

II. WHAT to Watch For (Some “Schemes”)

- A. Moral destruction
- B. Self doubts (e.g. “I don’t have much to offer”; “I’m just insecure”; “I don’t know *who* I am.”)
- C. Spiritual doubts (e.g. “Am I good enough?” “Can God really use me?” “Am I really saved?”)
- D. Intellectual doubts

Christian Smith, *Soul Searching*: Students leave faith behind primarily because of intellectual doubt and skepticism (page 89). “Why did they fall away from the faith in which they were raised?” This was an open-ended question there were no multiple-choice answers. 32% said they left faith behind because of intellectual skepticism or doubt. (“It didn’t make any sense anymore.” “Some stuff is too far-fetched for me to believe.” “I think scientifically and there is no real proof.” “Too many questions that can’t be answered.”)

David Kinnaman (*You Lost Me*) says that 12% says it’s “completely true” and 23% says it’s “completely or mostly true” that they have significant intellectual doubts. (Kindle, 3045-3047).

1. Does **God** really exist? Is God really “good”?
2. Is **Jesus** who Christians claim he is?
3. Is the **Bible** really reliable and true?
4. Doesn’t **science** conflict with faith?
5. How can nice people really be spiritually “lost”? The idea of **hell** seems so intolerant. It doesn’t seem fair.

- E. Volitional doubts (e.g. “I don’t *want* to believe”; “I don’t *want* to do it”)

III. WHO to Watch For

A. Prominent and popular skeptics

1. Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (2006).
2. Christopher Hitchens, *How Religion Poisons Everything* (2007).
3. Bart Ehrman (Professor of Religious Studies, Univ. of North Carolina)
 - a. *How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee* (2014).
 - b. *Forged Writing in the Name of God—Why the Bible’s Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are* (2011).
4. Lawrence Krause (atheist cosmologist, Arizona State): “Change is always one generation away. So if we can plant the seeds of doubt in our children, religion will go away in a generation, or at least largely go away. And that’s what I think we have an obligation to do” (*Salon* [Nov 4, 2014]).

B. Internet influences

“When our participants were asked to cite key influences in their conversion to atheism – people, books, seminars, etc. – we expected to hear frequent references to the names of the ‘New Atheists.’ We did not. Not once. Instead, we heard vague references to videos they had watched on YouTube or website forums” (Larry Taunton, “Listening to Young Atheists: Lessons for a Stronger Christianity,” *The Atlantic* online [June 6, 2013]).

IV. WHERE to Turn for Help

- A. Christian prayer.
- B. Christian peers.
- C. Christian parents (biological and spiritual).
- D. Christian publications (e.g. websites, videos, books). See <http://www.roomfordoubt.com/recommended-resources.html>.
- E. Christian professors (e.g. @Lincoln Christian University!)