

Answering the Tough Questions

#4 “What are some proofs that God exists and that there is life after death?”

John 11:25 – Dr. Matt Cassidy – 5/2/2010

It has been a busy few weeks here at Grace Covenant Church. On Resurrection Sunday, a number of people submitted questions that they had for us to discuss during our teaching time.

The first week of this series, we looked at the reliability of Bible which is foundational and why we started there. We saw in a sentence that the Bible stands separate and independent of other pieces of literature, not just in its reliability in the textual criticism of that book but also in the claims that it has about the nature of God and even the existence of Jesus the Christ and what He said and did. [4-11-2010 #1 “What Is the Greatest Source of Spiritual Truth?”]

Then we looked at a perplexing issue about the power of God and the freedom of man and how those two things can overlap and both be practiced. We looked at the fact that God does have sovereignty (a word which means He has a plan and He has the power to commit that plan into action) but yet He works in such a way as to honor and exalt human freedom as we are made in the image of God, that we have these expressions of freedom. He is still able to work His plan out in our lives because of His vast knowledge, He is able to anticipate our every action, our incidental ones but also our eternal decisions that we make, and He plays off those things. [4-18-2010 #2 “The Director’s Cut”]

Last week, I delegated the easy sermon to Matt Henke – the problem of evil and suffering. That was a good week to be out. Matt did a masterful job of working with the mystery and we have to live by faith in this area, of how an all-knowing, all-powerful God and who is by definition all-loving, is able to permit the things that take place in our lives and also in the lives of people around us, innocence being violated and untold violence against our fellow human beings and against the planet. We have to live in the tension of God’s allowing free will to exist in the context of His strength and love. [4-25-2010 #3 How Could God Allow Suffering & Evil?]

Introduction to Today’s Topic

Today what I would like to do is not be too cerebral on this but I want to survey some of the answers to this question. But I combined two questions because they actually have a lot of overlap, if you think about it, and certainly at the end of today’s teaching time you will see that. The questions we will look at today are: *Are there proofs that God in fact exists? Is there proof that there is life after death?*

I want you to understand that when we look at today’s difficulty of the proof of God’s existence, I am going to survey rather quickly some more traditional answers to that question. Then I will look at a

couple of answers that are relatively new to the scene which are actually being used in contemporary expressions of debate at an academic, post-doctorate level debate on the existence of God. I want you to know about these because you can use them in your conversations just around your neighborhood or they might be perplexing to you as well. They might be good answers to the questions you might have.

When we look at the question of – *Does God exist?* , we have to know who is asking the question in the first place. With that I put quite definitely in the bulletin the description of what it means to be a “naturalist” or sometimes called a materialist. I put that definition in your bulletin so that you understand the world view or the value system that is included in the belief system called Naturalism. I will just read that but I want you to underline some words that are more dominating to the definition.

Naturalism: Naturalistic convictions often included the supreme reality of matter, the belief that nature could potentially explain all phenomena, and faith in the empirical, scientific method as the chief means of discovering facts. Such beliefs continue to exercise control on many areas of study.

.... And in our lives today as citizens of the western civilization, post-Enlightenment period of time. *Naturalism*, in other words, is the belief that all that there is, is what is in nature. Sometimes it is called *materialism* because it is referring to all that exists is matter. So one of the prophets of materialism or naturalism is from the television show “Cosmos”. It goes like this. Matter always existed and exists today and always will exist. Matter is in fact eternal. That is Carl Sagan’s worldview. In that context of that worldview or value system, it poses that the scientific method of investigating, using the senses and certainly heightened by microscopes and telescopes and that sort of thing, is the absolute means of knowing truth.

We will look at that as a value system or worldview, and particularly these days Richard Dawkins is a prophet of that value system. He is not a particularly good spokesman for naturalists because he is inflammatory in some of his language. But nonetheless, his books, *The God Delusion* and *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design* are bestselling books that you need to know about, talking about atheistic evolution explains all that does exist.

Today we will look at extra-biblical things that are outside the Bible which can help us get some sort of confidence that God does exist, something outside the material world exists, and that there is life after death.

Since the audience is a person of scientific method or just in nature, it is important for us not to appeal to a Bible verse. In Psalms, for example, it read that *God exists. He made us. We did not make Him.* We have use to these other sources. That is what I would like to do today rather quickly.

In that, I want you to see that there are five areas but I will only look at four – two briefly and two with more detail. They are expressions of the limits of Naturalism. There are problems with Naturalism as a belief system. The problems certainly exemplify themselves, most notably: in the Origin of Life, in Theistic Argumentation, in what is called Philosophy of the Mind, and in Specific Answers to Prayer, which we will look at today.

Origin of Life

I am going to survey this quickly. What has happened in the Origin of Life Debate, when it comes to atheistic evolution, is that we have had a couple of new players in the game in the last twenty years, but especially in the last ten years. The new players have a greater appreciation for philosophical thought, which I will explain in a few minutes. But you have to understand that you have to think rightly about things. Philosophy means the study or the love of knowledge. Philosophy is now finding itself back in science because science does have limitations to its understandings of definitions of terms, for example.

The more interesting thing is that math people left the college of mathematics to join people in biology and science and astrophysics because the discipline of statistical probability has turned this whole discussion on its ear. Once the guys and gals started looking at the probability issues of life's origin, starting out of non-life and then life happening, the statistical probability in each of the disciplines is staggering, overwhelming, and even impossible, beyond improbable but impossible.

The debate of Survival of the Fittest has become the *arrival of the fittest*. How do you get life from non-life? If Carl Sagan believes that matter always existed, how did that matter become living matter? There is something that is required that we call spontaneous generation; that something had to come in and add to it because statistically the improbability of things that needed to happen for life to come about for its first time is staggering. Again, these are naturalistic physicists.

For example, a physicist named Guye said that the probability of a single protein coming to an existence is 2.02×10^{231} . Those of who are distant from math or can't remember what that means, 231 is how many zeroes there are which follow the number 10. That is a big number, bigger than our deficit, even that. Oh, I get it now.

Salisbury, talking about a single new enzyme, suggested a probability of 10^{415} for mutations accounting for a new enzyme.

A Yale biophysicist, Morowitz, calculated a probability of 1 chance in $10^{339,999,866}$ for the chance formation of the correct bond energies for a minimal cell. That is a lot of zeroes. Someone pointed out to me that is almost half a google, where we get the term for Googling. I want you to see that someone actually put a calculator to this. If you look at the last three numbers, it is to the 866 power. So it was not just some number created out of the air.

In a word, the odds are staggering. For a person to have hope in this improbability, they have to borrow a word from our experience which is *faith*. Faith is now a word that is being discussed in the scientific community because it is required, because faith by definition is the assurance of things hoped for. It is the conviction of things not seen. So, it is unimaginable that these things could happen. So one must put faith in the fact that they did. That is okay because we all have to live by faith. I am glad that the naturalists in the scientific community who think it is a closed system are now being introduced to the idea that they too are having to put faith in that.

In my own personal experience, living by faith, I don't have enough faith to believe that life could come from non-life unassisted.

We all live by faith. It is a matter of how much faith is required and how much we can live with at night. In my world, I think there is an outside intelligent being causing life and causing it to be in pretty good order.

Theistic Argumentation

That leads me to the second set of proofs which I won't go through in detail. These are thousands of years old but I am bringing them up to you because in the last twenty years especially, they have been updated. Even though they are philosophical in nature, some things in the science world, especially in astronomy, have allowed us to improve upon the cosmological argument, the Argument from Causation. There is also an Argument from Design which is being fine-tuned in light of the complexity of things we can find in more high-powered microscopes. Still to this day, the ontological argument or the Argument from Origin has yet to be refuted.

I am not going into these things because they tend to glaze people over and it is hard enough for you to stay awake. So I put these up on the power point here for you to investigate on your own. Again, they have become very popular in the last few years because of the writings of Alvin Plantinga at Notre Dame, William Craig and J. P. Moreland. These men are traveling the globe, debating post-doctorate

professors on these issues of the existence of God and life after death. They are kind of taking no prisoners when it comes to this area. But most importantly, they are bringing these other disciplines of thinking into the context of the scientific community that believes that science is the answer to all things.

Philosophy of the Mind

The next thing I want to talk about, and I will spend more time on this is the idea of the Philosophy of the Mind. I am using those words carefully. The word *mind* is in reference to something that transcends the brain. The brain is the thing in our skull and a naturalist or materialist believes that all that you are, all that a human being is, your experiences and your life and beliefs are contained from the neck up. It is an expression of chemistry and electricity. That is who you are.

The Philosophy of the Mind is an argument that suggests there is more to you than that.

If you listen to the radio, even today on the way home, a person with a materialistic view of humanity is the most popular radio show when it comes to medicine today. His name is Dr. Dean Edell. Years ago, you would call the Dean Edell Show and you would ask him medical questions like “I am having kidney stones. What do you think I should do with my parathyroid?” Over the years, he has evolved into a medical ethicist. The reason I am bringing this up to you is that if you listen to him, you will see that his materialistic value system – *man is only matter* – and – your body is to feed your brain – you see in the issues of reproductive ethics, of beginning of life issues, of sexual ethics, and end of life issues, he will give us ethical advice as though we were nothing more than a plant. To him that is all we are, a very sophisticated and complicated living thing that doesn’t have anything more to it than the physical. When you listen to him, I want you to know, there are a lot of people who believe we are only matter. It is only brain.

The Philosophy of the Mind argument has come up because of the works of a person who you have probably heard of. You know her works and that is for sure. Her name is Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross who wrote a book a number of years ago because she is a medical professional who worked at a university. She studied people dying. She wrote a book, *On Death and Dying*, in which she introduced us to the definitions of the five stages of grief. That was her work. When we talk about the five stages of grief, and most of you could probably name three out of those five out of your memory, that is Elisabeth Kubler-Ross’ work.

Her fascination with death continued. While she worked with people who died and the people grieving over their loved ones, she also started looking at the death of children. Her next book was *On*

Children and Dying. She started to see something that was fascinating because the value that we are only brain was being violated. Children who died clinical deaths, (a flat line in their EKG), their heart had stopped, and sometimes their brain had stopped (a flat line EEG), these children who had died came back to life and they told stories of things that their brain could not have experienced.

If we are only a brain, then we are limited to our experience of our senses, what we can see, taste, touch, hear and feel. This is also very important. We are also limited by the location of that brain. What Kubler-Ross started to see is that these young children, who had died and their brains were no longer working and they came back after a period of time, were experiencing things sensually [they could see things and hear things] while their brain was not working.

What was especially mysterious was that they were experiencing relationships with people whom they had never met. In their experience of death, these young children were meeting pre-deceased grandparents that they had never seen pictures of and they knew no stories of them. When they came back to life, they were describing their grandparents in great detail, what they sounded like, what they looked like, even to the color of their eyes.

Other people who had near-death experiences were out-of-body experiences, not like they were watching people work on their physical body but rather they were in other places, seeing things while on the other part of town.

One eminent cardiologist, Schoonmaker, took this project on himself and did an 18-year study over 1400 near-death experiences. Fifty-five of those had flat EEG's (their brains were dead, at least as much as we can measure). Out of those fifty-five people who were brain dead, some of them were dead for 30 minutes and some were dead up to 3 hours. All of them had these out-of-body experiences that could not be defined by a worldview that believes we are only material. Their ears, eyes, sense of smell, all were not working and yet they had all those experiences.

This is so important that I want to share more of those stories with you. I put a chapter on our website [www.grace360.org / Grace Radio / 5/2/10] this week, from a book entitled *Immortality: The Other Side of Life* by Dr. Gary Habermas and Dr. J. P. Moreland, which lists a number of verifiable experiences using scientific method of people who had died, experienced things, and had come back to life. I want you to know that is available for you to use in talking to someone who might believe that we are only a brain in a body. More than that, I wanted you to experience for yourself.

Testimony of John Keynon

Now I want to introduce to you someone who has had multiple near-death experiences. He is the father of a friend of my son. His name is John Keynon. He came to Austin to tell us a little of his own experiences. John, come on up. He is also going to tell us about his relationship with God and that dying was a good thing for you.

John: In the first service, I told about how Matt was talking about all this death and then I got a little bit nervous. The interesting thing is that after I got done giving my testimony at the first service, it always happens. I walked down and someone was a paramedic and another was a nurse and they started telling me all these different stories. I am ready to go out to my car and start praying. It is amazing the fear that can be put on us. God says that He is not a spirit of fear. It is interesting how sometimes the enemy hits us in our mind. But I wanted to tell you that when I got done, I knew I had a fireman here who was telling me about hooking someone up and how he actually felt the guy's defibrillator shock him. What I have been through has been a lot of fear – but God has brought me out of that. It is amazing because I grew up in a family where my dad would only let us ride our bikes on the lawn but not on the street. That is how much fear we had in our household. If you fall over, you will fall over on the lawn. We grew up with a lot of fear. I really allowed that God has allowed me to go through what I have in order to understand that He can take that all away. He is capable of removing our fear and we can live a joy of peace, joy, and happiness.

Matt: Tell us about your story. Your dad was a workaholic and you were a workaholic. You worked yourself into death.

John: At 18 I started up my company out of my garage. Like my dad, I saw what he did and like so many of us do, we follow the lead of our fathers. So my dad was a workaholic and I did the same thing. It took me to a point where we had 3500 employees working for us at the time when we moved to San Diego.

Anyway, God really woke me up one day. I was walking around our property where I was building a house for my family. We were building the guest house first. It was at framing stage and I just happened to be out there with my daughter and there were some construction people actually doing the framing of the house. While we were out there, a gentleman who works for me happened to be driving by our street and was checking to see if I was there. He drove onto the property and got of his car and started

talking to me. He said – *I was driving by and I needed to talk to somebody about my marriage.* I said – Rowland, *I don't know if I can really help you with marriage. I haven't really got that one down yet. It think you need to go to God.* – I pointed up and said God.

I had given my heart to the Lord about a year previously but really I didn't understand what that all meant and what really took place when I did that. Anyway, we started talking about God and got to the front of the guest house and I said to him – *I would give all this up to know that my dad was going to heaven.* I don't know why I said that. But he told me that I had my arms up and he explained to me later what had happened. Right then, my heart goes boom. So I go down. He gets me to the truck. I get there and I call my wife and said – *Suzy, I think I am having a massive heart attack. I have left Taylor (our daughter) in the tree fort. You need to come get her. Rowland is taking me to the hospital.* – Right after that, my heart went again and I cannot tell you exactly when my heart completely stopped but it stopped on the way to the hospital. We figured probably 12 – 15 minutes. Anyway, the gentleman drove me there, carried me over his shoulder into the hospital. They shocked me 12 times to get me back.

Matt: Twelve times, by the way. The standard number of times of shocking someone is three. Four on a bad day.

John: Yep, those guys kept going, thank the Lord. Right at this time that this is all taking place, it just happened to be my dad's birthday. My dad was eating lunch in Phoenix. I am in San Diego and he is in Phoenix eating lunch with my mom. He starts weeping at the table. He could not quit crying and my mom says – Jack, what is the problem? He said – I can't tell you but I can't quit crying. They had to leave the restaurant because he was just weeping. They went home and see the message machine. My wife had called them. They all came out to San Diego and they were in the waiting room. My dad told his experience of how he started crying right at the time that I would have died there. While he was telling this, all of a sudden my sister looked at him and said – *Dad, Bethie [a Jewish believer friend of ours] had a dream two weeks ago that John died and then she heard a voice say 'Don't worry. He will be fine.'*

Well, the first time I really hear from God is about the third time this happened. I only died twice but I went into seven different times of my heart racing and having to be defibulated out of that position. About the third time, I wake up in intensive care and I hear God say to me, “You must believe.”

There are only two times I actually heard God's voice. It was that morning at 6:30 and then the second time was when He spoke to me and said, “Against all odds.” It is interesting – just three words, two different times.

Matt: The “against all odds,” how did that play out?

John: “Against all odds” – eventually it came after a year’s period of time, after this happening so many different times, and I had seen different experts and specialists. They came to me and said – *We want you to bring your family together and we want to explain what we are going to do. We have come to the conclusion that we cannot fix your heart. We don’t know what is going on with your heart. We are going to take it out and give you a heart transplant.*

Here my whole family was. They came in to give me my pager and they were going to page me when my heart came in. I looked at the doctor and we were talking. He said, “This is against all odds if you don’t do this.” I knew that God had spoken against all odds and I knew I had to get up and walk out of there. Believe me, just like anybody, I was scared but I just knew what God had been showing me during this one-year period of time. He had spoken to me and I had dreams and revelations and things God showed me as proof He was going to heal me. I got up with my family and we left. It was not easy but God continually showed me that He was going to give me the faith to get through it. The Word of God says that Jesus says – I am the beginning and the end of your faith. That is what God gave me to get through his time of life and believe me, I needed Him, more than anything to get me through to understand I could get through without the heart transplant.

Matt: The point of this fabulous story in the context of what we are studying is that there is something beyond the physical.

It is like the Problem of Evil in our belief in the existence of a good God. The problem of evil is a problem. It is inserted – *How do you explain this?* So in the context of naturalism, you have these stories about people that if they are not just matter, how can you explain stories like this? A brain being dead, a heart stopped, and yet he can hear and have conversations and the conversations lead to things that prove to be prophetic in nature and have consequences.

One of the other times that – again if your heart stopped and doesn’t work and yet you were talking. Tell that story about your friend and how that is even an answer to prayer. Answer to prayer is our next point and I will talk about that in a minute but there is overlap with this one.

John: During this time, we had just moved from Arizona to San Diego. I had to move my family all over the place, opening up businesses. We had just moved to San Diego when this all happened. It was about three weeks into it when my heart went. So we really did not know anybody in San Diego.

Here we had brought our nanny with us from Phoenix. Our nanny was missing her boyfriend and was going to leave us. With all the turmoil going on at our household at this time, she probably wanted out. You have to understand that I was in a closet praying for almost four years, six to eight hours every day. I can't explain that all to you but that is where God had me. At this time, three months into this thing, I was upstairs praying. My wife knocks on the door, comes in and says, "John, Amy is going to leave us. She misses her boyfriend. You need to start praying that she finds somebody here."

Matt: Keep that nanny.

John: That is what I did. I started praying and believing Amy was going to meet somebody. That week, my heart started racing and the paramedics had to come in there. Sure enough, they hooked me up to all their EKG and their devices and they could not find a heart beat. They are doing it even with their hands, trying to find it. I was basically flat lined, sitting up, talking to this paramedic. The paramedic looked at me and said, "I have never shocked anybody with their eyes open before. Could you close your eyes?" Here I am. I closed my eyes and he shocks me -- and believe me, I don't know if you ... you don't want to go through that. It is incredible. Through it all, my nanny Amy married the paramedic and they have three kids.

Matt: He comes to Christ and he works for Young Life.

John: I was telling this story earlier this morning. We will have friends over talking. You have to understand that every day I give my testimony. I know that everyone of you out there has a testimony. What God showed me through it was that the more we tell it, the more He will give us to tell. I don't want you all to have to die and get shocked, but I am telling you guys that whether God gives you small or big, there is an anointing on that testimony and we need to tell it. I love telling it because I know He is real and I love Him. But I am just saying that I am just ministering to you guys – Tell your story.

Matt: The near-death experience, especially those who have been documented scientifically, is problematic for the naturalistic worldview – so much so that in the magazine *The Humanist*, writer Beloff

writes this. The evidence points to a “dualistic world where mind or spirit has an existence separate from the world of material things.” He chose those words, *mind or spirit*. There is something outside of material world. He admitted that this could “present a challenge to Humanism as profound in its own way as that which Darwinian Evolution did to Christianity a century ago.”

The issue of these near-death experiences cannot be explained in the context of a worldview that says there is nothing more to us than our material beings, our natural beings, just our flesh.

Specific Answers to Prayers

There is another answer to the problem of the existence of God, whether God exists or not. We are just talking sheer probability, statistically, impossible odds of answers to prayer. When we pray a prayer that cannot be answered, probability wise, outside of an external force invading our universe and making these things happen, it proves that God exists.

I want you to use your regular experiences with God and your prayer life as a defense for God’s existence. Hopefully, you live a life and pray prayers that can only be explained or realized if God intervenes.

While John is here in town, I want him to tell a couple of his fun stories because they have consequences for 1000’s of people’s lives.

John, would you start with your story about how you were an answer to someone else’s prayer from Uganda.

John: Can I go into one thing first and then I will go right into that. We were talking about who we are spiritually. I told the story earlier this morning about me watching this movie about God putting the stars into place, the universe, the earth, He created the trees, He created me. After hearing all this stuff, I started thinking – Man, I’m just a pimple. Who am I? But I said, ‘God, you have been so intimate with me through this whole thing.’ The next morning I was in the shower and while I was showering, I was praying. I heard God say to me, ‘John, go get a tape measure and measure your spirit.’ It was a huge revelation of who I am because we get up every morning and look at ourselves in the flesh and we want to go do something with that. God is saying, ‘No, look at yourself spiritually. Who are you spiritually. The Word of God says that if we feed on the Word, we feed on prayer, that anointing will come and we can move in the Spirit.

Matt: How does answering specific prayer that only God can answer. If He were orchestrating lives and history, how did He work himself out in your life? How were you an answer to someone else's prayer?

John: My brother, Richard, here, his father and I met about five or six years ago. It was at a time when I could hardly leave the houses. Richard's father's story is that in 1986, the Lord spoke to him in Uganda. He was a teacher, struggling with alcohol at that time. God told him to start an orphanage. So he brings in 24 kids to live with Richard and his sister in their house and started this orphanage right in this home.

A pastor in Phoenix came to Uganda, met Stephen and invites him back to Phoenix, Arizona, where Stephen comes. During the night, while he is staying at this deacon's house of the church, the deacon has a dream two nights in a row. I don't know exactly what that dream was but it ends up that the deacon takes Stephen to my corporate office in Phoenix, meets my salesman who drives him out to San Diego to meet us. My wife and I hear Stephen's story about how God had put this on his heart to start this orphanage. So my wife and I give him the funds to buy the property that he had showed us the plot of. As he is leaving, he says to me, "John, I have to know what kind of car you drive." I said, "Why, Stephen, why do you need to know what kind of car I drive?" He says, "Because in 1986, I had a dream that a guy in a white Toyota Land Cruiser handed me the keys to his car."

Matt: I am guessing you were driving a white Toyota Land Cruiser.

John: So after that, he came back and we gave him more funds to build the school. He came back and he wanted to show us the buildings. This father is precious, an incredible man. He came over and showed us pictures. We were driving around town and he is showing me these pictures of what they had built, the school and everything. It was incredible construction. He says, "John, we have to come up with a way that we can get our adults to help provide for the kids that we have." We started praying and we were driving around. All of a sudden, he sees a Starbucks and asked, "John, what is that?" He saw the line out the door. I said "It is coffee." He said, "We can grow coffee." I said, "Let's pray." We prayed and came up with the name "Above All Coffee". We prayed and came up with the idea of putting pictures of the kids on the cups. I looked at Stephen and said, "Stephen, do you know how to grow coffee?" He starts laughing and goes, "No, I've never grown coffee." So, I called our rehabilitation center that I work at in San Diego and said, "Boys, we have got to start praying and find somebody who knows how to grow coffee." I am telling you, that week a man named Andy came into the rehab to get off alcohol, who had been growing coffee in Hawaii for the last eight years. We didn't jump him right away. We let him come to the Lord.

Then we jumped him. No. We got him excited about what he was doing. He prayed and got on the computer and found out that the soils and temperature were the same in Hawaii and this place in Uganda. He ended up going there. We purchased a piece of property by Lake Victoria. He goes there to help set it all up. He comes back. Robert and I were excited to hear about what happened over there in Uganda. He could not speak until the following day. Serious. He could not tell us because he was so full of the Holy Spirit. This man is clean today of alcohol. He has been through ups and downs but just an incredible man.

Matt: He is an answer to prayer, very specific prayer at a very specific time.

There is that one other story because we have just a little time for this one. Again, if the universe is closed and there is no outside help, then when we have thoughts in our heads, you have to wonder – how could they get there? So sometimes we have these thoughts and they have to be coming from an outside source. There is no other way to explain it.

One of John's stories is really fascinating about a time when he was having heart attacks very recently, which was supposed to be after he was healed. Tell your story about Jake.

John: Yeah, Jake, my son, the oldest, is 20. He goes to school in Towson, Maryland. The day before he was getting ready to leave at the end of summer to go back to school, I was out on my walk. I take about 1 hour and 45 minute walk every day. I was out walking and texting. As I am texting, I get hit by my defibulator. So I go down and the phone goes down. I am about three blocks from my house. I haven't been hit by this in years. So, naturally, I am depressed, anxious, and I crawl over to the lawn next to the street. I started putting my phone together. Walking down the street is a lady with a Labrador and she sees me. She says, "Is everything okay?" I said, "Well, everything is okay but I got hit by my defibulator." She goes, "Well I am a cardiac nurse and I will come over and stand by you." – thank you, Lord. I get my phone together and called my son three times to come pick me up. He doesn't pick up. I called our LaCrosse coach who also lives in our guest house and he picks up. I said, "Danny, here is my address where I am at. I am laying on the lawn. I got hit by my defibulator. Don't tell anybody at the house. Just come get me." So he comes over and gets me. We drive home and as we were coming down the driveway to my house, I see my son Jake come out of the garage. He goes, "Dad, are you all right?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "I saw that you called me three times. I felt that something was going to happen today." I said, "You know, I am all right, I'm just depressed. I have been telling everybody that God is going to heal me and here I got shocked by my defibulator again." So we go into the house and I go into the kitchen. I am in there about 10 – 15 minutes and I come out. I look down the hallway and my son is coming out of the

guest bedroom. I kid you not, there was like a glow on him. I said, “Jake, what is going on?” He said, “Dad, I went in there to pray for you and I dropped to my knees. The Holy Spirit hit me and the hair was standing up on the back of my head. I heard God speak to me and say, “Your dad’s heart is not racing. It is a malfunction of the defibrillator.” So we went into the kitchen and we ate. Afterwards, I go up to take a shower. While I am up there taking a shower, I get hit by it again. So he hears me yell. With shampoo and soap all over me, I am lying on the floor. He goes in and goes, “Dad, you have got to believe me. I heard from God that your heart is not racing. We are going to get you dressed and we are going to get you ready and we are going to the hospital.” Anyway, here is my son taking care of his dad. He got me all dressed and we go to the hospital and sure enough my doctor just happened to be on staff. The doctor put the wand on my chest and he could see everything that is going on with my heart and what has gone on in the past. My son is sitting in the corner, looking at me like – dad, I have already told you. Sure enough, the doctor looks at me and says, “John, your heart never raced. It is just a malfunction of your defibrillator.”

What is so awesome about the story that God has given me is God talks about generations being changed. My father came to the Lord through this. I have come to know Christ intimately. My son is on his way. Praise God.

Matt: God exists! Thank you, friend.

I wanted John to come and tell his story of his near-death experiences that he has had and his specific answers to prayer, to help you see that honestly men of great intelligence in formal debates on the existence of God are using these two types of experiences to prove there is something outside of the physical world around us.

Your Life Application

But today one of the reasons I wanted to bring you the details we went into today with John’s life is to challenge you to live such a life. God does exist. There is life after death. We should live our lives like that is true.

In our conversations this week with John and Richard and some of the friends he has as we shared around the dinner table, Melinda and I were pretty much humiliated by the whole experience. We realized that they are living a life that is different than ours. They are reading the Bible and believing every word of it is true and counting on it. They pray in such a way that requires God to answer the prayers or they are stuck waiting, looking kind of silly.

Guys, we need to live that way. We need to abandon any hope of having a great reputation or being embarrassed by our friends or family or co-workers. We need to be willing to do whatever we need to do. We need to be willing to say what God has to say. We need to be absolutely drunk on the Word of God so that we know His voice when He speaks to us. We need to do what we have to do to obey His Word and come to His calling. If we live that kind of life, we can have proofs for God's existence in our own lives, stories that can only be explained by God's supernatural power and intervention in our lives.

I would like us to pray that kind of prayer today. I would like Richard to pray that prayer for us. Richard is the son of the pastor in Uganda at the orphanage there. There are 800 kids there or about that. Richard is here studying at Columbia University. He wanted to come down and see John in Austin. After praying with him a couple of times, I decided I want him to pray for this church. Would you pray for us? Then we will have the offertory after that.

Richard:

Our Father God,

We want to thank You because You are such a mighty God. You are so awesome. You are so holy and there is none beside You. Lord, we appreciate You so much for brother, John, O God, and for everything You have been through his life. Lord, you overcame him by the blood, by the word of your testimony, and by the blood of the Lamb.

Father, in Jesus' name and by virtue of His testimony, I even pray for this entire congregation in Jesus' name, King of Glory, that Lord, you cause each and every one here to overcome in every way in Jesus' name, O God. Yes, Master, King of Glory, that You bring healings to bodies in Jesus' name, O God, that You lift burdens in Jesus' name, King of Glory. Yes Lord, that You meet each and every one at their individual points of need in Jesus' name, King of Glory.

Father, we worship You and we exalt You. We know that we are so small before You. You are the one who says that all the nations are like a drop of water in a bucket, O God. Lord, without You, we can't do anything. So we pray that, Lord, You draw us closer and closer to your own self and You help us to abide in You, Jesus, even as You abide in us, King of Glory. That you help us to die to our own selves, O God, to die to flesh, my God, so that we shall be able to live according to your Spirit, in Jesus' name, O God. That we shall see You, O God, just as Isaiah was able to see You there and that King Uzziah (?) died, O God, that we see you highly exalted on the throne, O God, that You will be so real in our lives, O God, each other day, that we shall walk with you diligently to the glory and to the honor of your name that is above all names, in Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.