

GETTING INTO A SURGEON'S BRAIN. WHY I BELIEVE IN GOD?

Science. Medicine. Life and Death situations. Surgeons seem to live in a secret world, hidden in the operating room. Today we'll a surgeon to take off his mask and discuss some tough questions about life, the universe, and everything.

Dr. Page has practiced surgery for over 20 years, training at Baylor College of Medicine under pioneer heart surgeon, Michael E. DeBakey. He's an author, speaker, father of five kids and the founder of Spoonful of Courage, a Christian ministry aimed at inspiring people with hope and faith—in small doses. Speaking of life and the universe, Dr. Chuck has a book which presents an equation helping you understand how and why you approach life's challenges the way do. It's called *Spoonful of Courage: Equations to Find Grace in Life's Challenges*.

Q: Welcome. Dr. Chuck, you believe in God, tell us why?

A: Preface: *Joke*—how many surgeons does it take to screw in a light bulb? ONE. The surgeon puts the bulb in his hand, lifts it into the socket, and expects the whole world to revolve around him. So, divide what I say by two and take the square root of it.

But I don't think that joke applies only to surgeons. Our culture and its framework of thinking does the same thing. The modern worldview places *self* at the center of the universe. And then we expect the world (and reality) to revolve around us. The Christian faith doesn't begin with ourselves. It begins with God. And for most of us—that's a scary proposition. Because if we're not the center of the universe, if we're not the one calling the shots, if we're not the one determining right and wrong—then we need to make some adjustments.

Q: So, what's the danger of trusting in ourselves? Isn't that all we have?

A: Here's a question to ponder. *Can we really trust ourselves?* In our world today, it's impossible to sift through all the information available to us. History. Science. Psychology. Mathematics. We can't know everything. Our brains are finite. We can't experience every experience. We can travel the world and never see everything. And then there's wisdom—applying experience and knowledge into a specific circumstance and making the best choice.

Q: If trusting in ourselves isn't the answer, what do we do?

We have to believe in something outside of ourselves. There's has to be something external to ourselves. I believe this in one of the biggest reasons why someone should believe in God. When to listen to people you will recognize that everyone has a moral code. They refer to something beyond themselves when talking about issues.

One of the reasons we say should and ought, one of the reasons we point fingers at people is b/c we believe in a moral code—one which is universal. And we hold others to our absolute. We believe everyone is accountable to this external reference. THE VERY PRESENCE/EXISTENCE OF A UNIVERSAL/BELIEF THAT THERE ARE UNIVERSALS SHOULD TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT OURSELVES.

Q: How does your belief in God affect how you practice surgery?

A: It gives me hope, when I can't explain things. What puzzles me is the reality of surgery. Operating worn out, broken bodies is a humbling experience. It's puzzling when I do everything right and everything wrong happens. And the reverse is also true. Sometimes, things still have a positive outcome when I don't feel I've done my best. These perplexing situations remind me that there's a factor involved in healing which goes beyond my experience or training. It keeps me humble—when things go great and when I face unexpected outcomes.

Q: So, explain why everyone seems to have a different absolute? Just tune in to any talk show and you'll see people fighting over issues. Can both opinions be true?

A: It gets back to the self. When you begin with yourself to determine universals, you're walking on a slippery slope. Your rifle hasn't calibrated. All you have is arbitrary absolutes. A worldview starting with ourselves suggests that everyone is entitled to their own reality. And this gets us into a mess—especially when conflicting views surface. With this way of thinking, there's no way to determine right from wrong.

Think about how crazy it would be going to a baseball game without a referee?

Was the runner safe or was he out as he slid into home base? Well, if you ask the runner's mom, she'll say—he's safe. No question. But the catcher has a different opinion. Things can quickly become a mess... and a fight will ensue....And that's where we are today... everyone is pushing there own agenda/framework and saying that everyone's opinion is just as valid as the other.

This frame of things—brings chaos and confusion. Only an umpire, or a judge can bring order to the game. Every person on the planet knows there's an absolute—a reference outside of themselves. And this is only of the reasons I believe in a God.

THE BEST EXPLANATION FOR THE PRESENCE OF STRONG MORAL FEELINGS AND UNIVERSALS OUTSIDE OF OURSELVES HAS TO BE THAT WE'RE DESIGNED AS MORAL BEINGS.

Q: Other than a moral law what other evidence do you find for God?

A: Here's another question to ponder. If man is simply a composite of random chemical reactions which have no purpose or meaning, why are humans so preoccupied with meaning and purpose?

John Templeton said it this way:

“Would it not be strange if a universe without purpose accidentally created humans who are so obsessed with purpose?”

Wouldn't a better explanation for what we observe in ourselves and mankind—about our obsession with purpose—be that a God of purpose designed us to be purposeful?

Q: Tell us about how absolutes affect your practice of surgery?

Think about it. What if you came to my office with a mass in your colon and the biopsies showed cancer. How would you respond if I said, “Well it all depends on your point of view. If you choose not have cancer, then you don't have cancer.”

If you were wise, you would run out of my office and find another surgeon. You need answers. Absolutes, based on science. You would want to know the diagnosis, the treatment options, and the steps we need

to make you cancer free. Medicine and science is based upon universals. Doctors believe the body has a specific design—structure and function, that the body can be studied and understood.

Q: But Doctor, you're a scientist. Aren't you contradicting yourself?

A: I don't think so. Science is one method/tool to understand the body, life, and the universe. Believing that Science is *only* way we can understand reality is a stretch. That's moves into the realm of scientism. Believing that things are only true if they can be proven empirically, solely based on science has some real problems.

The very tools which we use in science—logic and math—can't be proven scientifically. You can't put human logic in a test tube and study it. We believe it's true—but we can't prove it. In order to study something scientifically you have to have a hypothesis (an idea about something), put it to the test, and use reason (logic) to verify that it works and fits reality.

Think about math. We can't prove math by an experiment—but it works. $2 + 2$ always equals 4. Math is more than a social construct.

The belief that we should only believe things which can be studied is a self-refuting statement. How do we prove love? But if you've ever been in love—it's hard to deny that it exists.

Q: There are many who say science and God are incompatible. How would you answer them?

A: It depends upon how someone orders their thinking. In medicine, we have a process. A method to the madness. We see a patient, listen to their complaints, examine their body, perform some tests, and then we consider all the possibilities. We call that a differential diagnosis. It's like putting the pieces of a puzzle together. We try to have an open mind about the cause of the problem. Using logic, induction, and deduction we decide which possibility is the most probable. And then we develop a plan of action based upon our conclusions. (can use appendicitis as an example).

The diagnosis can be a common presentation of a common disease, an uncommon presentation of common disease, a common presentation of an uncommon disease, or an uncommon manifestation of an uncommon malady. We ask ourselves what seems to be the simplest, most straightforward answer which explains what we see at the bedside.

Q: Can you give some specifics about what you mean?

I think it works the same with verifying the existence of God. We have to approach it with an open mind and set aside our intellectual bias. Take for example the cosmos. The movement from an ordered to a disordered universe, Hubble's findings in his telescope, and evidence that the cosmos is cooling down. This evidence suggests that the universe is expanding and that it had a beginning.

How do we explain these findings? What's the most probable explanation? Based on the evidence, I believe the most probable explanation is something came from someone. Trying to explain how something came from nothing, is like believing in the uncommon presentation of an uncommon disease. I think there are better explanations.

I was a biologist before I became a doctor. And the very existence of DNA cannot be explained by any other framework of thinking other than that of an intelligent designer. It's a complicated discussion. N

aturalists have failed to consider the most obvious explanation for DNA. It's a complicated discussion, but there are huge holes in the theories of design minus a Designer—when it comes to DNA.

Q. So, Dr. Chuck, how can people connect with you?

A: Check out spoonfulofcourage.com. There, we have lots of free resources to encourage you. You can sign up for updates by texting spoonful to 66866. We have devotions, videos, and interviews with experts. Check out our videos which discuss why thinking people believe in God or the 4 free videos which discuss the three levels of thinking in equation form.

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