

CSF Weekly Gathering - September 9



*We're glad you're here! CSF's weekly gathering is intended to be a space where students can meet together, discuss scripture, pray and build relationships. Our vision is to **Make Disciples of Jesus on Campus**. We are a Christian organization, but wherever you are on your spiritual journey - lifelong Christian, uncertain believer, part of another faith, or unsure God even exists - you are welcome to here. We seek to interact, and even disagree, with kindness and respect.*

Stay Up To Date:

Website – <https://www.csfpa.com/psu-berks>

Instagram @csfberks

Twitter - @csfberks

Discord -<https://discord.gg/kzrXe3ajQY>

Upcoming Events:

Concession Stand Fundraiser - Saturday, September 11 at PSU football game
SIGN UP!

Fall Retreat - October 8-10

This retreat is going to be AMAZING!

Register and pay (\$75) online: www.csfpa.com/fallretreat

Bible Reading Plan - From Acts to New Creation

Join us for our Fall Reading Plan on YouVersion -

<https://bible.com/p/45303139/c9a96cec15a932ba9c5b7c05a2240ba5>

Leadership:

President – Emily Clapper (ezc80)

Secretary – Ayomide Ogunleye (afo5187)

Pastor - Dave Hershey (dave@csfpa.com)

Vice President – Danny Frederick (dpf5238)

Treasurer – Nathan Bonslaver (njb5515)

Advisor - Sgt. Mark Groff (mdg116)

What is God Like? God Is.

What is God like? How we answer this foundational question will impact every single area of our lives. *What is the purpose of life? How do I make things right when I make mistakes? What should I do with my money? What career should I pursue?* We all have some assumptions about what life is about, whether we believe in God or not. These assumptions, if we think of them, are connected to our understanding of what is Ultimate Reality. “God” is simply the word we use for this ultimate reality. It begs the question - who or what is God? How do Jesus and the Holy Spirit relate to God? Is God far off or near? What does God desire of me? This semester we are going to investigate these questions.

Ice Breaker Discussion - Once upon a time, my four-year-old daughter asked me, “Who made God?” Her question is one that I imagine every parent who takes their kids to church (or mosque or synagogue) has had to answer. Despite knowing it was coming, I stumbled over offering a halfway decent answer a four-year-old could understand.

How would you answer my daughter's question? How might your answer be different if you were speaking to a fellow college student as opposed to a child? A Christian as opposed to a skeptic?

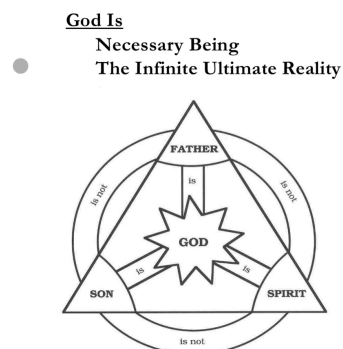
Bible Study:

Read Exodus 3:1-4:17 and ask, “what does this tell us about God?”

A Brief Reflection

Theologian David Bentley Hart echoes much traditional, classical thinking on the identify of God when he writes:

"(God) is instead the infinite to which nothing can add and from which nothing can subtract and he himself is not some object in addition to other objects. He is the source and fullness of all being, the actuality in which all finite things live, move, and have their being, or in which all things hold together; and he is also the reality that is present in all things as the very act of their existence. God, in short, is not a being but is at once 'beyond being' (in the sense that he transcends the totality of existing things) and also absolute 'Being itself' (in the sense that he is the source and ground of all things.)"



All beings in the entire universe

Contingent Beings

Humans, dogs, cats, trees, eggs,
bacon, aliens, planets, amoebas,
piranhas, sharks, coffee, avocados,
bacteria, footballs, tennis rackets,
swimming pools, continents, oceans,
presidents, nuclear engineers, teachers,
doctors, parallel universes, distant
galaxies, black holes, the quantum
realm, etc.

Regardless of a person's religious beliefs, all people must answer the question of what started it all/is the necessary foundation of all. Ultimately, we can boil the options for what always existed down to two:

1. Natural Option - The physical universe (multiverse) itself has always existed. Nature is the ultimate. This is the view of physicalists, materialists and naturalists.
 - We tend to associate this idea with atheists but technically atheists do not have to be naturalists
2. Supernatural Option - A being beyond the physical universe (something super-nature) has always existed. This is the view of the great world religions: Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam. Even ancient religions with belief in many gods often had a belief in one high God above and beyond all the rest.

Whichever option we choose is a choice of faith. To name the thing that has always exists, or to declare the universe popped out of nothing, is to go beyond evidence and the realm of science (observable nature). When we speak of God, we are speaking of the ultimate reality that holds everything else together and not using natural/scientific/physical categories. *To name the ultimate reality as God, nature or something else is to make a step of faith and such a step of faith is unavoidable.*

A Brief Tangent - On Faith and Science

Every year questions are asked about how a Christian is to reconcile science with faith and can Christians believe in the theory of evolution. Just a few brief points:

1. Science is amazing! Christians can and should study science with an excitement, curiosity and vigor to better understand God's creation.
2. Science is not everything. There are plenty of areas that science is not equipped to deal with (meaning, purpose, ethics, other minds, etc.).
3. Christians can (and plenty do) accept the theory of evolution through natural selection. Evolution is about how physical matter came to be what we see today (evolved) and not where the matter came from in the first place. So there is no contradiction in believing in both God and evolution. That said, evolution (and much modern science in general) may/will impact how certain passages of scripture are interpreted. Its worth saying the Bible was never meant to be a modern scientific textbook and that's just not what its about (any more than I'd build a grocery list off of reading Game of Thrones or use LOTR to as a manual to fix my car).

God has always existed (God did not begin to exist) and is the source from which all other things which exist spring into being. Christians sharpen this by saying God has always existed as a self-giving relationship of love between Father, Son and Spirit.

Read Acts 17:28 and John 1:4 and John 8:48-59. What do these teach us about God?

Christians confess that God exists forever as Father, Son and Spirit - Jesus is the I AM that spoke to Moses (and the Holy Spirit is the same spirit hovering over the waters in Genesis 1). We will get into all of this in the future...

Key Points:

1. God is not a being among other beings. God simply is. God is Being. God is necessary, God always existed. God was not made.
2. Naturalists still must place something in this foundational spot - what is necessary. Choosing nature rather than super nature is not based on evidence but on a sort of faith (what evidence could prove ONLY nature exists, after all?).
3. God simply Is. God is beyond description, though we try, using words like transcendent and immanent. God is most fully revealed to us in Jesus who is fully God and our clearest picture of what God is like.