

## Isn't Science Enough? You Asked For It

Dan Hamel  
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Today we are continuing in our series called, "You Asked For It," and this week we get to talk about one of the most debated questions over the last 150 years, which is about the relationship between science and faith. There are a lot of ways to express the question, but perhaps the simplest is this: *Isn't science enough?* And here's how the question goes: "Of course people in the ancient world believed in God. They kind of had to in order to explain the universe and humanity and the animal kingdom and natural disasters. But now we have science. We have telescopes to tell us how the universe works, we have microscopes to tell us how organisms work, we have doppler radars to tell us how the weather works, the theory of evolution to tell us how all the animals came to be. Thousands of years ago, they had to believe in God. Today, science explains it all. We've outgrown our need for God. Isn't science enough?!"

My best guess is that at some point in your life you have probably thought about this at a pretty deep level. And for some folks, it was this very conversation that shook their faith, or even led them away from faith. Well known author and scholar Patrick Glynn describes his journey in these words: "When I first learned of Darwin's theory of evolution, it immediately occurred to me that either Darwin's theory was true, or the creation story in the Bible was true. They could not both be true. Thus began a long odyssey away from the devout religious belief of my childhood toward an increasingly secular outlook." Maybe his journey is similar to yours, or is similar to the story of someone you know. You grew up believing God created the world. You got to high school science class, and your science book didn't mention anything about God. Then you got to your college biology class, and your professor said that his express goal for the class was to get you to abandon your belief in God. And you got the sense as you got older that what Ernest Hemingway said might actually be true, "All thinking men are atheists." And slowly the confidence you once had in God began to fade, skepticism quickly replaced it, and you were left wondering what to do with your faith.

From my understanding, the Bible does not tell us to shy away from these discussions about science and creation. If anything, the Bible tells us to dive as deep into them as we possibly can, because as we do, as science teaches us more about the natural world, it will teach us more about the God who created the world. Listen to what we read in Romans 1:20, "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." This passage is saying that the message of creation is so clear that we are actually accountable to respond to it. Paul is saying that since the beginning of the world, creation so powerfully and undeniably points to the existence of an all-powerful God that, if you refuse to believe in God, you are without excuse. At the end of your life you can't say, "How was I supposed to know there was a God? There weren't enough signposts pointing me in the right direction!" The world itself is our evidence. Creation consists of a million signposts, every one of them pointing to God.

Just think of it this way: if I walk outside of my house in the morning and get in my truck, turn it on and drive around town, and then come home and tell Keren, "I am so glad that truck spontaneously generated itself and randomly appeared in our driveway. It sure is convenient, it

helped me run all my errands today.” Keren might say, “What in the world are you talking about, that truck didn’t just randomly appear, it didn’t generate out of nothing.” And if I said, “No, I think it did,” she would take me outside and show me the truck, she would point out the obvious evidence of design, the tens of thousands of different parts, all of them assembled perfectly and aligned with one another to allow it to turn on, start up, and take me around town. And if even after looking at all the complexity, all the interdependence, all the alignment, all the evidence of design I still refused to believe it was created and instead chose to believe it just appeared, you might say, “Dan, all the evidence is there. Is there some reason you are choosing not to believe someone made this?” That’s what Paul is saying it’s like for mankind when we look at creation. All the evidence is there. And if we refuse to believe, we won’t have any excuse.

While doing all my reading and brainstorming this week for this message about why science isn’t enough, I had about 15 different answers. But for the sake of time, I want to focus today on just three. Here’s the first: *Many world class scientists are also devout Christians*. Sometimes the logic of the conversation goes: “If all the smartest people in the world have renounced their faith and decided just to go with science...I don’t want to be the dummy choosing to believe in myths and magic and childhood fairytales.” Which makes sense. But the premise couldn’t be further from the truth. Many of the smartest people in the world, many of the best scientists in the world, are profoundly committed to the Christian faith. And they don’t see science and religion as opposed to one another, they see them working hand in hand with one another. The more they discover about the world we live in, the more reasons they have to worship the God who created it.

One of the most noteworthy Christian scientists is Francis Collins. He is a medical doctor and a Ph.D. He oversaw the human genome project for 15 years until 2009, when he was appointed the director for the National Institutes of Health – a position he has held for 12 years, substantially longer than any other person in the history of our country. He’s literally one of the smartest guys in America. Listen to what he says about the intersection of his faith and work:

“In this modern era of cosmology, evolution, and the human genome, is there still the possibility of a richly satisfying harmony between the scientific and spiritual worldviews? I answer with a resounding ‘yes!’ In my view, there is no conflict in being a rigorous scientist and a person who believes in a God who takes a personal interest in each one of us...I’m a serious Christian. I take my faith seriously...I believe God intended, in giving us intelligence, to give us the opportunity to investigate and appreciate the wonders of His creation. He is not threatened by our scientific adventures...the God of the Bible is also the God of the genome. He can be worshipped in the cathedral or in the laboratory. His creation is majestic, awesome, intricate, and beautiful.”

So if you are questioning your faith or walked away from faith because you believe all the smart people have rejected it: here’s a guy who is way smarter than you, who is way smarter than me, I guarantee he is way smarter and way more qualified than the biology teacher from your freshman year of undergrad, and he is saying that the more he studies the world we live in and the more he studies the bodies we have, the more inclined he is to believe in God. The study itself causes him to worship God. He actually began as an atheist and became a Christian through studying science.

Our church is also blessed to have a world-class scientist worship with us. Dr. Phil Hipskind, a distinguished research fellow at Eli Lilly for 32 years, the highest-ranking chemist in the entire company, who now runs a cutting-edge biotechnology company. He holds 43 patents, with 9 more pending, and has authored more than 50 peer-reviewed articles. This guy worships at our church! And this is what he shared with me:

“If the questions are: ‘Hasn’t science disproved religion,’ and ‘Aren’t all smart scientists atheist or agnostics,’ the answer to both is absolutely ‘NO.’ As a scientist, I am always amazed at how God set up universe, the human body, and the cell itself with such unfailing predictability that I – as a mortal human being myself – can observe the causes of disease, derive and test hypotheses, observe the result, come up with a conclusion, and once in a while make a small difference in patients’ lives. I can ask questions and amazingly, in His grace, make sense of the answers! There is no question that today I see my faith and my science tightly interwoven as a daily reminder of His genius and glory. I count myself amongst other ‘smart’ scientists who have acknowledged God, humbled themselves before God and professed faith in Christ.”

In fact, did you know that between the years 1901 and 2000, over 65% of all Nobel prize winners professed Christian faith? In total, Christians have won 72% of all prizes in chemistry, 65% in physics, 62% in medicine, 54% in economics, 49% in literature, and 78.3% in peace. How about that for a response to counter Ernest Hemingway’s statement that all thinking men are atheist? As it turns out, the vast majority are actually Christian. And that doesn't prove that Christianity is right, but it should tell you that if you are considering the Christian faith, you don't have to check your mind at the door. You don't have to put your confidence in a logical contradiction. You don't have to shut the science books and join the dumb kids in class. Throughout history, as well as today, some of the smartest people to ever live, some of the most noteworthy scientists to ever contribute to their field have a robust, rigorous, confident faith in God.

That’s the first reason that science isn’t enough. Here’s a second: *Science can’t explain enough about the physical world.* We know exponentially more than we have ever known before. But we still don’t know how this universe got here – we are only scratching the surface at best. The most commonly held assumption among the scientific community is that the universe is roughly 13.8 billion years ago. They will tell you that 13.8 billion years ago, the only thing in existence was a very very very small amount of very very very dense energy. To try to understand how small it was, take the smallest particle you can see with your eye, like a grain of sand. And then make it 100,000 times smaller than that. Once you have that size – so, so small – it was 4 billion, billion, billion times smaller than that. So the only thing that existed was this impossibly small, highly dense particle, and it was the heat of 10 billion, billion, billion, billion degrees Celsius, which for perspective is billions and billions and billions of times hotter than our sun. And then, something happened. We don’t know what caused it, but in a millisecond...literally, in a far less than a billionth of second there was a collision, with particles colliding into one another, rapid heating and cooling, at that time the electromagnetic force, the strong nuclear force, the weak nuclear force, and the gravitational force, were all folded into one, and then somehow, everything necessary for the entire universe, with 200 billion galaxies with roughly 100 million stars each, came into existence.

All of that, a universe far more vast than any of us can comprehend, so vast that if we lived a billion lifetimes we wouldn't be able to see just 1% – all of that came from something too small to comprehend, through an explosion that happened at a speed too fast to comprehend, and at a temperature too high for anyone to comprehend. And still, no one knows how that original matter got there or what caused the explosion in the first place. Science can tell us a lot, but even with all that science can tell us, there is still far more about the origin of the universe that it cannot tell us than that it can.

Everything we've learned about the origin of the universe over the last 30 years has actually led this man, one of the leading atheists in the world for his entire adult life, to change his mind. In 2007 he published a book called: *There Is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*. His reasoning was simple: we now know, as a matter of fact, the universe has not always been here, it had a beginning. And logically, everything that has a beginning has a beginner. He also said, the more we learn about the universe, the more fine tuning we learn that it has. There are 26 universal constants, all of which have to align perfectly and identically. If even one of them was off by one part in a million, this universe couldn't exist. He concluded that believing this universe came into existence on its own, against impossibly unrealistic odds, requires more faith than believing in God. He never claimed to know the identity of God, but he concluded, based upon all the evidence, that there must be a God.

But it's not just the origin of the world that science itself cannot explain, it's the origin of life. Charles Darwin gave us the theory of evolution, which explains the development of species, mutation, the survival of the fittest, and so on. Many in the scientific community say, "We don't need to believe in God to explain the complexity and the diversity of life as we know it." Even if you were to concede that the theory of evolution explains every life form as it exists on the planet today, *it cannot explain how life began in the first place*. It's one thing to believe that the dinosaurs evolved into birds that are around today, but it's an entirely different categorical shift to believe that non-living matter gave rise to living organisms. Because no matter how many times you bang two rocks together, no matter how long you wait, you never end with amino acids and proteins and cells, the building blocks of organic life. Because non-living matter does not produce living organisms.

Listen to what Walter Bradley, a retired professor of engineering from Texas A&M has said:

"The mathematical odds of assembling a living organism are so astronomical that it is a wonder anybody still believes that random chance accounts for the origin of life. Even if you optimize the conditions, it wouldn't work. If you took all the carbon in the universe and put it on the face of the earth, allowed it to chemically react at the most rapid rate possible, and left it for a billion years, the odds of creating just one functional protein molecule would be one chance in a 10 with 60 zeros...the odds would be the same as a man wandering the entire Sahara Desert while wearing a blindfold and finding one marked grain of sand...and doing it three times in a row. The scenario is more likely than a tornado sweeping through a junkyard and accidentally assembling a fully functional Boeing 747."

Science can do a lot for us. But there are some things science can't do. Science can't tell us how life started. Even Sir Francis Crick, a passionate atheist, said, "The origin of life appears to be

almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to be satisfied to get it going.” It’s interesting that he called it a miracle, because sometimes, even the most staunch atheist scientists look at that data can’t explain it, they can’t logically take 2 and 2 and turn it into 7, so they say, “It was somehow miraculous. There is no God...but that looks like a miracle.”

Along those lines, listen to what outspoken atheist Richard Dawkins said in an interview with Ben Stein: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDvaPzg32W8> (check out the clip from 0:12 - 1:23). Did you see that? We don’t know how life started, but it is possible that aliens may have come from another planet and planted the seed of life on this planet. And how did those aliens get there??? They evolved too! How did life start on their planet?? The string keeps going further and further back. It has to stop somewhere, right?! You see, that’s not science! That’s just a guess. And a pretty far-fetched one, at that. Not the sort of guess I want to stake my eternity on.

Is science enough? Well, many world class scientists are devout Christians, and they don’t think so. Science isn’t able to explain enough about the physical world. And one more response: *Science can’t explain enough about the metaphysical world.* When I say metaphysical, I simply mean all of that which is beyond the physical – the sun, the moon, the stars, the trees, your dog are all a part of the physical world, but things like beauty, truth, love, and morality are part of the metaphysical world. We can’t touch them, we can’t put them under a microscope, but nevertheless we not only know they are real, we know that the metaphysical realities are what make our physical life worth living. And science itself can’t explain them.

Let me give you an example: show of hands, how many of you believe that lying is wrong? Do you know that science cannot lead you to that conclusion? How many of you believe that racism is objectively wrong and evil? I hope that’s an easy one. Do you realize that science cannot lead you to that conclusion? How many of you believe that murder is wrong? Again, science cannot lead you to that conclusion. We know that telling the truth is objectively better than telling a lie, that equality is objectively better than racism, and that loving our neighbor is objectively better than killing him. These are facts that undergird our entire existence. But science cannot explain them. In fact, under a Darwinian theory of survival of the fittest, many have found all the rationale they need to lie, discriminate, and kill. Never forget that it was an evolutionary worldview that gave rise to Nazi Germany and the extermination of Jews, Gypsies, the handicapped, and other people not a part of the “more advanced” Aryan race.

This is part of what is called the moral argument for God. We believe that there are certain things that objectively, intrinsically, without doubt or question, are right and wrong. It is wrong for me to lie to you, it is wrong for me to punch you in the face, it is wrong for me to take your possessions, it is wrong for me to treat you worse based on the color of your skin. But why do we believe that? Why do we know that to be true? Not because there was an accidental explosion 14 billion years ago and we got here through the process of impersonal, unguided survival of the fittest, by the strong killing the weak, but because there is a moral law giver, there is a God who is himself loving, truthful, and just. Where science itself cannot explain those metaphysical realities, the existence of God does.

And it’s not just the existence of morality that science cannot explain, it’s also the existence of miracles. Now I know when I say that, some of you, especially the skeptics in the room, are

tempted to say: “Come on man! How in the world are you going to bring miracles into a conversation about science?!” But give me a second and hear me out on this, because this is an area where I think that data, the raw evidence itself, is actually and surprisingly very compelling. Now we can define a miracle as an intervention in the physical world that is without a viable physical explanation. It is probably not a miracle when you pray for that parking spot at the front of Target to open up...and then magically, after your 12th pass, there it is! A miracle, by definition, is something that happens in our physical world that defies any legitimate physical explanation. And though many skeptics are hesitant to believe in miracles, Craig Keener, a world class scholar, devoted years of his life to studying this phenomenon. He wrote this two volume book, and in it he makes this observation:

In his book, through unbelievably meticulous research, he shows that roughly  $\frac{1}{3}$  of all Christians alive claim to have personally witnessed a miracle. That equals out to be 700,000,000 people. Now, he says, let’s just go ahead and assume that some of these people are wrong. How many of their testimonies should we discount because they were biased or didn’t look at all the evidence? 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, 99%, 99.9%, 99.99%? Let’s do that. Let’s assume that of the 700,000,000 people who claim to have witnessed a miracle, only 1 out of every 10,000 was right. There would still be *70,000 miracles*. The data, the raw evidence, even from an unbelievably skeptical, 1 in 10,000 approach, inclines us to believe that on a regular basis, the laws of nature are broken, that physical forces that govern our universe are arrested, God breaks through and alters the normal ordering of affairs in order to show his mercy and grace. A good scientist, looking at the data, can't deny that it happens. But neither can a good scientist explain it. Because *science itself is not enough*.

Science can help us understand a lot of things, but science itself is not enough. There are too many world class scientists who believe, there are too many things about the physical world that science cannot explain, and there are too many things about the metaphysical world that science cannot explain. Science makes a wonderful field of study. But it makes a pretty bad god. The Scriptures would tell us to use every tool science can give us to better understand our world, because the more we come to understand about the world we live in, the more we will come to understand the majesty, the power, and the glory of the God who created it, who created us, and who gave us the ability to appreciate it.