

What Good is God? by Philip Yancey

Discussion Guide

1. The question “What good is God?” occurs to most people at some point in their life. Have you experienced this feeling and how did you reconcile this question with your own faith? (chapter 1)
2. What would be your talking points with someone who does not believe in the existence of God, or believes in God but not the need for the Church? (chapter 1)
3. The Virginia Tech shooting took place shortly before the school year ended. While everyone was still on campus, they had each other to process the event. After that, they would be processing their experience in their own communities. What is the role of the community in the healing process? (chapter 2)
4. Where or to whom have you gone in your times of grief and pain? (chapter 3)
5. Elie Wiesel said “Apart from God, what was there in a world darkened by Auschwitz?” The author writes, “The final chapter of the Christian story asks us to trust that the world will be redeemed. This is not the world God wants or is satisfied with.” Do you agree with Wiesel and the author? Why or why not? (chapter 3)
6. Is faith in God good or bad in society? The author uses his discussion of China in order to study this question. When you consider the effect that American Christian English teachers have had in China, and also the finding of a Chinese social scientist that the West’s power has stemmed from its Christian faith, are you drawn toward Christianity as a powerful agent of change and of good? How do you think that non-Christians would respond to these ideas? (chapter 4)
7. The author speaks to those who minister to professional sex workers: “You remind us of the mystery of each individual person, a message that modern society and also we in the church surely need.” In what ways might you agree that modern society and the Church need this reminder of the mystery of each person? (chapter 6)

8. C.S. Lewis has been rated the most influential Christian writer of our time. He found beauty in the ordinary. How common is that attitude in our culture today? Why do large numbers of people today seek to live beyond the ordinary? (chapter 8)
9. How does an institution, or even a family unit, keep from becoming so enculturated, so comfortable in its own identity, that it ceases to see areas of needed change or improvement? (chapter 10)
10. Nelson told Bill Clinton what he said to himself on leaving prison: "They have already had you for twenty-seven years. And if you keep hating them, they'll have you again. And I said, I want to be free. And so I let it go." How could a person let go of hate as Mandela did? How did his choice help set a course for the nation? (chapter 12)
11. Yancey discusses the Parent stage of the Christian life and says, "Jesus did not come and die so that we could live happy and self-indulgent lives to show the rest of the world our self-contentment. No, he came as an example for us to follow in his steps." How do we remain self-indulgent? How do we look beyond ourselves and care for the needs of others? (chapter 13)
12. Our world is witnessing the danger of radical religion. Many Muslims in the Middle East and Africa equate Christianity with the excesses of the Western world. We hear of the bravery of the Catholic community in Iraq. What are your thoughts about these problems? How would you respond to the beliefs of anyone practicing a more orthodox or radical religion? (chapter 16)
13. Why do you think we have a natural tendency to blame others for our behavior? How does a person admit his or her own powerlessness and reliance on God and yet accept the need to overcome and addiction or bad habit? (chapter 19)
14. What is the role of the Church and your faith in times of tragedy and crisis? The author was present during the Mumbai attack; in our own country, 9-11, fires, hurricanes, and tornadoes to name a few. What would be your questions for God as you experienced or witnessed the horror and uncertainty? (chapter 20)

