

*The* **4**  
**QUESTIONS**  
**THAT SHAPE**  
**A TEEN'S**  
*Faith*

## **What are the 4 Questions?**

You know that asking questions about our faith is important. You also know that what we do with our questions can either feed deep doubts or build up our faith.

**There are two types of students:** those who have unanswered questions, and those who have unquestioned answers.

If you are not engaging your students' hard questions—and questioning their answers—in the context of a relationship, you risk losing a generation to doubt and misinformation. You have the opportunity to model truth within a relationship. Engaging their deepest questions will show them how to interact with their faith and identify counterfeit worldviews.

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## **This is why we've compiled the 4 Questions resource.**

In an easy-to-understand format, we discuss four questions that can destroy a student's faith in God, if left unanswered. Our videos with Summit faculty from our deep vault of resources will equip you to handle these questions.

Over the next 4 weeks we will send you emails to help you dive deeper into issues to help protect and anchor faith for the next generation. The emails will include content and video resources to deepen your study of these questions!

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**Does Christianity really matter?**

**How do I know Christianity is true?**

**What's God's plan for my life?**

**Why does God allow bad things to happen?**

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# ONE: Does Christianity really matter?

**“If we just think we have it all together because we’ve been in church and Sunday School all of our lives, we are actually in greater danger.” – Dr. Jeff Myers, Summit President**

At no time in history have humans been so inundated by information. The at-your-fingertips access to information drowns young people in a tsunami of data. We expect students to have an astounding level of discernment while sifting through the noise.

Therefore, the question every Christian must confront is this: How do we cut through the noise with meaningful, credible, and trustworthy ideas?

The answer is simple, but not easy. Young people need help in understanding the ideas at work in the noise. We can learn how to understand these ideas by recognizing patterns. This is why teaching worldview matters. It not only allows us to defend what we believe against false beliefs but helps us identify the false beliefs in the first place. But how do we teach students to recognize these patterns? We live it out right alongside them. We engage in conversations. We invest in our relationships with them. This creates the opportunity for students to see that a life with Jesus changes everything. Conversations about discernment and identifying patterns of false ideas can flow right from this real-life interaction. These interactions are fueled by compassionate, thoughtful, and meaningful exchanges about life, faith, and a biblical worldview. As you interact with students, find opportunities to point out where and how you see God at work and how a relationship with Jesus matters in their everyday lives.

***SUMMIT KEY: Facilitating meaningful conversations about faith with students works best when you speak the truth in the context of relationships. Deep relationships create a bond of trust, through which truth can more easily flow and begin to thrive.***

## Resources to Guide the Conversation



### Communicating Truth to a Relative Culture

- Dr. Sean McDowell

[Watch Video](#)



### The Truth Changes Everything

- Dr. Jeff Myers

[Watch Video](#)



### How Can Christians Live in a Way that Proves the Truth Exists?

- Brett Kunkle

[Watch Video](#)

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## TWO: How do I know Christianity is true?

In the midst of a crisis of faith, a father told his son, “*Son, I’m excited for you. It’s great to explore answers to these questions. I just ask one thing: don’t reject Christianity without knowing that it is untrue.*” Instead of ignoring or brushing off the questions his son had, this father took them seriously, giving his son space to search for answers. As a result, the son’s faith grew stronger. In fact, this family is now known worldwide for their expertise in the Christian worldview. You may even have heard of them. The father and son are Josh and Sean McDowell.

How are you creating a culture with your teens that welcomes questions about the authenticity of Christianity? Don’t be afraid of saying “*I don’t know.*” But don’t leave it there! Follow that statement with “*...but let’s seek out the answers, together, let’s seek out the answers, together, and follow the evidence where it takes us, all the while praying to God for guidance.*” These are important questions that have reasonable, scholarly, and detailed answers.

- **How are we to understand the Bible?**
- **What does the Bible say about humanity?**
- **What does the Bible say is wrong with us?**
- **What does the Bible say about how we should live?**
- **How are we to understand other worldviews based on the Bible?**

*“Disliking parts of a worldview is not the same as disproving it; an idea’s complexity, simplicity, or unpopularity is not reasonable evidence.”*

By answering the five questions above, students learn how to “always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.” (1 Peter 3:15).

Doubts students face about their faith often come from a lack of foundational knowledge. “*Some people stop believing in Christianity because they just don’t know enough to do anything differently. Their beliefs are not based on knowledge to begin with.*” Students need more than slogans to have a strong faith. They need strong arguments and knowledge about what they actually believe.

**SUMMIT KEY:** *Other religions may offer advice on how to search for God, but Christianity turns that search on its head: God is the one who gets in touch with us.*

# TWO Resources to Guide the Conversation



[Watch Video](#)



[Watch Video](#)



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# THREE: What's God's plan for my life?

Students long to understand what is true, who they are, and why they exist.

Have you ever searched online for a new pair of shoes, then logged in to social media to find an ad for the exact shoe you were looking at? For some, this can feel like a sign that they should buy the shoes. For others, the sign is that they need to improve their personal security!

When we buy into this culture, the noise keeps us in a loop of distraction. The importance of still, quiet time with the Lord gets shortened or even forgotten altogether. *"Distraction makes selfishness and laziness easy."* These distractions can distract teens and potentially lead them to believe false ideas about God and his truth, which can cause doubt about their identity and purpose.

When students find their identity or define themselves by anything other than a child of God, they set themselves up for a future of despair instead of hope found in the gospel. Students feeling empty and disconnected from God can sometimes resort to inauthentic optimism and misplaced self-confidence. Filling their hearts with useless data and facts to give themselves meaning cheapens the identity Christ gives them.

Help students start asking a different questions. Encourage students to ask *"how can I open up my life and be a vessel for God in every season?"* In doing this we teach students our life is not our own and our purpose is driven by our Creator. "God works through flawed people all over the world, each of whom is flailing like a child learning to walk, steadied by an ever-patient God."

**SUMMIT KEY:** *Truth, identity, and meaning are complex but crucial questions for students. When you speak from a relationship rooted in truth, you can speak to the heart of young individuals who are seeking to understand God's plan for their life.*

# THREE

## Resources to Guide the Conversation



[Watch Video](#)



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# FOUR:

## Why does God allow bad things to happen?

### What is God doing?

*“Most people who argue that God is responsible for evil, reason that if God created everything and evil exists, God is responsible for the creation of evil. But...evil is not a thing. It is the absence of a good, not a thing in itself. It is not part of creation.”* While this statement is true, the intellectual answers to how an all-powerful, all-loving, and all-knowing God could allow bad things to happen are sometimes insufficient when presented with the real pain our students face.

How can we come alongside students who are questioning God’s goodness when:

- A friend has an abortion and doesn’t seem to have any regret about the life she has taken.
- They learn that a young mother and her child died in a car crash with a drunk driver.
- A family in their church leaves the comforts of home to become full-time foreign missionaries only to learn they have been murdered by the very people they went to serve.
- They scroll through social media and see another natural disaster hit an already impoverished country.

When suffering affects students, how do they view God? Do they imagine a big bully? Do they want him to be a grandfather who loves them and wants to make them happy? People experiencing pain can revolt against the idea of God and question his power and goodness. But a present and loving God who enters into our pain with us helps us realize he is the only adequate answer to the emotional question of pain.

Through Job’s story, we see God as our giver in all seasons. Author Philip Yancey says, *“Job clung to God’s justice when he was the best example in history of God’s apparent injustice. He did not seek the Giver because of his gifts; when all gifts were removed he still sought the Giver.”* In addition to this, we know God is actively working for the good even in the midst of suffering, Romans 8:28 says, *“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”*

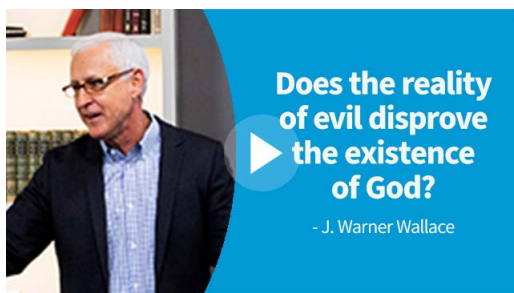
**SUMMIT KEY:** *Through Christ, meaning emerges out of meaninglessness. In Christ, we have a model for what to do in the midst of pain. Because of Christ, God not only makes good possible, he makes good happen.*

# FOUR

## Resources to Guide the Conversation



[Watch Video](#)



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# TAKE ACTION!

If your kids aren't displaying all five signs of a strong biblical worldview, please don't lose hope. You're not alone in this journey. It's a fact that only about 1 percent of Gen Z currently embrace a biblical worldview. However, there is a beacon of hope shining through. Summit Ministries is dedicated to working with thousands of teens just like yours every year, and we have a powerful solution to offer: **our Student Conferences**.

These five signs represent the core of what every parent desires for their teenager. They reflect the solid foundation you've laid for them. Imagine the profound impact you could have on your child's future faith journey by taking one simple step before they leave home—sending them to a life-changing Student Conference this summer.

## More about Summit's Student Conferences

At our Summit Conferences, your teens will engage with other peers their age as they discuss and share their faith. They will learn from speakers who are experts in theology, apologetics, and worldview formation. They will worship together and praise God as they learn about a biblical worldview. They will better understand the true story of reality as told in God's Word and hunger for its truth. Finally, they will surround themselves with like-minded young Christians who take their faith seriously and want to see the world transformed for Jesus. Summit's Conferences create spaces for your teen to develop these five signs of a flourishing faith.

At Summit Ministries, we partner with you to help your teen thrive in their faith. So, why not consider moving heaven and earth to give your child the opportunity to own their faith in these transformative ways? Join us in making a difference in your teenager's life and setting them on a path to a strong and enduring faith.

Explore dates and locations on our website.

Visit [summit.org/students](https://summit.org/students) today.

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