

## Can Faith and Science Hang Out?

The answer is Yes! The key is knowing what faith is, and knowing what science is, and knowing how they hang out.

### What Is Faith?

Faith is trust in God (Hebrews 11:1). But it is not trust in God without any reason or for no reason at all – that is superstition.

The reason most of us have faith when we are young is because someone we trust – our parents – passed faith onto us (like Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:5). But as we mature, that faith becomes our own as we grow to find our own reasons to believe.

We have good reasons to believe in God because of the physical world (Romans 1:19-21).

- Let's call all that exists (or has existed) the "blob of everything."
- Almost everything we experience in the "blob of everything" comes from something else, depends on something else.
- But "the blob of everything" can't come from something else or depend on something else – there is no "something else" besides everything!
- So why does the "blob of everything" exist?
- There must be something that exists that doesn't come from something else or depend on something else, but has always existed, independently, and is the ultimate explanation for everything else in the "blob of everything."
- Something that is eternal, invisible, and all-powerful. God! (see Acts 17:24-26).

And we have good reasons to believe in Christ because of the testimony of eyewitnesses (John 20:30-31; Acts 17:1-3).

### What Is Science?

Science is a system of knowledge concerning the physical world.

This means that there is a sense in which faith and science do not "hang out". Since science is the study of the physical world, and God is not an object in the physical world, science does not have the tools to find God.

On the other hand, since faith and reason reveal to us that God made the physical world, when we study the physical world, we will see the work of God. This is the way faith and science can hang out (as in Psalm 105:10-14).

So science and faith can hang out. In fact, faith in God is what motivated science in the first place.

- Pagan religions believed in multiple gods who were part of nature and at war with each other.
- This meant that the physical world was a chaotic battlefield of gods, with no order and no purpose.
- If the physical world lacks order, it cannot be systematically studied, and so science is impossible.
- Faith in one God who created the physical world with order and purpose made science possible.

### **Then Where Is the Conflict?**

The conflict is not between faith and science, but faith and *scientism*, the belief that science is the only way to obtain knowledge because the physical world is all that exists.

The big problem with scientism:

- If all that exists is the physical world, then your mind is nothing but your brain, which is nothing but atoms operating under the blind laws of physics.
- Since your mind is nothing but your brain, which is nothing but atoms, then “thinking” is nothing but molecules in motion, guided by the laws of physics. We cannot really think *about* anything. “Thoughts are not about stuff” (Alex Rosenberg, *The Atheist’s Guide to Reality*, p. 179).
- If we cannot think *about* anything, then we cannot engage in logical reasoning.
- If we cannot engage in logical reasoning, then our beliefs cannot be based on reason and logic – including belief in scientism.
- But a belief that is not based on reason is a superstition.
- That means that scientism is superstition.

Science is an important source of knowledge, but it is not the only source of knowledge.

- Science can propose how one physical thing depends on another physical thing, but it cannot explain the ultimate foundation of all physical reality. Faith can (Hebrews 11:3).
- Science can give us the tools to create technology that can be used for good or evil, but it cannot tell us what is good or evil. Faith can (Matt. 22:37-40).

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