

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## *Finding God Beyond Religion: A Guide for Skeptics, Agnostics & Unorthodox Believers Inside & Outside the Church*

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### **Chapter 1**

What are your earliest impressions, thoughts, images, and feelings regarding God?

In what ordinary aspects of life do you stumble upon the Holy?

How has your concept of and relationship with God grown? What is your current view of God? What are the catalysts that have influenced your concept of God?

### **Chapter 2**

How did you pray when you were a child, and what did you expect from the act of praying? How has your prayer practice changed since you were a child?

How do you know when your prayers are answered, and how do you explain it when they are not?

How does the notion of appreciation or presence as a form of prayer resonate with your personal prayer practice?

What aspects of interpersonal relationships do you experience as a dimension of prayer?

### **Chapter 3**

What religious teachings that you learned through a specific religion or church do you no longer believe? Why?

How would you articulate the distinction between belief and faith in your own words? How is it similar to or different from the distinction described in this chapter?

What role, if any, has doubt or questioning played in bringing you to your current beliefs about religious truths? What role, if any, has it played in deepening your spiritual life?

If faith is a way of living that involves trust in God, life, and love, do you consider yourself a person of faith? Why or why not?

### **Chapter 4**

How did you view Jesus when you first learned about him?

When you consider Jesus from the perspective of low Christology—that is, with an emphasis on his human attributes—does the perspective of low Christology conflict with the belief that he was or is divine? Explain.

Why or how might it be true that humanity and divinity are inseparable?

In what ways might you claim that Jesus was unique, different from anyone before or after him?

### **Chapter 5**

Why, despite the radical sound of it, might you say with confidence that you too are a mystic?

Identify a time in your life when you felt “all is well,” as Julian of Norwich wrote, despite the outward fact that it was not.

Who, if anyone, related to you in such a way that you felt special to, exceptional to, loved by, or close to God?

What aspects of your self do you encounter when you look within?

### **Chapter 6**

Presuming that you have been inspired, describe how it felt and what it led you to do.

When you first encountered the Bible, what did you learn about its authority?

In what ways has the Bible shaped your life? How has its message made you a better person?

In what biblical stories and parables can you see yourself?

### **Chapter 7**

Describe the feelings that accompanied your first exposure to moral teachings. What positive purpose do moral teachings like the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule have in your life?

Describe a time in your life when being true to the Spirit may have required you to go beyond the law.

What life lessons have you learned? What meaning have you discovered by experiencing life’s ups and downs? How would you put into words the “moral” of your life?

### **Chapter 8**

How do you try to make sense of the fact that evil is so ever-present?

What, if any, incongruence is there between your notion of God and the existence of evil?

How has your experience of life’s difficulties affected your beliefs about God? Have you ever experienced the loving presence of God in the midst of suffering? If so, describe what that was like.

### **Chapter 9**

What reforms do you think are needed in your religious tradition and/or in churches in general?

If you once belonged to a church, why did you leave? What would be required in order for you to return to communal religious practice?

What is your experience of church regarding cultural life versus religious or spiritual life?

Which have you heard more about from the pulpit, “good and evil” or the idea that we are spiritual beings?