

# Questions & Answers

## Mt. Ellis Academy, MT - Freshman Class – Bible I

### By Pastor Ed Anderson

#### Freshman Student Q.1:

#### Does God punish those who aren't sure if He is real?

##### Does God Punish Those Who Aren't Sure If He Is Real?

No, God does not **punish** people simply for having doubts or being unsure of His existence. Instead, He **patiently invites people to seek Him** and provides evidence of His reality. The Bible shows that **God understands our struggles and meets us where we are.**

#### 1. God Welcomes Honest Doubt and Questions

Many people in the Bible **struggled with doubt**, yet God did not reject them:

- **Thomas (The Doubter)** – He refused to believe Jesus was resurrected until he saw the proof (*John 20:24-29*). Instead of punishing Thomas, Jesus **showed him the evidence.**
- **Gideon (The Fearful)** – He doubted God's calling and asked for multiple signs (*Judges 6:36-40*). God **patiently answered him.**
- **John the Baptist (The Questioner)** – Even though he baptized Jesus, he later doubted and asked, "*Are you the one who is to come?*" (*Matthew 11:3*). Jesus did **not rebuke him**, but reassured him with evidence.

**If God punished doubt, He would have rejected these people—but instead, He patiently guided them.**

#### 2. God Invites Us to Seek Him

God doesn't expect blind faith; He invites us to **ask, seek, and find Him:**

- **Jeremiah 29:13** – *“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”*
- **Isaiah 1:18** – *“Come now, let us reason together,” says the Lord.*
- **Matthew 7:7** – *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”*

If you **sincerely seek the truth**, God promises to reveal Himself to you.

### 3. God Only “Punishes” Those Who Willfully Reject Him

Doubt is **not the same as rejection**. God is patient with those who are searching, but the Bible warns against:

- **Willfully rejecting God despite evidence** (*Romans 1:18-20*).
- **Hardening the heart against truth** (*Hebrews 3:12-15*).

However, if **someone is genuinely unsure and seeking**, God is not waiting to punish them—He is drawing them closer.

### 4. God Gives Everyone Time to Find Him

- **2 Peter 3:9** – *“The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*
- **Acts 17:27** – *“God did this so that they would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from any one of us.”*

God gives people **time, opportunities, and evidence** to discover Him—He does not rush to judgment.

### Final Answer: Does God Punish Those Who Aren’t Sure If He Is Real?

- ✗ No, God does not punish people for struggling with doubt.
- ✓ He welcomes questions and provides evidence.
- ✓ He invites people to seek Him and is patient with those who are searching.

✓ He only holds people accountable when they deliberately reject Him, not when they are genuinely unsure.

## Freshman Student Q.2: How do you know if you have a close enough relationship with God?

### How Do You Know If You Have a Close Enough Relationship with God?

Having a **close relationship with God** isn't about being perfect or having a certain degree of perfection—it's about continually seeking Him, trusting Him, and growing in faith. Here are some ways to know if you're close to God and areas to grow if you feel distant.

#### 1. Do You Desire to Know God More?

- **A close relationship isn't about feelings—it's about desire.**
- Do you have a hunger to know God better, even if you don't always feel close?
- **Psalm 42:1** – *"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God."*

✓ If you **desire God**, you are on the right path!

#### 2. Do You Spend Time with Him?


Just like any relationship, closeness with God grows through **time and communication**:

- **Prayer** – Do you talk to God regularly? (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- **Bible Reading** – Do you seek His wisdom? (Psalm 119:105)
- **Worship & Thanksgiving** – Do you acknowledge Him in your life? (Psalm 100:4)

✓ If you **spend time with Him**, even in small ways, your relationship is growing!

### 3. Do You Trust God in Difficult Times?

- A close relationship with God is **not about life being easy**, but about **trusting Him even when it's hard**.
- **Proverbs 3:5-6** – *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."*

 If you find yourself **leaning on God, even when you don't understand**, that's closeness!


### 4. Do You See God Working in Your Life?

- Do you notice answers to prayer, changed attitudes, or lessons He's teaching you?
- **Philippians 1:6** – *"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion."*

 If you see **growth, even in small ways**, God is at work in you!

### 5. Do You Try to Live for Him?

- **Obedience is a sign of love** (*John 14:15*).
- Do you **try** to follow His ways, even if you struggle sometimes?
- **Romans 7:15-25** shows that even Paul struggled, but what mattered was his desire to follow God.

 If you **care about doing what's right**, even when you fail, it shows your heart is for Him!

### 6. Do You Love Others?

- A close relationship with God isn't just about personal devotion—it's about **how we treat others**.
- **1 John 4:20** – *"Whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen."*

 If you're **growing in kindness, forgiveness, and love**, you're reflecting God's closeness in your life!

## 7. Do You Feel Convicted When You Sin?

- A close relationship with God doesn't mean **never sinning**, but **being convicted when we do**.
- **Hebrews 12:6** – *"The Lord disciplines the one He loves."*
- If you feel **remorse over sin and a desire to change**, that's a sign of closeness!

✅ If you **recognize sin and seek to turn from it**, that's God working in you!

## What If I Don't Feel Close to God?

If you feel **distant**, don't be discouraged! Even strong believers go through dry seasons.

✅ **Keep seeking Him.** (James 4:8 – *"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."*)

✅ **Don't rely only on emotions.** Faith isn't about feeling close—it's about trusting He is there.

✅ **Ask Him to reveal Himself to you.** He promises to answer!

## Final Answer: How Do You Know If You Are Close Enough to God?

- **Are you seeking Him?** → That's a sign of closeness.
- **Are you growing, even slowly?** → That means He's working in you.
- **Do you trust Him, even in struggles?** → That's true faith.
- **Do you love others and want to obey Him?** → That reflects His presence in you.

Being "close enough" is not about degrees of perfection—it's about progress and desire!

## Freshman Student Q.3:

**In what ways are men above women?**

✓ Men are not above women in worth, but they are given leadership roles in the home and church.

#### 4. Biblical Examples of Women in Leadership

Though men are given certain leadership roles, **God has used women powerfully in**

**Scripture:**

- **Deborah** – A judge and leader of Israel (*Judges 4-5*).
- **Priscilla** – A teacher in the early church (*Acts 18:26*).
- **Esther** – A queen who saved Israel (*Esther 4:14*).
- **Mary Magdalene** – The first to witness the resurrected Jesus (*John 20:16-18*).

✓ God values and uses both men and women for His purposes.

**Final Answer: Are Men “Above” Women?**

⊘ No, men are not superior to women.

✓ Men and women are equal in value, but have different roles in the home and church.

✓ Men are called to leadership, but with love, humility, and responsibility.

## Freshman Student Q.4: Why isn't God talking?

**Why Isn't God Talking?**

If you feel like God is silent, you are not alone. Many faithful believers—including people in the Bible—have struggled with seasons where God **feels distant or silent**. But just because God **seems silent doesn't mean He isn't speaking or working**. Let's explore why God may seem quiet and how to hear Him again.

### 1. Are You Listening in the Right Way?

- Sometimes, God is speaking, but **not in the way we expect**.
- We often want **audible voices, dreams, or clear signs**, but God often speaks **through Scripture, the Holy Spirit, and circumstances**.

#### **Biblical Example:**


- **Elijah expected God in loud miracles, but God spoke in a whisper.** (*1 Kings 19:11-12*)
- **Jesus' followers didn't recognize Him after the resurrection because they weren't expecting Him in that form.** (*Luke 24:13-32*)

 **God may be speaking, but in a different way than you expect—are you listening carefully?**

## **2. Are You Spending Time in His Word?**

- The **Bible is the primary way God speaks today**.
- If we want to hear God, we must **read His Word regularly**.

**Psalm 119:105** – *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”*

 If you feel like God is silent, try spending **more time in Scripture**—He may have already spoken through His Word.

## **3. Is There Sin Blocking Your Connection?**

- **Unrepented sin can create a barrier between us and God.**
- If we knowingly live in rebellion, it can make it harder to hear His voice.

**Isaiah 59:2** – *“Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you.”*

 **Ask God to reveal any sin that may be hindering your ability to hear Him** (Psalm 139:23-24).

## **4. Is God Testing or Strengthening Your Faith?**

- Sometimes God is **silent to grow our trust in Him**.

- **Faith is believing even when we can't see or hear.**


**Job 23:8-10** – Job couldn't find God, but he said, *"When He has tested me, I will come forth as gold."*

 **God's silence can be a test to deepen your faith and trust Him more.**

## **5. Is God Working Behind the Scenes?**

- Just because you **can't hear Him doesn't mean He isn't working.**
- God often works **in hidden ways**, preparing answers and shaping your situation.

**John 11:6** – Jesus delayed answering Mary and Martha's call for help, but He was preparing a greater miracle—raising Lazarus from the dead!

 **God may be silent now because He is setting up something bigger than you can see.**

## **6. Are You Expecting a Specific Answer?**

- Sometimes we feel like God isn't talking because **we only want a certain answer.**
- If we're **only looking for what we want to hear**, we may miss what God is actually saying.

**Proverbs 3:5-6** – *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."*

 **Be open to whatever God is saying, not just what you want to hear.**

## **7. Keep Seeking—God Will Speak in His Time**

- **God's silence is never permanent.** He promises that if we seek Him, we will find Him.
- **Jeremiah 29:13** – *"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."*



- **Matthew 7:7** – *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”*

✅ Keep praying, seeking, and waiting—God will speak in His perfect time.

### Final Answer: Why Isn't God Talking?

⊘ It may not be that He's silent—but that He's speaking in a way we haven't noticed yet.

✅ Check if He is speaking through His Word, through circumstances, or through conviction.

✅ Trust that even when He seems quiet, He is still working.

✅ Be patient—His timing is always perfect.

## Freshman Student Q.5: Why is death praised or accepted by Christians?

### Why Is Death Praised or Accepted by Christians?

Christians don't **celebrate** death itself, but they **accept** it differently than the world because of their **hope in eternal life through Jesus Christ**. Here's why:

#### 1. Death Is Not the End for Believers

- **John 11:25-26** – Jesus said, *“I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die.”*

- **1 Thessalonians 4:13-14** – *“We do not grieve as those who have no hope... Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him.”*

✅ For Christians, death is not final—it's the doorway to eternal life with God.

#### 2. Death Is Defeated by Jesus

- **1 Corinthians 15:54-57** – *“Death has been swallowed up in victory... Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
- Jesus’ resurrection **defeated the power of death**, so Christians no longer need to fear it.

✅ **Death is not praised, but its power is broken by Jesus’ victory.**

### 3. Christians Look Forward to Eternal Life

- **Revelation 21:4** – *“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.”*
- Christians **accept death** because it leads to a future where suffering ends and life with God continues forever.

✅ **Christians don’t desire death, but they trust that something better is coming.**

### 4. The Bible Calls Death “Sleep” Until Jesus Returns

- **John 11:11-14** – Jesus described death as **sleep**, meaning it’s temporary for believers.
- **1 Corinthians 15:51-52** – *“We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed... at the last trumpet, the dead will be raised.”*

✅ **Christians view death as a temporary rest before resurrection.**

### 5. Martyrs and Sacrificial Deaths Are Honored

- **Philippians 1:21** – Paul said, *“For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”*
- **Revelation 14:13** – *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”*
- Throughout history, Christians have **sacrificed their lives** for faith, knowing that death is not the end.

✅ **Christians don’t seek death, but they accept it as part of God’s plan when it comes.**

### 6. Christians Grieve, But with Hope

- **Christians don't ignore the pain of death**, but they grieve differently than those who have no hope.
- **Jesus wept when Lazarus died** (*John 11:35*), even though He knew He would raise him.
- **Paul acknowledged sorrow but emphasized eternal hope** (*1 Thessalonians 4:13*).

✅ **Death is sad, but for believers, it is not the final goodbye.**

### **Final Answer: Why Do Christians Accept Death?**

- ✅ **Death is not the end—it is the beginning of eternal life.**
- ✅ **Jesus has already conquered death.**
- ✅ **The resurrection gives Christians hope beyond the grave.**
- ✅ **Death is seen as temporary sleep, awaiting Christ's return.**
- ✅ **Christians grieve but with the assurance of reunion in eternity.**

## **Freshman Student Q.6:**

**If God really cared about us wouldn't we live in a different more perfect world knowing ahead of time Eve would sin?**

**If God Really Cared About Us, Wouldn't We Live in a More Perfect World, Knowing Eve Would Sin?**

This is a deep and understandable question. If God is **all-knowing** and **loving**, why did He create a world where suffering, sin, and death could happen? Wouldn't a truly loving God create a **perfect** world where Eve never sinned? Here's how the Bible helps answer this question:

### **1. God DID Create a Perfect World—But Love Requires Free Will**

- **Genesis 1:31** – *"God saw all that He had made, and it was very good."*
- The world was created **perfect**, without sin, suffering, or death.

- **Genesis 2:16-17** – God gave Adam and Eve **one rule**—not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- Why? Because **true love requires a choice**.
- If God forced humans to obey Him, they would be **robots, not loving beings**.

✅ **God’s love is so great that He gave humanity freedom—even knowing they could (and would) choose wrongly.**

## **2. Couldn’t God Have Stopped Eve from Sinning?**

- Yes, but then **free will would not be real**.
- If God forced Eve to obey, it would mean humans have no real choice—**and love cannot exist without choice**.
- **Imagine a world where no one could do wrong—but also where no one could truly love God or each other.**

**Example:** If someone is forced to love you, is it really love? No. Love must be chosen.

✅ **God allowed free will because He wanted real relationships with us, not forced obedience.**

## **3. Why Allow Evil If He Knew It Would Happen?**

- God saw ahead of time that **sin would enter the world** but also knew He had a **plan to redeem humanity**.
- **Revelation 13:8** – Jesus is called *“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”*
- This means that **before God even created the world, He planned to send Jesus to save us**.
- **Romans 8:28** – *“God works all things together for good for those who love Him.”*

✅ **God didn’t abandon us—He had a rescue plan before the fall even happened.**

## **4. The World Will Be Perfect Again—Just Not Yet**

- **Revelation 21:4** – *“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.”*
- **God will restore the world to perfection**, but He is allowing this time for people to choose Him.
- Right now, God is **giving everyone a chance** to decide whether they want to follow Him.

✅ **This world is not the final chapter—God has a better future planned for those who choose Him.**

## 5. What If God Had Never Created Us?

- Some may ask, *“If God knew we would sin and suffer, why create us at all?”*
- The answer is **love is worth it**.
- **Parents know their children will experience pain, mistakes, and hardships—yet they still choose to have them. Why? Because love makes life worth living.**
- God knew that **despite sin, many would choose to love Him**—and that was worth creating us for.

✅ **Even in a world with sin, love, redemption, and hope still exist.**

## Final Answer: If God Really Cared, Wouldn't He Have Made a Perfect World?

- ❌ He DID! But He gave humans free will because love requires choice.
- ✅ God knew sin would happen, but He also planned to redeem us through Jesus.
- ✅ Evil is temporary—God will restore a perfect world where sin will never return.
- ✅ God created us because love is worth it, even in a broken world.

## Freshman Student Q.7:

**Why can't I do anything on the sabbath? It just feels like a limit on what I can or can't do.**

**Why Can't I Do Anything on the Sabbath? It Feels Like a Limitation.**

It's understandable to feel like the Sabbath is a **restriction**—especially when it seems like a list of “**don'ts**.” But the Sabbath isn't meant to be a burden—it's actually a **gift from God**. Let's look at **why the Sabbath exists** and what it really means for us today.

### 1. The Sabbath Is About Rest, Not Restriction

- **Genesis 2:2-3** – *“On the seventh day God finished His work... so He rested... and made it holy.”*
- God didn't create the Sabbath to **limit us**—He made it to **bless us**.

Jesus said:

- **Mark 2:27** – *“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”*
- This means the Sabbath isn't about **rules**; it's about **rest, worship, and connection with God**.

✅ The Sabbath isn't about what you “can't” do—it's about what you **GET** to do: rest, recharge, and reconnect with God and others.

### 2. The Sabbath Helps Us Break Free from Endless Work

- In today's world, **we are always busy**—work, school, stress, social media, distractions.
- The Sabbath forces us to **pause, breathe, and spend time with God and loved ones**.
- **Isaiah 58:13-14** – The Sabbath is meant to be a **delight**, not a burden.

✅ Instead of thinking “I can't do this,” think “I **GET** to rest, recharge, and focus on what truly matters.”

### 3. What Can I Do on the Sabbath?

The Sabbath isn't about sitting still doing nothing—it's about shifting focus from **work and distractions to God, relationships, and spiritual renewal**.

✅ **Things you CAN do on the Sabbath:**

- Spend time in prayer, Bible study, and worship.

- Enjoy nature and appreciate God’s creation.
- Fellowship with family, friends, and church.
- Serve others—Jesus healed and helped people on the Sabbath (*Luke 13:10-17*).
- Reflect and recharge spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.

#### ✓ Things to avoid on the Sabbath:

- Work (jobs, business, household chores that can wait).
- Buying/selling (*Nehemiah 13:15-22*).
- Self-focused entertainment that takes away from worship and rest.

#### 4. The Sabbath Isn’t Legalism—It’s Freedom

- Some see Sabbath rules as **strict laws**, but Jesus showed it’s about **relationship, not legalism**.
- **Matthew 12:12** – *“It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”*
- **The Pharisees turned the Sabbath into a burden**, but Jesus reminded us that **it’s about rest, love, and renewal**.

✓ The Sabbath isn’t a prison—it’s freedom from stress, work, and the distractions that pull us away from God.

#### 5. Why Should I Keep the Sabbath?

- **God blessed and sanctified it** (*Genesis 2:3*).
- **It’s one of the Ten Commandments** (*Exodus 20:8-11*).
- **It’s a sign of our relationship with God** (*Ezekiel 20:12*).
- **Jesus and the disciples kept it** (*Luke 4:16*).
- **It will continue in heaven** (*Isaiah 66:22-23*).

#### Final Answer: The Sabbath Is a Gift, Not a Limit

⊘ It’s not about what you “can’t” do—it’s about what you **GET** to do.

✓ God gave it to you for rest, joy, and spiritual renewal.

✓ It helps us escape the chaos of life and reconnect with God.

✓ It’s about freedom, not restrictions.