

Lesson 1 / June 1, 2008

Unchanging God. . . Changing Faith

for use as

STEP 1

Lesson 1

Focus:

We can depend on our
unchanging God.

Lesson 1

Bible Basis:

Exodus 20:1-3; Psalm
99:2-5; Malachi 3:6

In light of high school students' falling away from faith in record numbers during college, your class will be honest about what doubts they have about God, and discuss what they can do to be better prepared.

Spend a little time on Frank Turek's website: www.crossexamined.org. Turek's research shows that 75% of teens will walk away from their faith and from the church after high school. Yes, we worship and serve an unchanging God, but obviously, our faith in Him can change. Why do teens walk away? According to Frank Turek:

- ▶ They find the church irrelevant
- ▶ They find the world attractive
- ▶ They are intellectually skeptical about the Christian faith
- ▶ They are unequipped to resist atheistic professors
- ▶ College professors are five times more likely to be atheistic
- ▶ One-half of college professors view evangelical Christians unfavorably

God never changes, but sometimes our faith does. In fact, studies have shown that three out of four of you in this room will walk away from your faith when you leave high school.

• **Why do you think that so many of your peers seem to lose their faith when they leave home?** (*Freedom; experimentation; becoming your own person; not equipped or prepared for the world*)

• **Do you have friends who have stopped walking after the Lord? Why have they stopped?**

Share: Today we will look at a website called www.crossexamined.org. (*Upload this site for your class if possible.*) Frank Turek is a speaker and author who has a passion to help young people know why Christianity is true and to know how to defend it and refute its attackers. His research has shown the following reasons why teens leave their faith. (*Read the above list, or read directly from the website.*)

• **Which of those reasons apply to you?**

During today's lesson on our awesome and unchanging God, we will focus on making our faith personal, feasible, and defensible.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *High School Teacher's Guide*; your Step 4 appears below.)

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Share: As each of you contemplates leaving home after high school, you will likely face temptations to leave the God of the Bible and the God of your parents for other gods. This is exactly what the first commandment is all about. From our initial and honest discussion, some of you may be very apprehensive about how your faith will be tested. We will conclude today's lesson by taking one more look at Frank Turek's website. His mission is to help teens see why Christianity is true, how to defend it, and how to refute its attackers. (*Revisit the website and watch a segment of his TV program: "I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist."*)

What do you think of Frank Turek's approach?

Are there questions about God that have never been satisfactorily answered for you? What are they? (*Sovereignty and evil; the Trinity; God out-of-date; God of OT and NT are so different; Science vs. Faith; miracles; etc.*)

Take note of any tough issues that teens bring up. Don't try to deal with them now, but figure out where you can go for answers, and make a plan to address those difficult topics in the very near future. If you need to, plan on bringing in experts, like your pastor or someone from the community whose job field qualifies him/her to talk about that topic.

Have any of you heard anything about Ben Stein's movie *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*? What do you think of it?

Share: Frank Turek and Ben Stein are both waging war on the anti-God establishment within higher education. During the coming week you may want to visit both of their websites. Ben Stein's website is www.getexpelled.com. If you haven't seen the movie, see it! (*Maybe you could go together as a class. There is a 13-page leader's guide that can be downloaded and used for discussion. If you have time, go to this website at the end of class to get your teens familiar with it. On page 12 there is an outline for a classroom debate. If your class is interested, this would be an excellent way to pursue this subject*).

Both Turek and Stein feel that Christians cannot cede the intellectual high ground to atheistic institutions and scientists. The "scientific" theory of Darwinism is hugely flawed, but universities and scientific programs practically forbid any rigorous analysis of it.

Lesson 1
Memory
Verse

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

—James 1:17

- ▶ Darwinism is defined as life developing through an unguided process—in other words: Nothing + Time/Chance = Everything
- ▶ Intelligent Design is proposed as the best explanation for certain features of the universe and for the development of life on earth.

Do you think it matters which of these you believe? Why or why not? What are the probable consequences of each belief? (*Darwinism: devaluing of life, esp. human; no purpose in life; no logical morality; no afterlife; no soul; etc. ID: life has purpose; humans have souls; life has meaning and morals; there is an afterlife and accountability; etc.*)

Obviously the stakes are high, yet most Christians are on their heels when it comes to science and defense of the faith (apologetics). Challenge your teens to visit these two websites. Frank Turek offers many other sites as well. Challenge your teens to see *Expelled*. Encourage your teens to ask some of their tough God questions at home with parents and siblings.

Close with prayer: **Dear unchanging God of the Bible, may we come to see You and Your works as one beautiful tapestry that draws us to worship You alone. May we also see our need to engage our faith with our minds as well as our hearts, as we contemplate living out our faith in the world, away from home. Teach us to love You, as Your first commandment says in Exodus, as the only true and unchanging God. And teach us to love You, as Your first commandment in the Gospels says, with all our heart, *mind*, strength, and soul. In Jesus' name, amen.**

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