



I Believe

LESSON ONE VIDEO OUTLINE

(Chapter I in *Light From Light* book)

- I. INTRODUCTION
 - A. Why the Nicene Creed, and where did it come from?
 - B. Professed by almost all Christians

- II. TO BELIEVE
 - A. “I believe” vs. “We believe”
 - B. Nothing to do with acceptance based on no evidence; faith is supra-rational
 - C. St. John Henry Newman’s views on faith and reason
 - 1. We assent to religious claims in a similar way as we assent to other claims
 - 2. Assent comes from a combination of testimonies, historical records, intuitions, hunches, etc.
 - 3. To “believe” rather than “to know”

- III. “IN GOD”
 - A. In Latin, “in” also means moving toward. We never experience or know God totally.
 - B. “God” is not one being among many, not even the *supreme* being
 - C. God is the sheer act of “to be” itself, and the cause of bringing all of finite reality into being

- IV. TWO PATHS TO THE EXISTENCE OF GOD BY THE LIGHT OF NATURAL REASON
 - A. Intelligibility
 - 1. Every science is predicated on the supposition that the world is marked by form, pattern, and understandability (i.e., “intelligibility”).
 - 2. The world is not God. God is something like a great intelligence that embedded discoverable patterns into the structure of the universe.
 - 3. Science analyzes created things in the universe, but since God is not a created thing, he cannot be known fully by science.

B. Contingency

1. Things in the world exist, but do not have to exist.
2. Things do not contain the reason for their own existence, so you have to look for the cause that makes each thing exist. Then, you look for the cause of the cause, and the cause of that cause, and so on.
3. Ultimately, there has to be the existence of some noncontingent reality that explains contingent being. Thomas Aquinas referred to this reality as the “uncaused cause” or the “necessary being”—what people mean by “God.”



I Believe

LESSON ONE QUESTIONS *for* UNDERSTANDING

1. Why is the Nicene Creed important? How does it serve as a point of contact among Christians?

2. What is the tension between the early introductory words, "We believe" and the current form from the Latin, "I believe"? How is each statement appropriate in expressing the doctrine of Christianity?



3. Is faith accepting things without evidence? How is St. John Henry Newman's explanation of how we come to assent to a proposition relevant to this question?

4. What is the Christian understanding of the word "God"? Why is "knowing God" not like knowing anything else? (Exod. 3:14; CCC 198, 206)

5. What principles of science and rationality support belief in God as Creator?

6. What is the “moral” argument for God’s existence?

LESSON ONE

QUESTIONS *for* APPLICATION

1. Reflect on the fact that just about every Christian in the world professes the same Nicene Creed, yet there are deep divisions among Christians. How can you stress the “common ground” in your relationships with non-Catholic Christians?

2. In your own words, how would you explain that faith and science are not mutually exclusive?



3. Do you have any agnostics or atheists in your circle of family or friends? What, if anything, in this first lesson has helped you better understand and potentially communicate who God is and the truth that he exists?