

the evidence of witnesses of the resurrection, so to be consistent you probably need to be Catholic.

*Revelation.* A direct message from God may compel you to believe. Do you recognize that your revelation can never be compelling evidence to anyone but you? What if someone else receives a message from God that contradicts yours?

*Science.* If you think that God exists because there is scientific evidence that He exists (irreducible complexity, universal fine tuning, etc.), then you are choosing science over blind faith, which is a good thing. You are also admitting that, though you believe in God now, you will change your mind if the scientific proof for God's existence is found to be lacking.

*Need.* A person under great stress may need something to hold on to for the purpose of keeping sanity and getting through the day. Although an atheist would not recommend turning to an unproven deity for comfort, it's hard to blame someone who would feel hopeless without their belief.

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an assumption about how the universe works, you have to acknowledge that it's reasonable for an atheist to not believe in God because supernatural beings do not make sense to the atheist.

*I have a feeling.* You may believe in God because you have a deep-seated feeling of His presence or some part of you "just knows" that God is out there. Using your feelings as evidence when there is no other way to make a decision may be justified, so long as you grant others the right to do the same thing. If someone has a deep-seated feeling that pagan gods exist, that the Earth has feelings, or that there are no gods, you can't say that they are wrong for acting as if those feelings represent the truth if you believe in God for a similar reason.

*There is religious evidence.* Some people find scriptural accounts of miracles compelling evidence that God exists. You might argue that hundreds of people saw the risen Jesus, and this is compelling proof that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead. If you rely on this kind of proof, you must do so consistently. For example, thousands of people witnessed the miracle of Our Lady of Fatima in 1917. That is at least as compelling as



# ARE THERE GOOD REASONS TO BELIEVE IN GOD?

A Question of Moral Atheism

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FROM AN ATHEIST perspective, is it possible for a theist to have a good reason to believe in God? Or are all justifications for such belief either irrational or just plain silly?

The moral atheist is dedicated to clear thinking more than to disbelief in deities. For this reason, a moral atheist might recognize that someone who has certain opinions about how the universe works or how philosophical problems should be solved could reasonably conclude that a deity exists. A moral atheist has no problem with this, so long as the theist's position passes the two-question test (it doesn't contradict itself, and it doesn't use reasoning the theist wouldn't want others to use).

Given this, there are several reasons a theist might justify belief:

*It just makes sense.* Perhaps the existence of God seems obviously true to you — like it's the default position for explaining nature. So long as you make sure that your convictions don't contradict observed reality, this isn't a problem. But because your opinion is based on

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# QUESTIONS OF MORAL ATHEISM: INSTRUCTIONS

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We appreciate your interest in helping us spread information about moral atheism! To make copies of this pamphlet for your own use or to share with friends, follow these simple steps:

1. Print pages one and two of this document, one on each side of the same piece of paper (if you don't have access to a duplex printer, print page one, put the page back in the paper tray upside down, and print page two — depending on the type of printer, you may have to experiment a bit).
2. Cut the printout in two, using the thin rules across the middle of the page as a guide.
3. Fold the two pieces of paper in half, making a pair of small pamphlets.
4. Keep one of the pamphlets to read, and give the other away to an interested friend or stranger.

That's it! If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments, we invite you to share them by leaving a comment on [blog.iamanatheist.org](http://blog.iamanatheist.org). Thanks!

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