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Is the Theory of Evolution Compatible with the Christian Faith? (Leader's Guide)

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How to Use This Material?

This study of the relationship between the Christian faith and the science of evolution (as presented in Denis O. Lamoureux’s *Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes!*\(^1\)) is composed of six/seven “weeks.” Each week contains two sections. The 1\(^{st}\) section deals with two sets of questions. The first set, *Reading and Reflection* questions, are to be completed before each meeting and are meant to help the participant wrestle with the concepts introduced in that week’s chapters. The second set, *Discussion* questions, are to be written by the participants (and the leader) as they read. Both sets of questions are meant to foster discussion, but your groups should by no means limit itself to the questions contained in these sections. The 2\(^{nd}\) section includes external references and additional questions for “Digging Deeper” into the topics addressed in the 1\(^{st}\) section.

This study is intended for informal, small group discussion, such as that of a Bible study, catechism, or family reunion. Each theme may be unpacked on its own, but it is the hope of the authors that the entire study may be useful to the interested reader (leader and participant alike). The study is also aimed toward high school students, college students, and post-college adults with an interest in how science and the Christian faith interact.

As you read, it is our hope that you will come across (and come up with) questions which challenge you, both in understanding your personal faith and in understanding science. In these questions, you will have the opportunity to grow through asking and answering these questions in a healthy setting. Consider the context and history of these questions: Why has the church historically believed in *this* answer or *that* answer? What might you say if you were a Christian scientist? How might you be challenged to defend your answer?
Planning and Preparing for a Session

The material assumes that each session will have about 30–45 minutes in which to meet. It also assumes that each participant will have read the assigned sections of *Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes!* (2016) ahead of time, as well as studying the Reading and Reflection questions associated with that week. In order to prepare effectively for each meeting, all participants (including the leader or co-leaders) must answer the Reading and Reflection questions before the session.

More material has been included in each week than is likely to be covered in a single session. Discussion questions might often take priority over Reading and Reflection questions in-session, but the material covered in the 1st section will always be relevant to the concepts and ideas explored in small group. It must also be noted that these questions are intended as a guide for your discussion, but a spirited discussion may head off in any direction – plan accordingly for the flexibility of your small group.

Equipped for Service

This “Leader’s Guide” is meant to equip leaders of these small group discussions, and thus the following pages are far more detailed and expansive than the average participant may judge necessary for complex discussion. We offer information directly from other references, topics for each session (as implied by session titles), and suggested answers to the questions posed in the text. This has been done in the hope that you, as the leader, may more easily facilitate and moderate discussion in and amongst your peers in the small group. Your small group may be made up of the generation that initiates change in how the common Christian comes to understand these questions and answers – in the service of your peers, do not underestimate your own significance as a leader or co-leader.

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1 The title of *Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes!* is reminiscent of a book titled *Evolution: The Fossils Say No!* which partially inspired Lamoureux’s grappling with the conflict and compatibility models of science and faith. The book, published in 1979 by Master Books, is an attempt by author Duane Gish to argue against evolution based on fossil record observation.
Who is the author of *Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes!*?

At the time of this study’s publication, Denis O. Lamoureux is a professor of science and religion at St. Joseph's College at the University of Alberta, Canada. As the reader of his most famous work *Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes!* will soon discover, he has doctoral degrees in theology, biology, and dentistry.

Lamoureux began his faith journey as a young-earth creationist, raised in a household of young-earth creationists. After being confronted with the physical evidence of evolution for the first time in college, he renounced his faith, but an experience reading Scripture called him back to Christianity as a young-earth creationist. Some time later, he began to consider the possibility of the integration of evolution and the Christian faith, and he came to a tentative acceptance of evolutionary theory as a possible natural mechanism of God’s eternal plan for Creation. Now, he is a staunch evolutionary creationist and evangelical Christian.

It is important to note that Lamoureux is an evolutionary creationist, sometimes referred to as a “theistic evolutionist” (although he denounces this term in his book). Not all members of a discussion group may agree with the implied bias towards evolutionary creationism which is evidenced in the book, but the writers of this study guide note that his book is of use for all Christians seeking to better understand the concept of evolutionary theory and how Christians may wrestle with/respond to the questions posed by a majority of the scientific community and other interested individuals.
# Table of Contents

How to Use This Material........................................................................................................ 2
Planning and Preparing for a Session......................................................................................... 3
Equipped for Service.................................................................................................................. 3
Who is the author of Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes!?............................................. 4
Week 0: Before You Begin .................................................................................................... 6
  Overview Questions ............................................................................................................. 6
Week 1: Creation “versus” Evolution ....................................................................................... 7
  Reading and Reflection ........................................................................................................ 7
  Discussion ......................................................................................................................... 8
  Digging Deeper ............................................................................................................... 8
Week 2: Biblical Interpretation ............................................................................................... 9
  Reading and Reflection .................................................................................................... 9
  Discussion ..................................................................................................................... 11
  Digging Deeper ............................................................................................................. 12
Week 3: God’s Works and God’s Words .............................................................................. 13
  Reading and Reflection ................................................................................................. 13
  Discussion ..................................................................................................................... 15
  Digging Deeper ............................................................................................................. 15
Week 4: Five Basic Positions ............................................................................................... 16
  Reading and Reflection ................................................................................................. 16
  Discussion ..................................................................................................................... 17
  Digging Deeper ............................................................................................................. 18
Week 5: Famous Scientists and Historical Perspectives ....................................................... 19
  Reading and Reflection ................................................................................................. 19
  Discussion ..................................................................................................................... 21
  Digging Deeper ............................................................................................................. 22
Week 6: Academics and Evolution ....................................................................................... 23
  Reading and Reflection ................................................................................................. 23
  Discussion ..................................................................................................................... 24
  Digging Deeper ............................................................................................................. 24
Terms ....................................................................................................................................... 26
Bibliography ......................................................................................................................... 28
Week 0: Before You Begin
Overview Questions

1. Have you come up against the theory of evolution before? Was this a moment of confrontation, discussion, debate, curiosity, etc.? How did you respond?

2. Do you think that evolutionary sciences can enrich and deepen the faith of a Christian?

3. What is the difference between atheistic and theistic evolution? To which of the two are most Christians referring when they condemn "evolution"?

4. What is the heart of your Christian faith? In other words, what belief(s) do you consider absolutely irrefutable? On which, if any, beliefs is your personal relationship with God founded?

5. What do you consider the Image of God?
Reading and Reflection

“Trapped in ‘Either/Or’ Thinking”

Chapter Summary: Lamoureux notes the harmful dichotomy of "faith versus science" and "creation versus evolution" which the vast majority of Christians are taught from the beginning of their faith lives. Lamoureux began as a creationist, confronted atheistic evolution in his freshman year of college (studying biology) and was encouraged to choose the "science" side of the "Either/Or" debate, after which he made many mistakes as a result of his new understanding of life as insignificant and random happenstance, lacking in purpose. In a turn of events, he returned to the faith as a staunch creationist, determined once more to take down what he considered to be the heresy of evolutionism.

1. How does Lamoureux answer the angry young woman in the beginning of the chapter?

Suggested Answer: In response to the young woman who is upset with the anti-evolutionist teachings of her church and childhood, Lamoureux tells his own story of an evolving faith, pointing out that parents, teachers, and pastors have their own reasoning for furthering the assumption that evolution and faith are incompatible. Most importantly, he asks her to consider for herself what can be done to improve the situation. Lamoureux is not looking just to interest the reader for the short time it takes to read his book; he wants to change minds, change the culture, cause students to wrestle with these concepts as he has. In this goal, his book proves good fodder for a discussion on the changing relationship between science and faith.

2. What is the dichotomy that Lamoureux mentions?

Suggested Answer: The either/or of evolution or creation. This dichotomy, as Lamoureux notes, is common to the modern Christian mind – and to the modern mind in general.

3. What was the "completely logical conclusion" which challenged the Christian faith of the younger Lamoureux in the chapter? What do you think about his reasoning?
Suggested Answer: Lamoureux concludes that “since evolution is true, then the Bible must be false and Christianity a lie.” This dichotomy is, of course, arising out of a dangerously false line of thinking: that science is separate from God, his Word, and the realm of Christian thought.

Discussion

In addition to thinking about the above reading questions, please write two questions of your own regarding the chapters you read for today.

1.

2.

Digging Deeper

Consider the following quote as you read and study this work: "Biological evolution has significant theological implications, especially for Christianity" (158).
Reading and Reflection

“Opening God's Two Books”

Chapter Summary: The author posits the possibility of reading Scripture only as a description of "who" created the world, while nature (and by extension, science) tells us "how" he created. In this chapter, Lamoureux also details his experience in theology school and medical school, the first Christian professor who challenged his six-day creationism, and the evolutionary creationist's interpretation of Genesis 1.

1. Why did Lamoureux decide to get a Ph.D. in theology and a Ph.D. in biology?

Suggested Answer: Lamoureux chose to pursue both degrees in order that he might become a defender of the faith against the supposed heresy of evolutionism. This is a rather ironic motivation, considering that he subsequently changed his perspective on creation and evolution.

2. What is "scientific concordism"?

Suggested Answer: Concordism is “the belief that there is an alignment between the Bible and the facts of science” (27). Concordists believe that the discoveries of science regarding the natural world must agree with the teachings of the Bible on the natural world. Concordists also generally believe that all of Scripture has a basis in historical fact.

3. What does Lamoureux consider "so much more important than any view on how God had created the universe and life? What do you think of this statement?
Suggested Answer: “Deep in my heart of hearts, I knew that my personal relationship with Jesus was so much more important…” (28). The second part of this question is very much a response question – how have you and your peers read Lamoureux thus far? How much of faith is head and how much is heart?

4. What is a transitional fossil and why might it be significant to a Christian scientist?

Suggested Answer: A transitional fossil is a fossil of an extinct animal which appears in between two different kinds of extinct animals in the rock layers of the Earth. In order to be transitional, the in-between fossil must share characteristics of both “the animal from which they evolved” and the animal “into which they evolve” (33). A Christian scientist (like Lamoureux) might conclude that these fossils provide significant evidence that one species might have gradually transformed into another (proof of a biological evolutionary process).

5. Name the three examples of evolution which Lamoureux explains in-depth in this chapter. Which of the three, if any, do you consider especially intriguing or convincing?

Suggested Answer: While answers to the question will differ based on individual preference and rationale, the three examples named by Lamoureux here are: 1) fish to amphibian, 2) reptile to mammal, and 3) land mammal to whale.

“Terms That Begin to Free Us”

Chapter Summary: In this chapter, Lamoureux explores and redefines the terms which further the "false dichotomy" of science versus faith. These include: "creation," "evolution" (including three basic evolutionary sciences), "teleology and dysteleology," and "Intelligent Design." He considers what he calls the concept of Metaphysics-Physics as it relates to the act of faith which brings an atheist to the "belief that there is no design, no teleology, and no Creator" (58).
1. What is complementary about the relationship between modern science and Christian faith?

Suggested Answer: Lamoureux argues that modern science deals with physical realities, while the Christian faith deals with spiritual realities. These two different spheres of influence make science and faith complementary (that is, “combining in such a way as to enhance and emphasize the qualities of each other”\textsuperscript{3}).

2. What is the "act of faith" of anti-religious atheist Richard Dawkins?

Suggested Answer: By the reasoning of the Metaphysics-Physics Principle, Dawkins, who is a dysteleological evolutionist, sees the lack of physical evidence for a spiritual realm and makes a deductive leap that there must be no plan, no purpose, and no God of the universe. Lamoureux labels this an act arising from Dawkins’ atheistic belief that there is no design, no teleology, and no Creator.

3. What does the author claim that Genesis 1 does not reveal? What does he say it does reveal?

Suggested Answer: Lamoureux, and Christians like him, say that Genesis 1 does not reveal how the Lord created living creatures, but it does reveal who made plants, animals, and humans – the God of Christianity.

Discussion

In addition to thinking about the above reading questions, please write two questions of your own regarding the chapters you read for today.

1.

2.
Digging Deeper

Lamoureux says that "the word 'evolution' is conflated with a godless and purposeless view of the world" and "the term 'creation' is conflated with the literal interpretation of Genesis 1" (45). Do you agree, or disagree?

Consider the questions Lamoureux poses to the reader of this chapter. "Is it possible that statements about nature in Scripture do not align with the physical world because God accommodated and allowed the biblical writers to use the science-of-the-day? More specifically, did he communicate timeless spiritual truths by using an ancient understanding of origins as a vessel to deliver them? In other words, is it reasonable to reject scientific concordism, but to accept spiritual correspondence?" (60). What do you and your group think of these questions? Do you have answers to them?
Week 3: God’s Works and God’s Words  

Reading and Reflection  
“Intelligent Design and the Book of God's Works”

Chapter Summary: The "irreducible complexity" of Michael Behe is introduced, as is the "God-of-the-gaps" theory which contradicts the sovereignty of the Intelligent Designer. Lamoureux talks about the two basic types of divine revelation – Special and General – as well as passages affirming design in the physical world. He proposes a way to understand the complementary relationship of design to nature, between the ultimate (metaphysical) belief in intelligent design and scientific (physical) discoveries in nature. Finally, he attempts to refute Richard Dawkins and offer "An Evolutionary Perspective on Intelligent Design."

1. What do you think about the titles "Cosmic Artist" and "Supreme Engineer" for God?

Suggested Answer: Answers may vary, depending largely on the preferences of your small group. From a physical perspective, one title may be preferable over the other – for example, a humanities major may like the title “Cosmic Artist” while a physics major or engineer may prefer the “Supreme Engineer.” This question is primarily to inspire you to think about the way that you address God, and how different individuals may have different (and not necessarily wrong) approaches.

2. What are the six categories of biblical design put forth in Psalm 19, and which two extra categories are found in Romans 1?

Suggested Answer: This is primarily a reading comprehension question. The six characteristics are: 1) the creation is active, 2) the message in nature is understandable, 3) natural revelation is non-verbal, 4) the creation’s message is never-ending, 5) natural revelation is universal, and 6) the message through nature is a divine revelation. Lastly, 7) the message inscribed in the creation is rejectable, and 8) the creation makes all men and women accountable. Try to avoid the question of free will at this point in your small group discussion, unless you can find the extra time for it.
3. What is Lamoureux's *speculation*?

Suggested Answer: Recognizing intelligent design in nature carries eternal consequences. That is, refusing to accept the existence of an Intelligent Designer might very well be an issue of salvific proportions. This means, of course, that Christians (especially Christian scientists) are called all the more to pursue the knowledge that science and faith *can* be compatible, for the sake of those to whom they may be daily witnessing.

"Ancient Science and the Book of God's Words"

Chapter Summary: In these 38 pages, we find quite a lot of information to chew on. Lamoureux opens the chapter with a hypothetical discussion between himself and a Christian who cannot conceive of one being both evolutionist and a Christian. He states throughout that God does not lie and that questioning the truth of scientific concordism is not challenging the honesty of God's Words, but rather challenging a human interpretation of the Words. He discusses a way of reading Scripture "like a person in ancient times. Though the Bible was written for everyone in every generation, it was written to a specific ancient people during a specific ancient period."

1. What is the Principle of Accommodation?

Suggested Answer: Although explicitly defined in an earlier chapter as “the idea that God descends to our level to communicate with us” (31), this question serves as a reminder that Accommodation is the theological principle that God, while being in His nature unknowable and unreachable, has nevertheless communicated with humanity in a way which humans can understand and respond to. The concept is that Scripture has accommodated, or made allowance for, the original audience's language and general level of understanding.

2. What, according to Lamoureux, is the central purpose of Scripture?
Suggested Answer: The Bible, according to Lamoureux, serves to “reveal spiritual truths about God, his creation, and humans because God wants to be in a personal relationship with each of us” (86).

3. What is the difference between eisegesis and exegesis?

Suggested Answer: Both eisegesis and exegesis deal with studying and interpreting the Scriptures. Eisegesis is the common mistake of forcing one’s modern (scientific) ideas into a reading of the Bible. Exegesis is attempting to draw out the Biblical author’s intended meaning from a passage.

Discussion

In addition to thinking about the above reading questions, please write two questions of your own regarding the chapters you read for today.

1. 

2. 

Digging Deeper

In the “Intelligent Design” chapter, Lamoureux mentions upward and downward steps of faith. What does he mean by these?

What do you think about the following excerpt: "As Christians, we can proclaim that Jesus is the Lord of our 13.8-billion-year-old universe. Therefore, as science advances, every amazing discovery can be viewed in the light of God’s lordship over creation, including all the discoveries from the evolutionary sciences"?

Take a second look at the Billy Graham quote on page 112. How does the author feel about this? How do you feel about this? Do you agree with Billy Graham that God's creative method does not make any difference in regard to who we are and our relationship with the Lord?

What are your thoughts about the Lord using an evolutionary process to create men and women?
Week 4: Five Basic Positions
Chapter covered: “Moving Beyond the ‘Evolution’ vs. ‘Creation’ Debate”

Reading and Reflection
“Moving Beyond the ‘Evolution’ vs. ‘Creation’ Debate”

Chapter Summary: The author compares and contrasts what he considers to be the five basic positions on the origins of life and the universe, doing so in as objective a light as possible (except in regards to evolutionary creationism, of which he is clearly a representative). These are: 1) young earth creation, 2) progressive creation, 3) evolutionary creation, 4) deistic evolution, and 5) dysteleological evolution. The most important quote in this chapter is as follows: "If we do not use the Bible to determine the structure and origin of the heavens, then I don't think we should use it to understand how God created living organisms, including humans" (132).

1. Explain each theory of creation and how a proponent of each would justify his or her beliefs, as briefly but as objectively as possible.

   Young-earth creationist:

   Progressive creationist:

   Evolutionary creationist (Denis O. Lamoureux, the author of *Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes!* is an evolutionary creationist. Many (Christian) science professors in colleges and universities today are also evolutionists; consider interviewing one of these in order to gain a complete picture of what evolutionary creationism might include):

   Deistic evolutionist:

   Dysteleological evolutionist:
2. Which 4 beliefs does Lamoreux think are essential to the Christian faith?

Suggested Answer: 1) the world has an ultimate plan and purpose, and this teleology originates from the Christian God. 2) nature features intelligent design and points to an Intelligent Designer. 3) God created the world and is personally involved in the lives of men and women. 4) the Bible is the Word of God.

3. What is your position on origins? Do you have an opinion regarding scientific concordism?

Suggested Answer: Consider this question to be the center of your small group discussion for this session. What do you and your peers believe? Before reading this chapter, could you articulate your beliefs? How about now? As the group leader, remember to keep the discussion on-track, beneficial, and fair. Ad hominem (the argumentation fallacy of directing an attack against the person rather than the position he or she maintains) has no place in a healthy discussion.

Discussion

In addition to thinking about the above reading questions, please write two questions of your own regarding the chapters you read for today.

1.

2.
Digging Deeper

"...it was never God's intention for any animal to go extinct, like the dinosaurs" (130). What do you think about this statement?

How many different kinds of creationists do you interact with? Is there one of these five basic views that is entirely new to you?
Week 5: Famous Scientists and Historical Perspectives
Chapters covered: “Galileo and God’s Two Books,” “The Religious Evolution of Darwin”

Reading and Reflection
“Galileo and God's Two Books”

Chapter Summary: Galileo, a Christian who is famous for his run-in with the Catholic Church when he accepted Copernicus' heliocentric theory of the world system, is often known as the "father of modern science." Lamoureux refutes the misconceptions of the modern public concerning the debate between the man and the Church of his time. He also offers his interpretation of Galileo's beliefs as can be found in the 1615 "Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina," in an attempt to convey the truths that God Created Faithful Laws of Nature, Science is a Gift from God, Nature is Rational, Science Contributes to Biblical Interpretation, and more. He nears the end of the chapter with this lengthy paragraph (quoted here for your convenience and to further its significance):

"Christians who attacked Copernicus and Galileo damaged the relationship between science and Christianity. It is my opinion that today young earth creationists and progressive creationists are harming an opportunity to share Jesus with evolutionists who are searching for the Lord. In addition, our churches and Sunday schools are discouraging young people from careers in the evolutionary sciences. In doing so, we are blocking their testimony of faith within the scientific community. We need to stop the disrespectful attitudes toward Darwin and biological evolution" (151).

1. How do you respond to "Salvation deals with our relationship with Jesus, not with the age of the earth, not with the fossil record, and not with how God created the universe and life, including humans"? Positively? Negatively? Indifferently?

Suggested Answer: Answers may vary, although Lamoureux seems to assert that the best way for science and faith to achieve compatibility – and for Christians to achieve unity – is to categorize opinions on origins as a non-salvific issue. Discuss this with your peers. If not origins, what do you believe to be the issues of salvation (without tending to the legalism of “You must do this or that to be saved”)?

2. Another particularly interesting assertion from the chapter is: "My church and Sunday school had indoctrinated me with the assumption that scientific concordism was a feature
of the Word of God” (148). How does your experience with church and Sunday school compare? Why might this teaching be a common feature of churches today?

Suggested Answer: Some participants may agree, some may not – this answer is dependent on background and experience with church, Sunday school, catechism, private or parochial schools, etc. However, it would be fair to argue that this teaching is a common feature, especially in conservative churches, because most conservatives tend to a young-earth creationist understanding of origins and a literal reading of the Genesis account. As Lamoureux noted, “many [pastors (and parents)] are taught in theology school that evolution can destroy our faith in Jesus” (13). This teaching is a direct result of the dichotomy he strives to challenge throughout the book.

“The Religious Evolution of Darwin”

Chapter Summary: As the title suggests, this chapter deals with the religious evolution of Charles Darwin, the so-called father of evolutionary biology, from a Christian to a man with firm rejections of Christianity to an agnostic with doubts of Christianity (although he was never, at any time, an atheist). As Darwin wrote, "...there is more in man than the mere breath of his body" (166). Lamoureux even writes that the story of Darwin, beyond being the surprising journey of a misunderstood man struggling with the conflict of science and faith, may also be an encouragement to Christians who are wrestling with biological evolution.

1. What did Charles Lyell claim in his book Principles of Geology?

Suggested Answer: Lyell, the “father of modern geology,” argued that geological evolution could be explained entirely through natural processes. There was no need to factor in the possible effects of miraculous catastrophes, such as the Flood and other geological events that may have been initiated by a higher power intermittently involving himself in his creation (as other geologists of the time believed).
2. Which two conflations/assumptions did Darwin make, in Lamoureux's judgment?

Suggested Answer: 1) In a “simpleminded approach to Scripture,” Darwin made the “massive assumption” that the early chapters of Genesis are a historical record of actual events in the past (with which Lamoureux disagrees). 2) Darwin also conflates God’s activity in nature with God’s personal acts in the lives of men and women, rejecting God’s intervention in the origin and operation of the world (the act of creation) as well as in the lives of his children (miracles, answering prayers, etc.).

3. The existence of ________ in nature made Darwin reject intelligent design. What are your thoughts on this?

Suggested Answer: In his Second Period of Religious Reflection, Darwin was troubled by the existence of suffering in nature. “There seems to me too much misery in the world” to believe in the design of a “beneficent and omnipotent God” (162). The answers posited by your small group might be especially intriguing. How does your group understand the existence and purpose of suffering in the world?

4. Have you ever read/heard a convincing refutation of the rational argument for design? If so, explain what about the argument persuaded you.

Suggested Answer: This question is meant as a challenge. Does every member of your group believe in intelligent design? If addition, can every participant explain why they do or do not believe?

Discussion

In addition to thinking about the above reading questions, please write two questions of your own regarding the chapters you read for today.
Digging Deeper

Is there a difference between a "God-of-the-gaps" and Galileo's assertion on page 139 that "I have no doubt at all that, where human reason cannot reach, and where consequently one cannot have a science, but only opinion and faith, it is appropriate piously to conform absolutely to the literal meaning of Scripture"? Those who hold to a God-of-the-gaps have no use for a God who is also sovereign over human reason. Rather, their God is found only in the unknowns, in the as-yet-mysterious gaps in human knowledge that haven't been filled by science. Scripture for these proponents holds value only in so far as science offers no answer, and the Bible is read literally only where it does not contradict science. Is Galileo any different? Explain.
Week 6: Academics and Evolution
Chapter covered: “Let the Students Speak!”

Reading and Reflection

“Let the Students Speak!”

Chapter Summary: Lamoureux shares a few student stories from his time teaching university students an introductory course on the relationship between science and religion.

1. How has the relationship between science and religion been presented to you (such as in church, peer groups, college or university, etc.)?

Suggested Answer: Answers may vary based on background, life experience, and the nature of each participant. Perhaps he or she has been aggressively confronted with evolution as the young Lamoureux was, and thus their understanding of the relationship is mostly in a negative setting. Perhaps he or she has grown up in a traditionally moderate or liberal church setting in which the compatibility of science and faith was emphasized. Maybe a participant has even undergone a difficult faith journey similar to Lamoureux’s, from young-earth to unbelief to young-earth to evolutionary creation.

2. Do you know a Christian scientist or a Christian who is studying/has studied the natural sciences? Consider interviewing them to get a closer perspective on what Lamoureux calls the "yearning" for an integration of Christian faith and modern science, including human evolutionary biology" (173).

Suggested Answer: In your interview, be sure to ask questions along the lines of “Have you experienced this yearning? If yes, how? If no, do you know someone who has? As a Christian, did you have a positive experience with the natural sciences? How much or how little did your choice of major affect your relationships with friends and family, coworkers, fellow science students? Did your study change your faith or the way you view the world? Why or why not?”
3. "[Students] often read in popular books and on the Internet that sciences proves there is no God. But science deals only with the physical, not the spiritual or metaphysical" (177). Have you found this to be true, or not?

Suggested Answer: This question is a parting thought about how culture and society influence the relationship of science and religion. Consider bringing in articles, magazines, or links to speeches/sermons that tend toward the “conflict model” of science vs. faith, evolution vs. creation.

4. Lamoureux states that most pastors are not aware of non-concordist interpretations of passages in the Bible that refer to nature. If this is true, how might it be remedied today?

Suggested Answer: There is no easy answer to this challenge. As Lamoureux said in the beginning when he responded to the angry young woman, you might be the generation of change in the church world today. Encourage your small group to seriously think about this question, and about how they might begin to enact such change (if they consider it necessary, which some individuals and groups may not)!

Discussion

In addition to thinking about the above reading questions, please write two questions of your own regarding the chapters you read for today.

1.

2.

Digging Deeper

What is the heart of your Christian faith? Does your answer match the way that you answered this question in the Week 0 session? Why do you think it might have changed somewhat?
Lamoureux states in the final chapter that the best way to introduce young people to different perspectives on origins and Biblical interpretation is to "Teach the different views in a fair and balanced way, and young men and women will figure it out on their own" (180). Do you agree? In your opinion, has *Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes!* succeeded in this? Has this study guide succeeded in this?
Terms

Chapter 1:

Atheistic evolution: the view that the world came into being via evolution and without God
Theistic evolution: the view that God used evolutionary processes to create the world
Dichotomy: opposition, conflict

Chapter 2:

Transitional fossil: a fossilized creature that exhibits signs of being in a developmental stage between two other forms.
Embryology: science examining the formation and development of living organisms

Chapter 3:

Creationist: a term that usually refers to a person who believes that God created the world in six 24-hour days using miraculous processes
Evolution: a scientific theory which asserts that the cosmos and living organisms, including humans, arose through natural processes over billions of years
Cosmology: a study of the origin, development, and end of the universe
Geology: science investigating rocks and the formation of the earth
Biology: science explaining the living organisms
Teleologist: a person who believes there is an ultimate plan or purpose for our existence and that we are moving toward an end and final goal
Dysteleologist: a person who proclaims that the world does have any ultimate end or purpose, that our existence is ultimately pointless and that there is no ultimate right or wrong
Intelligent design: the view that the world’s beauty, complexity, and functionality point toward an Intelligent Designer
Metaphysics-Physics Principle: a principle asserting that the relationship between metaphysical beliefs and scientific discoveries requires a step of faith both from science to religious and philosophical beliefs about nature and also from metaphysics to assumptions that influence scientific explorations, such as factors that impact observation of the physical world
Spiritual correspondence: the belief that statements about spirituality in the Bible align with spiritual reality
Inerrant: absolutely true; incapable of error

Chapter 4:

Irreducible complexity: a term coined by Michael Behe, who defines it as a single system which is composed of several interacting parts, and where the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to cease functioning
Special revelation: specific information from God that is given to men and women, the nation of Israel, the Christian Church
Biblical revelation: a form of special revelation in which the type of divine disclosure is verbal
Personal revelation: a type of special revelation in which the Lord reveals himself specifically to individuals and to his chosen people, as through answering prayers, in dreams and visions, or with signs and wonders
**General revelation**: a non-verbal revelation experienced by all men and women, including both religious and non-religious individuals, offering a broad outline of God’s attributes and his will for humans

**Natural revelation**: a form of general revelation which deals with intelligent design in nature

**Moral revelation**: a type of general revelation that guides us in understanding right from wrong

**Chapter 5**: 

**Phenomenological language**: poetic or figurative language based on appearance or visual effects/phenomena

**Immutable**: never-changing, always the same

**Pre-formatism**: the old belief that within each male sexual seed there was a tightly packed miniature human, giving the impression that men are the only contributors of seed in the creation of a life, while women appear to be only receptacles and nurturers of the seed of males

**De novo creation**: the belief that the creation was formed quickly and completely by a divine being who acts dramatically through miraculous interventions to make fully formed living organisms

**Chapter 6**: 

**False dichotomy**: a misguided or mistaken belief that only two simple positions exist on a particular issue

**Chapter 7**: 

**Geocentricism**: an old astronomical theory which claimed the earth is at the center of the entire universe

**Heliocentricism**: an astronomical theory presented by Nicholas Copernicus which claimed that the sun is at the center of the world

**Chapter 8**: 

**Darwinism**: an evolutionary perspective on origins often mistakenly equated with a dysteleological view of evolution
Bibliography