

D. Fisher
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FEATURE: Progressing Beyond Curiosity

- ANNCR: This is the last time we'll hear the pleasant voices of Michael and Carol Quicke, saying things like...
- VOICE: The God that we detect in nature, also detects us.
- PROF.: And God holds us responsible for discovering the fact that He exists.
- MUSIC: THEME: ESTABLISH, THEN UNDER ANNCR
- ANNCR: Today we present the last episode of Truth in the Test Tube that Dr. and Mrs. Michael Quicke recorded before moving back to England. In future weeks we plan to continue the program with other voices, including astronauts and others with fascinating roles in science, technology and medicine.
The Quickes call their final episode "Progressing Beyond Curiosity." Carol begins by asking...
- VOICE: Professor, what last thoughts would you like to share with listeners?
- MUSIC: THEME: OUT
- PROF.: I want to make sure everyone understands *why* we have presented these programs. It wasn't just to discuss interesting subjects and satisfy our curiosity.
- VOICE: As we have discussed various topics, one subject that has fascinated me has been "fine-tuning" – the complexity and precision that we see all through nature, and in every organ of our own bodies.
- PROF.: That has often led to another of my favorite subjects, the idea that this fine-tuning exists because some kind of being who is smarter than man exists.
A friend summarizes that idea, "Nature is an effect, whose cause is God."
- VOICE: That's the impression I have gotten during our discussions – that we were finding reasons to believe God exists.
- PROF.: But the late British author Prof. C. S. Lewis gives an additional perspective to the things we've been discussing. He wrote, "It is always shocking to meet life where we thought we were alone. 'Look out!' we cry, 'it's *alive*'."
- VOICE: How does that relate to the subject of fine-tuning in nature and God?

- PROF.: Many people are comfortable discussing God in an intellectual way – making him a subject to study. Like detectives, they enjoy exploring nature and discovering clues that some thing or some person has left indications that “it” or “He” exists – and built some very complex organisms.
But Lewis said that sometimes the God they thought they had confined to a laboratory to study him, shows that He is alive by starting to speak...
- VOICE: ...Showing that God is not an inert object lying still and allowing Himself to be examined and dissected. Instead, He’s a living being who has expectations of how we should behave.
- PROF.: Some people back away when they discover that the Creator of the universe is what the Bible calls “the true God” and “the living God and the everlasting king.” (Jeremiah 10:10).
In Lewis’ words, “And therefore this is the very point at which so many draw back...and proceed no further with Christianity.”
- VOICE: Let me make sure I understand what he’s saying. Does he mean some people prefer a God who “stands still” so we can examine him?
- PROF.: Yes. He continues, “An impersonal God – well and good. The subjective God of beauty, truth and goodness, inside our own heads – better still. A formless life-force surging through us, a vast power which we can tap – better still.”
- VOICE: Any of those would be a god we could study.
- PROF.: Some of these imaginary “gods” might allow us to control them and use their power in ways we choose.
- VOICE: Some people worship lifeless things as gods. I remember that the Bible ridicules some people for burning part of a tree for firewood, and making another part of that same tree into a god.
- PROF.: Yes. God inspired the prophet Jeremiah to write, “For the customs of the peoples are worthless; they cut a tree out of he forest, and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel. They adorn it with silver and gold; *they fasten it with hammer and nails so it will not totter.*” (Jeremiah 10:3-4).
- VOICE: (LAUGHS) This kind of lifeless “god” can’t even sit up by itself. Its makers have to nail it in place to keep it from falling.
- PROF.: Jeremiah continues, “Like a scarecrow in a melon patch, their idols cannot speak; they must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them; they can do no harm – nor can they do any good.” (verse 5).

- VOICE: Where is the part about making firewood into a god?
- PROF.: In the Bible's book of Isaiah, chapter 44. It says, "Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. . . .From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, 'Save me; you are my god.'" (44:16-17).
- VOICE: Any god that we can control, is too weak to do us any good. Now I understand why Jeremiah and Isaiah spoke with sarcasm and ridicule. They showed how silly it is to worship a lifeless object as a god.
- PROF.: But Lewis points out that there is one God who is *alive*. He writes, "But God himself, alive, pulling at the other end of the cord, perhaps approaching at an infinite speed, the hunter, king, husband – that is quite another matter. There comes a moment when the children who have been playing at burglars hush suddenly: was that a *real* footstep in the hall?"
- VOICE: Is he implying that some people enjoy an imaginary God, but consider a real God to be a *surprise*?
- PROF.: Yes, and maybe even a *threat*. In his words, "There comes a moment when people who have been dabbling in religion...suddenly draw back. Supposing we really found him? We never meant it to come to that! Worse still, supposing he had found us?"
- VOICE: In other words, many people enjoy discussing and studying ideas about God – treating Him as an abstract idea, a topic to explore and debate philosophically. But they think He doesn't have anything to do with our real lives.
- PROF.: Exactly! Lewis says these people would be unhappy if God actually walked into the room.
He continues, "Why are many people prepared in advance to maintain that, whatever else God may be, he is not the concrete, living, willing, and acting God of Christian theology?"
- VOICE: Probably because the God that the Bible describes, is smarter and more powerful than we are. So He expects us to obey Him.
- PROF.: Yes, and we know that we have disobeyed.
Even those of us who have obeyed God's commands not to steal or murder, have broken His commands not to covet or to have any other god except the "true and living God" as the center of our lives.
- VOICE: We tend to forget that there are *ten* commandments. And the very first is, "You shall have no other gods before me."

PROF.: In his book *Mere Christianity*, Lewis says, “The trouble is that one part of you...really agrees with his disapproval of human greed and trickery and exploitation. You...know at bottom that unless the power behind the world really...detests that sort of behavior, then he cannot be good. On the other hand, we know that if there does exist an absolute goodness, it must hate most of what we do.”

VOICE: So we agree that God commands us to be completely good, but we know that we don't measure up to His standard of complete perfection.

PROF.: The fine-tuning of every part of nature implies that some kind of wise creator-God exists. But the Bible tells us God holds us responsible for the fact that we have discovered that He exists.

VOICE: I hadn't thought of it that way. “The Bible tells us God holds us responsible for the fact that we have discovered that He exists.”

PROF.: God is more than just the Creator. He has given us a conscience – a sense of right and wrong. And that conscience tells us that some of our actions are wrong.

VOICE: So the God that we detect in nature and in our consciences, also detects us.

PROF.: Yes, and the Bible book of Acts tells us God “commands all men everywhere to repent” (17:30) – to admit we have disobeyed Him. When we do that, He forgives our disobedience, and He gives us strength to live the way we ought to live.

VOICE: Well, Professor, what should I tell my friends who have listened?

PROF.: Several things. First, the episodes will remain available on our website for some time. They can listen as often as they want. And they can *record* the programs to play repeatedly – and to share with friends.

VOICE: In one episode, Dr. Francis Collins summarized the three questions that cry out for answers in each of our lives: “Why are we all here anyway?,” “What’s this all about?,” and “What happens after we die?”

In other words, “Where did we come from?,” “What is the purpose of life?,” and “Where do we go when we die?”

PROF.: Tell your friends to replay the episodes of “Truth in the Test Tube” and the other programs on our website, until they understand the answers to those vital questions.

Also encourage them to learn more by reading the Bible. The Gospel of John is a good place to start, followed by the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

VOICE: And look at books we have mentioned during our discussions, including titles like *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis.

PROF.: We want to emphasize that intellectual curiosity is not the only reason we have raised these issues here on “Truth in the Test Tube.”
God is “pulling at the other end of the cord” – not as someone “pulling our strings” and making us move like a puppet, but as the God who loves us and wants personal contact with us. He wants to give us a clean conscience, and to be “our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1).

VOICE: More important than the scientific ideas we have discussed, God offers forgiveness for all the bad things we have done. And he promises a place in heaven after we die.

PROF.: Please don’t rest until you have received everything that God offers.

MUSIC: THEME: ESTABLISH, THEN UNDER ANNCR

ANNCR: Well, that was a thought-provoking discussion, wasn’t it?
In future episodes, we’ll have different voices, but the same caliber of discussion. For example, next time we’ll hear from an astronaut who walked on the moon – and joked about NASA paying him for mileage!
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Join us again, here at Truth in the Test Tube.

MUSIC: THEME: UP TO CONCLUSION

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