

PRAXiS

# One-Star Review: Modern Apologetics



PRAXiS

## HOW TO USE

This discussion guide is designed for you, leaders, to guide your group through this Praxis video series. This series is structured as a conversation based around engaging questions intended to promote thought-provoking discussion throughout each episode. When these questions pop up on the screen, hit pause and turn the question to the group. **Each episode includes the following:**

### BIG IDEA

We highlight the big idea behind the episode, emphasizing key scriptures or quotes, to give you and your group an idea of what will be covered in the video. Feel free to share this before pressing play, or after to summarize what was taught into a concise thought.

### SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

If the video question does not invite participation, use these questions to promote further interest. These questions are simply reworded to present the idea in a different way. We invite you to be creative and present the questions in a way that engages your group.

### DISCUSS

The video questions are created to encourage conversation and to allow the formation of thoughts and ideas – inviting participants to wrestle with and begin sharing their beliefs and experiences. This is just the beginning. The discussion questions exist to go deeper and to invite more intimate and transformational conversation.

## CONTEXT

### ■ IN A CHURCH OR LARGE GROUP SETTING

This guide is designed to be used by a leader, so begin by identifying those leaders and getting a guide into each of their hands. If you are watching the episodes with more than 20 people, we would advise identifying multiple leaders and having them focus on a section of the group. When the video questions arise, have them turn to their “small group” and discuss the questions openly. Time dependent, ask each smaller group to share with the larger group what was shared. This invites more people to share without the intimidation of a large group setting. Whether you keep these groups consistent from week to week, or you mix it up, remaining the same for the discussion portion of each episode will allow for greater depth and increased transparency.

### ■ IN A SMALL GROUP SETTING

Every leader in the room should have one of these guides prior to beginning the video. It can be helpful to identify one leader as the facilitator, and others as helpers. The facilitator can guide the video question time, with helpers stepping in as needed based on the direction of conversation. Come discussion time, gathering into small groups where one or two leaders oversee a small group can invite quieter participants to engage and allow for greater depth of conversation.

### ■ AS AN INDIVIDUAL

While this discussion guide is designed with group participation in mind, the content is something we believe is valuable for every individual. We advise watching these episodes with a pen in hand and paper before you. Have your Bible handy and get ready to pause the video. You get to take this at your pace! When Scripture is referenced, open your Bible and read along – when questions are asked, hit pause and write out your answer. If questions arise in your mind that you are unable to answer, write them down to ask later.

## GET READY

Take a breath, the pressure is off. We are not asking you to teach, or to have the answer to every question. Your role is to guide, facilitate, but most importantly to **listen** and **invite**.

### **Invite questions. Invite conversation.**

This discussion guide was created to provide direction for the conversation, but not to limit or harness the group. During the video, listen to what the participants say. Do not feel the need to answer the question yourself. Be comfortable with silence. Give it fifteen seconds before you use a supporting question. Let them think.

“When will I know when to press play again?” Trust me, you’ll know. Conversation will end, or you may even have to re-focus the group if they go down a rabbit trail. If a valuable question or topic is sparked during the video, write it down and say you will return as a group to it during the discussion time.

When it comes time for discussion, follow the pace of the group. Let them naturally guide the conversation around what content stuck out from the video, or what questions were sparked for them. You are not confined to the questions in this guide. Pick the ones that stand out to you or add your own. This time will look different for each group and that’s intentional.

### **Listen and Invite.**

# One-Star Review

THREE EPISODES | PRAXIS SERIES 12

## BIG IDEA

Because we live in an age of post-truth, surrounded by different beliefs, conflicting values and sciences. It can be intimidating being a Christian and knowing how to share what you believe with others. Especially when all we see around us are negative reviews of Christianity.

In this series, we explore ways to better understand these negative reviews, in order for us to know how to share our faith in simple yet practical ways without adding to the one-star review.

# One Star Review

## EPISODE 1 | KEEPING FAITH TO YOURSELF

### BIG IDEA

When you share something with someone it's because you not only like it, but you're also convinced of it.

### KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

**Matthew 5:14-16:** *You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your [light] shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.***

#### **Let the [Light] shine:**

When we see Scripture like Matthew 5:14-16 it describes to us the Light in two ways:

- 1.) The Light is one description of God in the person of Jesus (John 8:12).
- 2.) The Light we shine to others testifies whether the Light lives in us or not (1 John 1:1-7).

**2 Corinthians 5:11, 19-20:** *Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, **we work hard to [persuade] others...** For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And **He gave us this wonderful message of [reconciliation].** So we are Christ's **[ambassadors]**; God is making His appeal through us.*

**[Persuade]:** “convincing one to believe something with reason and action.” Our persuasion should come from a place of love. This is what we need to work hard at.

**[Ambassadors]:** “a person who acts as a representative or promoter of a specified activity.”

Representing what God has given us and to help others find this same gift. This is what it means to be a Christian -- to be responsible for sharing and living out our faith with other people.

**[Reconciliation]:** “to restore what was made broken.”

The message that we bring to people is a message that reunites friendship between God and His people. We need to share and explain what Jesus did on the Cross & Resurrection, for you and me.



## SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **Have you ever had such a good experience with something that you recommended it to everyone you knew? What was it that made you want to share the experience?**
  - Why do we tend to have more confidence recommending something we've experienced personally?
  - Was there something you've recommended that you've personally never experienced or had no clue or idea what it was about? How did that backfire on you?
  - How would you describe the difference between knowing *about* Jesus and knowing Jesus?
- **Why do you think people feel like faith should be kept private? What should our response to this thinking be?**
  - What are some fears and worries that stop you from sharing your faith? What are the proverbial 'bowls' that cover your light from shining (Matthew 5:14-16)?
- **Why do you think it feels harder to "recommend" your faith than to recommend anything else to your friends?**
  - Do you think what you share or don't share reflects what you value most in your life? Where would you place your faith in comparison to the other things you share?
  - What are some things that will cost you, if you shared your faith with those closest to you? (friendship, popularity, comfort, idols?)

## DISCUSS

- **What challenged or encouraged you the most in regards to how much you value or like your faith?**
  - **What excites you most about your faith? Are there experiences that has made you convinced of this faith you believe in?**
  - **Have you ever experienced sharing or recommending your faith to someone? What ended up happening?**
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## NEXT STEPS

**#1.)** Consider spending time this week, reflecting on the question and response Jesus gave Peter in John 21:15-17. How would you answer the same question Jesus gave Peter? And how would you react to the same response Jesus gave Peter?

Allow this to bring your heart into an honest place with Jesus.

**#2.)** Consider spending time this week praying for someone you know and asking God, "God give me boldness to talk with \_\_\_\_\_ about my faith in you."

# ONE STAR REVIEW

## EPISODE 2 | THE BIBLE TEACHES PEOPLE TO HATE

### BIG IDEA

Love is the framework whenever we use the Bible to ‘nudge’ outsiders to meet Jesus and ‘judge’ insiders to live for Him.

### KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

**Matthew 7:1-5:** “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged. And **why worry about a speck in your friends’ eye when you have a log in your own?** How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! **First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friends eye.**”

**1 Corinthians 5:12:** “It isn’t my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning.”

### Rules assume Relationships:

“When we try to hold people [accountable] to rules that they haven’t signed up for, then we’ve misunderstood how rules work.

You can’t have a rule over someone if you don’t have relationship with them. In the same way, if there is no relationship between an individual and Jesus, it makes it hard for the rules to apply or even keep that person [accountable].”

**[Accountable/Accountability]:** requiring or expected to explain, justify or take responsibility for one’s actions or decisions.

**John 13:34-35:** “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

**Ephesians 4:29:** “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”



## SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **What are some ‘house rules’ that you or your family have that are different than friends?**
  - If your friends or guests are in your home, do you think your house rules should apply to them? Why or why not?
  - Does Jesus have any ‘house rules’ that would apply equally to both a believer and an unbeliever?
  - In what attitude or manner would you explain your ‘house rules’ to guests or friends that come to your house? How would you explain Jesus’ ‘house rules’?
- **Why do you think Jesus asks Christians to judge? How can we do this in a loving way?**
  - How important do you think Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:5 plays a vital role in how we judge Christians? Explain why.
- **Have you ever confronted a friend about something they did? Has anyone confronted you about something you did?**
  - How would you define whether you’ve judged someone in love or not? Is it fair if we only gauge it by their response?
  - What has been your experience when being confronted by Jesus on sin?
  - Do you believe Jesus has your best interest when He confronts you?

## DISCUSS

- **Read 1 Corinthians 5:12 and discuss the differences are between what it looks like nudge someone and what it looks like to (healthy) judge someone.**
  - **Do you have someone on the ‘inside’ who you have relationship with that keeps you accountable? What has gone well and what hasn’t?**
  - **Jesus is usually first on the scene, through His Spirit, to confront you and I about sin. In what ways do you allow or seek out Jesus’ accountability in your life? What keeps you from not doing this or continuing to do this?**
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## NEXT STEPS

Let’s challenge ourselves to walk into some life changing moments this week:

**#1)** Seek out a family member, friend, or leader (someone you feel safe with) and ask them to keep you accountable in a certain area of your life. Be open and honest about that area in your life and share it all. Invite them to speak into areas of your life and then pray together.

**#2)** Read Hebrews 4:16, and do the same thing in challenge #1, but with Jesus. Finish with prayer and receive His forgiveness with great thanks and hope.

# ONE STAR REVIEW

## EPISODE 3 | CHRISTIANITY IS ANTI-SCIENCE

### BIG IDEA

Our faith can change others perspective on Jesus by not being afraid of bringing faith into rejected areas. Through question asking, honest doubting and investigation we are able to experience and see the existence of God.

### KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

**Matthew 22:37:** *“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.”*

\*From the beginning of Christianity, Jesus has invited us to worship God not only with our heart & soul (experiences), but also with our **brains**.

**Colossians 1:16-17:** *“For by him [Jesus Christ] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”*

**[Atheist/Atheism]:** a person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of God or gods. The word itself comes from the Greek word atheos. Which means (*a* = “without”) and (*theos* = “a god”)

**[Philosophy]:** the study of general and fundamental questions that pertain to life such as; knowledge, values, reason, mind, reality and morality.

**[Objective Truth]:** based on facts not influenced by personal feelings, opinion, prejudices, interpretations, or bias.

**[Subjective Truth]:** based on a person’s perspective, feelings, or opinions.

**Be Honest with Doubt:** Use your mind and your heart together. Don’t settle for the upfront answer. Research and investigate Christian writings and Atheist writings.

**Bring Your Faith with you into your vocation:** Use your mind to worship & serve God. Together, Christianity and Science has historically progressed medicines and academic establishments of thought and innovation.

**Ask more Questions when someone disagrees:** Listen to understand the person and in response ask more questions to make a difference not a point. A listening ear will give way for a listening ear.

## SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **What does it mean to you that you are called to love God with all your mind? Have you ever felt the pressure to believe that faith and reason don't work together?**
  - What are some ways you worship or serve God with your mind?
- **Which of the science or health advancements that Christians have been responsible for is the most surprising? Why do you think so many people don't realize the impact Christians have had on these areas?**
  - What areas in your life (home, school, friendships, jobs) do you think people would be most surprised by, if they knew you were a Christian?
  - What areas in your life do you doubt your faith can make an impact?
  - Where have you seen first-hand, the impact of your faith? Where have you not?
- **If you consider yourself a Christian, what are some of the foundations of your faith? If you don't consider yourself a Christian, what are some of the foundations of your worldview?**
  - Essentially, why do you believe in what you believe? Have you been able to verify your belief through both experience (heart & soul) and research (mind) to explain why?
  - What would you need to experience or see for you to believe?
  - What are some doubts that you have in your unbelief or belief?

## DISCUSS

- **Do you find loving/worshiping God with your soul & heart (experience) easier than your mind (research)?**
  - **What are some other reasons that haven't been discussed in this series on why Christianity gets a one-star review? How have you engaged your mind in understanding why that review was given? Has it made your faith stronger or weaker?**
  - **Share why or how you came to faith in Jesus? Would you say your decision involved both your mind and your experience (soul & heart)?**
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## NEXT STEPS

- #1.)** Engage your mind by remembering why you came to faith. Or continue to answer the question given by Jesus, "do you love/like me?" Pray for that person who doesn't know Jesus.
- #2.)** Engage your mind by intentionally finding time to meet with that person of accountability.
- #3.)** Consider bringing your doubts to Jesus and finding someone who can help you on this journey.