

I Have A Friend Who...

#4: Does It Matter What I Believe As Long As I'm Sincere?

1. Acknowledge that sometimes sincerity _____

Proverbs 16:25 *Sometimes what seems right is really a road to death.*

We must be sincere & _____

2. Put religious truth claims _____

a) Accept the concept _____

John 8:32 *Then you will know the **truth**, and the **truth** will set you free.*

b) Examine religious _____

Proverbs 14:15 *The gullible believe anything they're told; the prudent sift and weigh every word.*

3. Respond to Jesus's _____

John 8:58 *I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!*

John 10:30 *I and the Father are one.*

John 3:36 *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.*

John 8:24 *I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.*

John 14:6 *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

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How do people validate their belief systems?

Many people who would carefully examine a school before sending their children there, or would carefully research a company before investing in it, never set aside time to investigate what they believe.

1) If the religion makes historical claims how valid are they? For example if the religion is based on a historical figure, then is there strong historical evidence that the person actually existed?

2) Does the belief system make sense, is it consistent? For example if the religion teaches that you must own a hat, and also teaches elsewhere that you must not own a hat, then that is contradictory. It does not make sense. If a religion is true then we would expect it to have robust internal integrity, and not contradict itself.

3) Does the belief system reflect reality? For example, if the religion in question teaches that all people are basically good, do we see evidence of this, or is the opposite true? If the opposite is true then we must question that religion. So it is reasonable to expect a belief system to have good external integrity, and accurately reflect the reality we see around us.

4) Does the religion have good explanatory power? In other words does it give first-rate explanations of those things which puzzle us most? Things like the nature of being, where we came from, where we are going, the problem of guilt, the origin of logic, love, good and evil, and so on. We can expect a true belief system to cast light on these questions.

5) Lastly how does it stack up against other belief systems? If we were to consider one religion which had no historical evidence, no internal integrity, no external integrity, and weak explanatory power, against one whose history was verified, which suffered no major internal or external integrity problems, and offered reasonable explanations for many of life's mysteries. Then common sense dictates that we choose the latter over the former. Ultimately we must compare belief systems and settle on the strongest.

Origin: where do I come from?

Meaning: what does life really mean?

Morality: how do I define good and evil?

Destiny: what happens when I die?