



Do You Really Believe in God? Really? **by Joe Sixpack**

Conscience is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, our conscience condemns us for all that we do that is sinful. On the other hand, it also condemns us for all the things we fail to do that we know we should have done. As I get closer to home (my way of saying I'm an old man), I'm becoming more and more aware of what it is to be guilty of having failed to do the things I knew I was supposed to do. I'm also becoming more and more aware of the horror of sin—mortal or venial. That said, and in light of the advancing moral decay of our culture and society, I feel obligated to talk to you like a Dutch uncle... or as one Sixpacker calls me, Uncle Joe.

The title of this piece asks a very serious question. I really want to know the answer. Obviously, I can't learn the answer from all of you, unless you log onto the Joe Sixpack website. So I'm asking you to be honest with yourselves as you read this to answer the question, "Do you believe in God?"

The first commandment says, "I, the Lord, am your God. You shall have no other gods besides me." I think the vast majority of us would say that we do indeed only worship the one true God in heaven, existing in His three Persons. But among all of us who would say that, strictly speaking it's not true... not true at all!

Do any of you sin? If the answer to that one is yes, then you do put other gods ahead of the Triune God of the universe. You are guilty of worshipping other gods.

We are all endowed by God with a free will and sufficient intellect to make the right choices. These attributes of the human soul are reflections of God, so this is why we can legitimately say we are created in His image and likeness. So when we choose to sin—and it doesn't matter how tiny that sin is—we choose that thing, thought, action or whatever to displace God at that particular moment. In other words, like it or not, every time we sin we are telling God that we prefer to worship something else over Him.

Every sin has eternal implications. Why? Well, the One being offended by our sin is God and He is eternal. So our offense against an infinite God is an infinite offense. Let me try to drive this home in a way that should make perfect sense to you.

As the Church has taught for 2000 years, and all of non-Catholic Christianity agrees, Jesus Christ is God in His second person. And as God, Jesus could see all of human history—from the creation of man to the end of time—from the cross. Now let's picture a scene at the foot of the cross.

We see Jesus hanging on the cross, naked and horribly wounded.¹ We also see Mary, John the Apostle, and the other women mentioned in Scripture. We can hear the jeers of those

¹ The crucifixes in our parishes are entirely too modest to reflect the reality. A careful reading of the Gospels show that the Roman soldiers quite literally stripped Him naked for all to see... including His poor mother.

who mock Him. We can see the soldiers casting lots for His final piece of clothing at the foot of the cross. Jesus is already suffering immensely, but now imagine that you have decided to join in the festivities. You walk up to the cross and you spit on Him, throw rocks at Him, curse Him, beat on His sacred body with a timber, and even throw animal dung on Him.

“Joe, you must be insane! I would never do that!” you say. I’m not insane, though. *You do that every single time you commit a sin.* You spit on Him when you sin. You throw rocks at Him when you sin. You curse Him when you sin. You beat Him with a timber when you sin. You go so far as to throw animal dung on Him when you sin!

What I have just said is absolute truth; an inconvenient truth, a truth none of us like to hear, but a truth nonetheless. So here you go to Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation² yet you only go to confession once or twice a year. Maybe you’re going more than that, but unless you’re going weekly you’re not taking the damage you do to Him very seriously.

Of course, it’s really very hard to hold most modern Catholics to blame for this. After all, few Catholics actually have a well-formed conscience. I’m not judging folks when I say this; I’m just going by the public evidence I see and hear. I hear people saying all the time how they do this or that and not even realize they’re committing sin. If they did realize it, they wouldn’t talk about what they do in public like it’s all right.

Of course, there are also public actions, and I see them from my fellow Catholics all the time. For example, it’s one thing to see a man glance at a pretty girl walking by, but quite another to ogle her... often longingly. It doesn’t matter whether he’s married or not, he’s giving plenty of evidence that he has no earthly idea what the Church teaches about this under the sixth and ninth commandments.

But who can blame him, at least to a certain extent. Every single week when I go to Mass I see *Catholic women* dressed more like they’re going to hang out at a bar than for Mass. I see women wearing clothes that expose cleavage, accentuate their figures, show too much flesh, wear makeup like the ladies I’ve seen in red light districts (I wasn’t always a Catholic, you know). I even see women wearing clothes that show off the fact that they are braless. So not only are they committing a mortal sin against the sixth and ninth commandments, but they are also committing the additional mortal sin of scandal against the fifth commandment. Then I watch as they go to Holy Communion as if absolutely nothing about how they dress is wrong, throwing more animal dung on Jesus as they receive Him in His Real Presence! (By the way, try dressing that way at St. Peter’s in the Vatican and see how far you get.)

Yeah, I know... I’ve heard all the justifications for why you men and women do the things I’ve written about here. And that’s just what they are—justifications. I’ve got news for you, though. Those justifications won’t work when you stand before Almighty God for your particular judgment when you die. He will simply say, “Go to hell.” He won’t be using our vulgar vernacular, but rather handing down your eternal sentence.

Don’t fool yourself by thinking you have all sorts of time, that you won’t die anytime soon. My oldest son, a mere thirty-seven years old and in seemingly perfect health, laid down to sleep one night and never woke up again. It can happen to any of us, and it will happen to all of us. You may not live to finish reading this article. I may not live to finish writ...

This is What We Believe...Why We Believe It.

Got questions or want to learn more about how to form a right conscience? Come visit JoeSixpackAnswers.com today.

² If you miss any of them without sufficient reason, you are in mortal sin!