

TOPIC 2.3**WE NEED GOD TO BE GOOD.
FACT OR FICTION?****Conversation Points**

- ★ If I had the opportunity to master a new skill by taking a pill, and was permitted only one, I would! **AGREE or DISAGREE?**
- ★ One day, I hope to write a best-selling book. **AGREE or DISAGREE?**
- ★ I want to be famous. **AGREE or DISAGREE?**

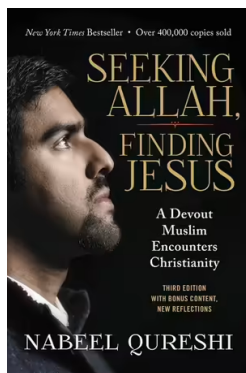
Reflection

Even though life got somewhat easier for Mr and Mrs Qureshi when they moved from Pakistan to the United States of America, they still faced some challenges. They were devout Muslims belonging to the strict Ahmadi sect of Islam. Mr Qureshi served in the US Navy and had a long and distinguished career attaining to the rank of lieutenant commander. In 1983 they welcomed the arrival of their son *Nabeel* into the world. Nabeel was his father's greatest delight and source of pride.

At the age of five Nabeel had been taught by his mother to memorise much of the Qur'an in Arabic - even though his parents' heart-language was Urdu. His mother also taught him the Islamic traditions which they observed strictly as a family and that Mohammad was the greatest and most perfect man. As Nabeel grew older he was trained to be a Muslim apologist. In High School he discovered that most of the Christians he met could be quickly and easily persuaded to doubt what they had been taught about Christianity.

After he finished High School it was his parents wish for him to study medicine and become a doctor. He was happy to comply because he wanted to make his parents proud. In 2001, Nabeel enrolled in the Medical School of Old Dominion University in Virginia. It was customary for students to join one of the many campus groups while studying, and Nabeel joined the *Debate Team*.

On one of the team's first trips, Nabeel shared a hotel room with fellow team member, David. When David settled into their room he took out his Bible and began to read it. When Nabeel saw that, he declared to David, *"You know what you're reading has been corrupted and is not the true Word of God?"* David, who had recently become a Christian while in prison, turned to Nabeel and said, *"Go on."* Most Christians whom Nabeel had said that to had simply accepted it. No one had ever asked Nabeel to *"Go on"* before, so Nabeel was a little caught off guard. He then said to David, *"What you're reading was originally spoken in Aramaic, then translated into Greek which was later translated into Latin which much later was then translated into German which was then eventually translated into English. So what you're reading there is a translation of a translation of a translation!"* David said to Nabeel, *"I see. Tell me, on our way up to our room I heard you talking to your mother on the phone in Urdu and I asked you what she said, and you told me in English what she said."* *"Yes"* said Nabeel. *"What you told me, was that an accurate translation of what your mother said?"* *"Ah, yes, it was"* admitted Nabeel.



With one question to help Nabeel evaluate his assumptions about what he believed about Christianity, and continuing to do so over the next few years of their time at university, David Wood helped Nabeel see and understand that what he had been told about Christianity — and Islam — was not true. In his book, *Seeking Allah Finding Jesus*, Nabeel describes how he became convinced that Islam was false and Christianity was true. But, it took him nearly two years to decide to convert to Christianity - not because of the lack of good evidence, but the *price* he would have to pay in being rejected by his parents. One night in a dream Jesus appeared to him and quoted Matthew 10:33 which then gave him the strength and courage he needed to tell his parents of his new found faith in Christ. In 2017, after a very brief battle with stomach cancer, Nabeel died aged 34.

The Role of Investigating Truth Claims

Investigating whether something we have long believed comes at a cost. For Nabeel the cost was his family and his community. Ultimately he paid the price of accepting the truth which meant that was rejected by his family and all of his Muslim friends. But he came to know new friends and discovered that despite what he had been told all his life, they were *good* people.

Not everyone is persuaded by facts and evidence alone. Often times the character (what a person is really like) is the determining factor as to whether they are believable or not. **What kind of character traits hinder or help someone from being believable?**

“His last words hung in the air, their gravity slowly sinking in. After a few heavy moments, I spoke. “Then what hope is there for us, David?” David smiled reassuringly. “Only the grace of God.” “But why would He give me His grace?” “Because He loves you.” “Why would He love me, a sinner?” “Because He’s your Father.” David’s words hit me powerfully. I had heard Christians call God “Father,” but it never clicked. Only when trying to figure out why God would give me mercy and grace when I deserved none did the gears start turning.”

NABEEL QURESHI

Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus: A Devout Muslim Encounters Christianity

The Relationship Between What a Person Believes and How They Treat Others

The ancient Greek philosophers understood that the most desirable goal for every person was to become a virtuous (“good”) person. For Plato this involved gaining wisdom. He discusses what this means in his book, *The Republic*, in which he narrates a long and varied series of dialogues between his teacher, Socrates, and several enquirers. **If you were asked, what are the qualities of a good person? how would you answer?**

In John Dickson’s book, *Humilitas*, he notes that before Jesus Christ came, no one considered *humility* to be a characteristic of a *good* person. Plato also recorded Socrates asking another philosopher, *Euthyphro*, whether something was *good and just because the gods decreed it*, or *did the gods decree it because it was good and just?* Today, philosophers refer to this as *The Euthyphro Dilemma*. The dilemma might also be reworded as - *is something right and good because God commands it?* Or, *does God command something because it is right and good?* Or, put even more simply: *Is God good?*

From the Bible

1. What did the people of long ago come to discover about God according to Psalm 100:5? (Note Psalm 118:1)
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2. How did the Lord reveal to the prophet Micah what it meant to be a *good* person according to Micah 6:8?
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3. Some people do not understand that God is the ultimate definition of *good* and that He is also the ultimate source of infinite knowledge and wisdom. Sometimes it seems that God is *not* good or doesn't really care because we experience pain/illness/tragedy/distress. But how does Romans 8:28 correct this idea?
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4. Even when people are not good to us, how does the Gospel teach us to treat them according to Romans 12:21? (Also consider Romans 13:3.)
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Worship always brings the worshiper closer to the one he or she worships and results in him or her increasingly becoming more like the one he or she worships.

5. Those who worship God in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:24) experience the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). How does this transform them?
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Can a person be good without knowing who the Source of good is? Can a person aim to be good without knowing what *true* goodness is?

Additional References

Qureshi, Nabeel. 2018 (2014). *Seeking Allah Finding Jesus. A Devout Muslim Encounters Christianity*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.