

## What Your Atheist Friend Knows About God (But Doesn't Want to Admit)

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Years ago I stood before Michelangelo's *David* in Florence, Italy. No one questioned that an artist had sculpted this magnificent piece of Renaissance art. It was the work of a genius. Yet, in the same room, no doubt, there were persons called "atheists" who would deny that a greater Artist was also necessary to create the original David that Michelangelo attempted to imitate. The true David, like other creations of God, was far more difficult to make than what Michelangelo crafted out of stone. *That* David had functioning eyes that could actually see, instead of an orb of stone.



Underneath the atheist's claim lies a nagging knowledge that a Creator actually made man and all the world of nature around him, with its symmetry, intricacy and beauty. The atheist may suppress that knowledge as a way to make room for his sin, but it is so obvious that only a man seeking to eradicate his moral problem could deny it.

And this is exactly what God tells us:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools . . . (Romans 1:18-22)

I have talked with atheists through the years. So far, each one that I can remember has finally admitted to me that he would *not* believe in God even if there were proof that He existed. This may not be what all atheists could bring themselves to admit, but it is exactly what God states is the case. What can we say then to that honest admission? Most [all?] atheists are moral ones, not intellectual ones.

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But there is another fact that atheists believe about God. They believe that they are doing wrong when they sin and they deserve to be punished (Romans 1:32). Again, they may not readily admit this.

Where does this sense of sin come from?

First, it comes from the knowledge of the existence of God, as I already mentioned. But, second, God teaches that they "know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things [i.e. sins he had just listed] are worthy of death" (Romans 1:32). The phrase, "ordinance of God" is specially used by Paul in Romans to describe what is under the law, those fundamental standards of God rather than the written Law of Moses. This means that without any written Law, their consciences indict them. In other words, they live in an inner world of allegations and defenses, proving that underneath it all, they believe God is there and has a standard by which to live. His actions and thoughts bear this out over and over again. He cannot deny this if he looks closely at his behavior and thoughts.

These two facts leave men and women, atheistic or not, in a frightening position before the God who is actually there. It is wonderful when an atheist will admit these truths honestly and openly. He is on his way to the best of lives and forgiveness of his rebellion against God. It will take more knowledge—the knowledge of the gospel itself—along with true repentance and belief in Christ, before he will have life from God, a life that gives evidence to the authenticity of that faith.

Let's pray that God will open our friend's eyes to see what he or she, in fact, already knows.

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