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DISCUSSION GUIDE – Based on the 3-minute video at OverflowToday.com titled:

Dembski – Science makes God unnecessary?

Featuring Dr. William Dembski, Senior Fellow at the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture. (Discovery.org) Dembski has his Ph.D. in mathematics and also in philosophy and has taught at Baylor University, University of Notre Dame, Northwestern University, and other institutions.

Two of his many books are titled: Evidence for God: 50 Arguments and The Design Inference.

His website is: <http://www.designinference.com>

Section 1

Discuss what you applied in the past seven days from the last OverflowToday show.

Read Proverbs 18:15. Briefly discuss how this passage applies to life today? How can this advice be beneficial to, first a) scientists who are atheistic, and then b) Christians who seek to defend the faith?

Discuss your thoughts about the popular statement "All truth is God's truth."

Section 2

Watch the podcast titled Dembski – Science makes God unnecessary? at <http://OverflowToday.com>

Section 3

What did you think? What stood out to you as you watched this?

The show proposed that many people today have a mindset similar to this: "Science explains most everything about reality, so the notion of God is not really relevant to serious discussion."

Do you hear that from people very much? Do you sense this view in the fabric of our culture?

In this show, Dembski names 3 or 4 issues that he says are not sufficiently answered by materialist theories on the origins of life. Which ones do you remember and discuss the merits of Dembski's objections.

How could things have gotten here?

How could matter have organized itself?

Scientific fact: The earth was once too hot for life to exist, so life could not have always been here. So where did it come from if it has not always been here?

If, as materialists say, no intelligent agent (like God) was involved, then life had to organize itself. Nothing else in science organizes itself.

Not only organize itself, but then to become complex and advanced life forms.

Dembski is a strong proponent of design theory. It proposes that since life forms on earth are organized and structured in such a complex way, they are the result of conscious design, versus random occurrence.

What are some ways that Dembski describes this controversy between those who believe in some sort of designer being involved versus materialists, who will not entertain the notion of a designer or a God at all when looking at complex life and how it got here?

Scientists who are see a designer involved

Materialists who will not allow a notion of a designer

We see engineering everywhere in biology. Vs. Complex life had no "designer," it happened randomly.

Let's discuss this evidence of design Vs. Keep this issue at bay. Avoid analysis of design theory.

This is a science vs. science debate Vs. *This is a religion vs. science debate*

What were some of Dembski's points on how common scientific controversies have been through the centuries? What does he see different about this controversy?

The author paints this debate as a clash of worldviews. How does he dispute the charge by materialists that proponents of design are religiously motivated?

No, this is a science vs. science debate. But that having been said, there are theological ramifications involved if we end up concluding that design is present; that this could not have happened randomly.

Section 4

Discuss and plan a way that group members can apply these principles this week in others' lives.

One suggestion, if needed:

Each group member approach two friends this week and seek a discussion like this:

"In my Wednesday night discussion group, we are looking at the varying views on how life started on earth. Can I ask you a question or two to find out what you think about that?"

1 – All scientists are in agreement that the earth was once way too hot for any life to exist on the planet. This means life definitely has NOT always existed on the earth, of course. How did living matter "arrive" or begin, or have its origin here, then in your opinion?

2 - Two of the main points of view on how life began and how complex life, such as birds or humans, ended up here are these:

A – It all happened randomly. Complex mechanisms like the functioning of the human eye or like the complex DNA code that is found in each human cell...all that is the result of life organizing itself. No outside agent was involved. Extremely complex life organized itself into such forms.

As opposed to...

B – It was aided by design. Such complex mechanisms and complex information code cannot occur randomly. Such design cannot organize and build itself from scratch. Such complexity requires that a "designer" was involved.

When you hear these two theories, which do you gravitate towards and why?

Thank them for their opinion. Ask them if they have ever heard the teachings of the Bible on this matter and if they'd have interest in your explaining that? If they are interested, simply indicate that the book of Genesis would agree with scientists who see design in nature as far too complex to have happened randomly, and that there was a creator/designer of life on earth, that being God. You might also quote Colossians 1:15-17 as teaching that Jesus Christ was this creator/designer. Then ask them their views on who Jesus was and if they'd like you to explain more about him.