequately according to some people, but we do respond. So we really appreciate hearing from you, so keep sending those questions in on Twitter with the hashtag #STRask, or you can go through our website.

That's what we call it, #STRask and not #STRanzer. Just saying. Okay, what do you got? You are the star people, you are the ones who make this show interesting, so we appreciate you.

Yeah, we do. All right, the first question comes from Wendy. Respond to someone that says, "I believe in science, not God." Well, it's very interesting, just recently I always answered that question for an audience.

And to me, that's like saying, I don't believe in God, I believe in flush toilets, or I believe in coosin arts. Well, it's a false economy. Can't you believe in mechanistic things and believe in God at the same time? It presumes, though, that somehow science has removed either demonstrated that God doesn't exist, or has removed the need for God.

So maybe tactically speaking, it asks the question, why the dichotomy? Why is it one or

the other? Explain that to me. Okay? And I don't want to hear what they have to say. And I don't know what they're going to say.

If I were them, I mean, I think the most intelligible and safe way of responding is all those things we believe that God did in the past, we believe this, now we know that it wasn't God at all, that it was nature that was doing it, and science has revealed that to us. Well, I think maybe in some cases that might be true, if you think that thunder is the God's bowling, and then you learn it's just lightning, etc, etc. Well, that dispatches that particular divine element from the mix.

And maybe one other example would be Darwinian evolution, where now, at least the conventional popular wisdom is, that is adequate to dispatch the designer, because it wasn't the watchmaker in this sense, according to Richard Dawkins, it's the blind watchmaker of natural selection that can accomplish that. Now, by the way, I actually think on the merits, that doesn't work. I think that whole idea has been powered for the last 150 years or whatever.

Is that right? 1859, 1959, yeah, 150, 170 years, maybe almost, but has been powered by philosophy and not by the merits of the science itself. But nevertheless, okay, let's just say those two things are true. Let's just say the Darwinian enterprise is true, and lightning isn't the God's bowling.

I'm curious what other things now that had been attributed to God have been dispatched. And what's interesting to me is that virtually every single founder of the modern scientific enterprise, whether it's whether it's biology, whether it's genetics, whether it's physics, like Newton genetics, who's the Gregor Mendel, you know, even the scientific method, Francis Bacon, at all, all of these people were Bible believing Christians. And the reason that there was no problem for them is that God explained something that is foundational to science.

Why the world is intelligible to begin with? Why the world is intelligible to begin with? It's because an intelligent God made an intelligible world that we can discover and use for our benefit. That's what they all believed. And by the way, that makes sense.

Let's just say there is no God. Okay, there is just science. How does science work? Well, people can describe them, the system, but you know, a bunch of things have to be in place before you can have the system.

You have to have the basic reliability of the senses. It just as an observation, by the way, Darwinian evolution does not choose for truth about the world. It chooses for survivability or getting your genes into the next generation, most precisely.

It doesn't choose for truth. Darwinism, Darwinian evolution doesn't help us believe truth better. Ironically, and I've talked about this not too long ago in the year, ironically,

Darwinists believe, or atheists believe that Darwinism is the source of our moral assessments of the world, our moral viewpoint.

But of course, when we say, say, murder is wrong, or rape is wrong, or whatever, this isn't saying anything about murder or rape, it's just saying of what our genes have tricked us into believing in order to get our genes into the next generation. That's a standard explanation. Not everybody is as clear about the dynamic there.

Michael Ruse is the atheistic philosopher who's an evolutionist. He said, "Yeah, we don't have true beliefs about morality when it comes to evolution. There's no basis for it.

We think they're true, but they're not. They're just produced by evolution." So in other words, evolution produces false beliefs about things. Do you wonder what other false beliefs it produces? If it doesn't choose for truth, it only chooses for survivability.

What's the point of making? The point of making is, science as an enterprise cannot work without the kinds of things in place that only God can provide. Laws of logic and rationality. Those are things that have to be in place, and they're not even material, but they're employed by the scientific enterprise.

Okay, the basic reliability of the senses, I mentioned that. Where does that come from? Well, it comes from God. That's what we say.

If you're an evolutionist, what do you say? It comes by accident through evolution. Well, if it comes by accident, why should we trust it? It's a standard argument, by the way. C.S. Lewis has brought it up, and so has more recently, Alvin Plantinga and others as well.

How can we trust our judgments about issues of truth if our mechanism for doing that is simply evolved by chance? It's a very important question. So this is the problem with dichotomizing religion or God in particular here, and science. I don't believe in God, I believe in science.

I have a little quip that probably takes some explanation. I don't believe in God or religion or whatever. Why not? No scientific evidence for it.

Okay, well, you shouldn't believe in science then either. Why not? Because there's no scientific evidence for it. Science itself doesn't justify the process of science.

It's philosophy of science that justifies the process, and that's outside of science. So how does that philosophy justify itself? A theistic worldview does a great job, and that's why all these others, Newton and Faraday and all the rest I mentioned, briefly, how they employed scientific method and developed it in order to learn true things about the world. So at the basic root, this is a false dichotomy.

Okay, now if you want more information about the foundations of science, the theistic foundation and Christian foundations of science, recommend two books that are new this year or late last year. And that is *The Return of the God Hypothesis* by Stephen Meyer. And I think the history of science stuff in the beginning of the book is worth the price of the book.

It's a big book, lots of stuff in it. But just reading the first part, he covers all the bases there. And then Jay Warner Wallace's book *A Person of Interest* talks about this as well.

So I recommend both sources to demonstrate that God is necessary. Let me put it back up. It is the Christian worldview and the existence of God that is the appropriate epistimal metaphysical foundation for the epistemology of science.

Did I say that right, Amy? The appropriate the appropriate metaphysical foundation for the epistemology of science. You can't know things through science unless the world is a certain way. So just a touch on a couple of those things, Greg, I think you're right that one of the things going on here is a view that many atheists have of God that this kind of pagan view that people used to have where they would manipulate they would do certain religious rituals to manipulate nature because they thought these gods were part of nature and that they would do what they asked them to do.

And there was a time when that was what people did with religion, but the Christian view of God is not that at all. And so it's much bigger than that. So this idea that if that science has expanded to push God out of things is just ridiculous because that's not how we view God today.

That's the first thing. The second thing is that's going on here that I think you need to tease out with this person is the idea that science is not the same thing as materialism because I think that is the other thing that's being assumed here. It's materialism versus theism, not science versus theism.

Science is just or you mentioned all these things, Greg, it's order, it's repeatability, it's natural laws, it's being able to determine things about how nature works. And therefore predict things, how they look in the future. All of that, as you explained, fits into a theistic worldview.

That's the methodology of science versus a philosophical framework that is now imposed upon the method. So it's actually it's actually not science that's a problem, it's materialism. So if you can help the person understand this is where the real problem is, you shouldn't use science and materialism interchangeably because they're not the same thing and you've kind of bought into this idea.

So let's talk about that. And then the points you made about how science works and how it's dependent on God, I think all fits into where the discussion could go from there.

Here's the next question for you, Greg.

This one comes from Matchless M. What is a good response to quote, love is love without using the Bible? Explain that it's a tautology, ask what properties make up love, how do we know that something is love, is it true for me, for you and me, an objective truth claim, or is it just true for you, a relative claim, how would you respond? All of the above. This is a question that's the questioner is the answer for himself really well. You know, Matchless, you've done a great job.

Those are the kinds of questions. I mean, essentially, this is our first columnal question. What do you mean by that? Love is love.

Okay. I'm a little confused. Can you help me understand what you mean? Now, this is one of the cases I can pretty much guarantee you're going to get what I call the Simon Agarfocal Response when you ask what do you mean? Those two guys back in 1966 who wrote the song, the sounds of silence.

What do you mean love is love? I mean love is love. Well, though I heard you the first time, I just am still confused. Sketch this out for me.

So, we're just going to gather more information on this and see what they say. And I think most of the time they're not able, I suspect, I've actually never encountered somebody who says this and I've asked them. If I see it, I'm going to ask.

But my suspicion is you're not going to get anything substantive. What's the point of saying that love is love? And all of the questions that were offered by matchless there are appropriate questions. Once you get some more information, or even if you don't get any more, help me out.

They are Colombo questions that are different ways of asking for clarification on the point. Telling somebody it's a tautology, I mean, I could say that on the air, so people understand it because my listeners know what that is. Tautology is just repeating the same thing twice.

So, bachelor's are unmarried males. All right, that's a tautology. It doesn't tell you anything about the world.

It doesn't say that there are males that are not married. It doesn't tell you whether they're bachelors. It just tells you the definition of word, A equals A. That's all it means.

A bachelor equals an unmarried male. It's just a, it's a synthetic statement in philosophy, what they say. It doesn't have anything to do necessarily with the real world.

That's a tautology. All definitions are tautologies. So, in this case, though, I don't think it's, you know, people aren't going to know what you're talking about.

If you say that, I just want you to have the insight. That's the problem. But they are getting at something because this phrase is used to dis, to dis, to dis, I'm thinking, disqualify, disenfranchise, dis, whatever, dis.

Usually the Christian who has views on matters, especially sexual matters, whether it's gender or marriage or sexual behaviors that are different from the cultural left. And so the way they respond is with a rhetorically vacuous phrase. Well, love is love.

Love is love. All right. And you mean what? I'm curious.

I'm open to hearing what you have to say. But so far, I have no understanding of your point. And this is a, it's just another clever, clever, rhetorical flourish that is characteristic of the left, who are very good with words.

And this kind of confusion, because it is confusion. You'll find out it's confusion when you ask people what they mean. Then, then they maybe will give you something of substance and content, but it has nothing to do with the phrase love is love.

That is meant to obscure any assessment of the view they actually hold. That's what's going on there. So, I mean, all the things that matchless said there, Amy, I think are really good questions, just leave tautology on.

We know that this is the problem. It says nothing. It means nothing.

It's a rhetorical flourish to accomplish something else. Let's try to flush out what they're actually after. I guarantee you, they do not really believe that every claim to love, every claim of love is equally admirable.

I guarantee you, that's what they think they're saying. But there is a deeper reasoning going on. And that's what you need to draw out.

And one way you could do that is say, okay, so what you're saying is love is I shouldn't discriminate. Everyone who loves should be allowed to love and should be celebrate. Their love should be celebrated.

Is that what you're saying? I suspect that's what they'll say, yes, that's exactly what I'm saying. Okay. Well, what about adultery? What about if somebody loves someone else's wife? Is that okay with you? Or children.

Or pedophilia? What about bestiality? What about incest? Pretty quickly, they're going to realize that they don't really think love is love. They don't really think that they're all equally admirable and commendable. Although the liability of that nowadays is that you may not get a morally common sense response from people.

Either they're going to think all of those things are just fine, or at least they're going to try to bite the bullet in the firm they're fine, even if they don't really believe a test to

make their point because they're defending turf. But I think that is a fully appropriate response. I'm sure there are people like that.

But I think the regular person on the street will maybe think about this. And then you can say, all right, so what makes this love different from the love that you do approve of? What is the actual difference? It's not just that it's love because there's something else that you're using to judge these kinds of love, or so-called love. What is it that makes these wrong? And now you'll come to their principle.

You'll find out what it is that- That's great. That is their principle for determining if a certain kind of love is okay. And they may not have one.

They might just say, well, that's obviously wrong. Okay, why is it obviously wrong? Well, it should only be two people. Well, why should it only be two people and not polyamorous relationships or polygamous relationships or whatever it is? What is it about two people? I guarantee you they have not thought this through for most people.

But at least what you're doing is saying, look, okay, so now you're admitting it's not just love as love. We actually have principles here. So why don't we look at those principles and see if they hold up and see if they're reasonable.

We can at least discuss those principles and get it out of this slogan into something that's actually meaningful. That's excellent, Amy. I think what this comes down to, I mean, a proper aphorism is, right love is good love.

In other words, for love to be noble, it can't just be construed as loving. It's got to be the right kind of loving. There's a moral element to it.

And that's what makes certain types of love and emotional interaction, arguably, in this case, good examples of love, but not every example of love is a good example of love. And this is why our culture isn't such a mess right now because we have no standard. We have nothing.

We're comparing things to. It's all about what you want, what your identity is, what makes you happy. If this is good for you, we're happy for you.

And so there's no way we have not been trained to understand what good love is. That's why we're a mess right now. And that's why there's so many people getting hurt in so many different ways.

So hopefully, Matt, this will help you with your conversations on love is love. And if you have a question you've been waiting to ask, go ask us that question, go on Twitter with the hashtag #STRask or go to our podcast right to the top of a page on #STR.org. Click on podcast, choose hashtag #STRask and submit a question. And we'd love to hear from you.

This is Amy Hall and Greg Cocle for Stand to Reason.

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