**#1. GOD'S IDENTITY**

1. **Designer and creator.** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. – *Genesis 1:1-3*
2. **Embedded anchor:** The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” *- Isaiah 53:1.* The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. *- Proverbs 9:10*
3. **Embedded clues:** The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.– Psalm 19:1
4. **Embedded order**: For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. – *Romans 1:20-21*
5. **The Ultimate judge**. Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. – *Revelation 22:12-13*

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Exodus 20:1-3 (pg. 54) and Isaiah 40 (pg. 511)

**Takeaways for Life:**

1. if Pascal is right that we are created with a God-shaped vacuum in our hearts. What’s in yours?
2. Reason is in fact the gate through which the Holy Spirit enters for many people. Don’t be afraid of it.
3. We are all “People of Faith” in one form or another. Honesty about the irreconcilable differences is a sign of respect.
4. So you believe God exists. That’s a good first step. Be sure to take step 2. Make the connection personal.
5. If God really is all the Bible teaches about Him than its logical to make Him our north star for guidance, values, and confidence in the world.

**VARIETIES OF GODS IN OUR OWN WORLD**

**God of the Bible:** Far from being just another Ancient Near East myth about deities, the biblical revelation of God is a radical departure from the norm—both then and now. The God of the Bible exists prior to and outside of the creation. He has a name and distinct personhood and is capable of creating by design. His creative acts are intentional and intelligent. The creation, including humans, reflects and demonstrates his nature but is not a part of his identity.

**Animism,** or “the animistic grid,” refers to the native or tribal worldview that sees every object as animated by a separate spirit. Trees, animals, and humans all have spirits and the earth as a whole is often referred to as “Mother”. The sky and space are seen as “Father.” Most animists also see an overruling entity called “Great Spirit” or simply “Creator”. Classical paganism (Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians) had highly structured forms of Animism with even Kings, Emperors, and Pharaohs seen as gods.

**Pantheism** is the belief that God and nature are one and the same thing. In Buddhism and Hinduism, for example, the physical world is a temporary manifestation of the Cosmic Spirit and will someday disappear altogether. Everything is really spiritual. There is no such thing as “creation” but only the temporary forms of a greater perfected reality—Nirvana. All objects, humans included, are as much “God” as is anything else.

**Atheism,** or “scientific naturalism,” claims there is no reality outside of the physical or material world. What appears spiritual, or prior to the creation, is merely the stuff that hasn’t been studied or explained yet by science. Everything is really physical. Gods are created by man to explain the mysteries and give psychological comfort to the mentally weak or the scientifically ignorant. But there are no vacuums in nature, or as G. K. Chesterton put it, “Once abolish the God, and the government becomes the God.”

**Humanism** is defined by the American Humanist Association as “an ethical and life-affirming philosophy free of belief in any gods and other supernatural forces”. While all worldviews depend on human ideas for organization and for application, Humanism is built on the understanding that there is no knowledge beyond the human mind. Or if there is anything “out there”, we can’t know what it is. Or as Greek philosopher Protagoras said, “Man is the measure of all things.”