

# 12 THINGS GOD CAN'T DO

## Discussion Guide

### 1. GOD CAN'T LEARN

1. Besides “Can God create a rock he can’t lift?”, what other questions do sceptics ask about God?
2. On page 31, Nick asks three questions about Psalm 139. Explore the same questions using Job 38-42 as a launching point.
  - a. What does God know?
  - b. How does he know this?
  - c. What effect does this have on Job?
3. How is it good news that God is not able to learn?
4. What does this truth change about:
  - a. Your life?
  - b. Your understanding of God?
  - c. Your perception of yourself?

### 2. GOD CAN'T BE SURPRISED

1. Do you think your culture is optimistic or pessimistic about the future? Why?
2. What would it mean for humanity if everything that was going to happen was pre-determined?
3. How would you summarise Nick’s argument for humans having free will while God also knows exactly what will happen?
4. How does the truth that God cannot be surprised change:
  - a. Your life?
  - b. Your understanding of God?
  - c. Your perception of yourself?

### 3. GOD CAN'T CHANGE HIS MIND

1. When have you recently changed your mind?  
Was the cause internal or external?
2. What biblical examples of God’s feelings seeming to contradict his actions can you think of? (i.e. being grieved by Israelite idolatry but remaining faithful to his promises) What does God feeling such things say about the fact that he doesn’t change his mind?

3. What examples can you think of when God kept his promises even though humanly speaking he had every right to change his mind? How do examples like these elevate your view of God?
4. How does this truth change...
  - a. Your life?
  - b. Your understanding of God?
  - c. Your perception of yourself?

#### 4. GOD CAN'T BE SEEN

1. How do you define total invisibility? What examples of very real but invisible things can you think of?
2. In your own words, how would you explain that God's invisibility is amazing and praiseworthy?
3. How does God's invisibility line up with the ways in which he does reveal himself? (For example, his word, his creation, through Christ?) Why does God reveal himself in these ways?
4. How does both the truth that God is not a visible being and that he shields us from beholding his glory change:
  - a. Your life?
  - b. Your understanding of God?
  - c. Your perception of yourself?

#### 5. GOD CAN'T BEAR TO LOOK

1. What is the connection between rest and God not being able to look at us?
2. What has God done to make a way for us to be with him even though we can't look at him and he can't bear to look at us?
3. How do you define justice? Why is true justice only possible with God?
4. How does God not being able to look at us because he is righteous and justice change...
  - a. Your life?
  - b. Your understanding of God?
  - c. Your perception of yourself?

#### 6. GOD CAN'T CHANGE

1. Give a few examples of changes that have taken place in yourself or others that were good, and some that were bad. What caused each change?
2. Using the examples you have given, why is each change not necessary or possible for God?

3. What unchanging truths and characteristics of God do you most rely on?
4. How does the truth that God remains the same change:
  - a. Your life?
  - b. Your understanding of God?
  - c. Your perception of yourself?

## 7. GOD CAN'T BE LONELY

1. What constitutes a “meaningful relationship”? What consequences of loneliness have you seen or experienced?
2. In your own words, can you describe how God is both independent and relational, and why it matters that he is both?
3. What makes the idea of God’s true, meaningful, loving, relationship with people (and his call for us to have such relationships with other people) counter-cultural? How have you seen this in your everyday life?
4. How does the truth that God is love and cannot be lonely change:
  - a. Your life?
  - b. Your understanding of God?
  - c. Your perception of yourself?

## 8. GOD CAN'T SUFFER

1. What’s the difference between suffering and emotions/feelings?
2. Do you tend to have a harder time believing that God is impassable or that God is not apathetic? Why?
3. How can you summarise what makes God’s inability to suffer good news?
4. How does the truth that God does not suffer change:
  - a. Your life?
  - b. Your understanding of God?
  - c. Your perception of yourself?

## 9. GOD CAN'T DIE

1. How do you feel about living for ever? What are the pros and cons, humanly speaking?
2. How does the truth that you’ll never reach the end of God mean that eternity won’t become boring?
3. How does the truth that God cannot die and has no beginning change:
  - a. Your life?
  - b. Your understanding of God?
  - c. Your perception of yourself?

## 10. GOD CAN'T BE TEMPTED

1. In what ways are you tempted to doubt God's "Godness"? What are some common cultural temptations to deny God's "Godness"?
2. Why does it not make sense for God to experience temptation?
3. Besides the temptation to believe that God doesn't love us, which is addressed in the book of James in the Bible, what other biblical examples of temptation—and God's strength to overcome it—can you think of?
4. How does the truth that God cannot be tempted change:
  - a. Your life?
  - b. Your understanding of God?
  - c. Your perception of yourself?

## 11. GOD CAN'T LIE

1. Have you seen the movie *The Invention of Lying*? What did you think of it? If you haven't seen the movie, how do you define lying? How does lying fit into our world?
2. In what areas does culture suggest that God is a liar? How do these narratives rely on using good things for evil ends?
3. How is God's goodness essential to his truthfulness? And vice versa?
4. How does the truth that God cannot lie change:
  - a. Your life?
  - b. Your understanding of God?
  - c. Your perception of yourself?

## 12. GOD CAN'T DENY HIMSELF

1. What sorts of things tempt people to disown God or to feel that they can't finish in the faith?
2. What is your primary takeaway about God as a result of who he is, and that he cannot deny himself?
3. Which of the 12 things God can't do has stood out to you the most?