Important Note: The word argument can be used in two main ways. 
1. Most commonly, the word argument refers to people angrily disagreeing about something. 
2. In academics (especially philosophy), an argument refers to an explanation or proof that something is true.

Kreeft, being a philosopher, will be using the second definition when talking about proving the existence of God.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we will change our format a bit. Instead of ten different questions, there is only one question with ten answers.  

Here are ten arguments. The first nine all try to prove that a real God is the only adequate explanation for (1) the existence of the universe, (2) the order in the universe, (3) your mind, (4) your desire for happiness, (5) morality, (6) miracles, (7) the Jews, (8) saints, and (9) Jesus. All nine of these things are real only because God is real. The tenth argument (Pascal’s Wager) tries to prove that it is reasonable to believe in God even if you can’t prove His existence.

1. The First-Cause Argument

The universe is the sum total of everything that exists in time and space, everything made of matter. Scientists have theorized that the entire universe came into existence suddenly, at once, about fifteen billion years ago, in what they call the “Big Bang”. Ever since that first moment, the universe has been expanding, growing. The growth of the universe is like the growth of your body; you don’t need a God to explain that. Your body grows by itself. But the existence of the universe is like the existence of your body: your body doesn’t exist by itself. It exists only because something else caused it: your
parents. Like your body, the universe can make itself grow, but it can't make itself exist. (For it's not there before it exists, but it is there before it grows.) Nothing else but a Creator could have "banged out" the "Big Bang", made the whole universe. Nothing in the universe could have caused the universe. No part of the universe could have created the whole universe.

Let's go through the same argument again. This time we'll think about the principle of cause and effect in general, rather than the "Big Bang" in particular.

Nothing happens without some cause. Nothing just pops into existence for no reason at all. And the universe popped into existence. So it must have a cause.

Everything in the universe causes something else. Sunlight causes plants to grow, plant food causes animals to live, lions cause lambs to die by eating them, dogs cause puppies to be born, and so forth. The universe is like a giant chain of dominoes, each one moved by another one. If there is no finger to knock the first domino down—if there is no First Cause, if there is nothing outside the chain of dominoes, outside the universe—then no dominoes can fall. And in that case, nothing would be happening anywhere right now.

No matter how big and long and complex the chain of dominoes is, no matter how old the universe is, there has to be a First Cause to make all the other causes act. If there were no First Cause, there would be no second and third and fourth and four-billionth causes. And those second and third and fourth and four-billionth causes do exist. We see them. Therefore, there must be a First Cause, even though we do not see it.

And the absolutely First Cause of absolutely everything else is one of the things that "God" means. So we have proved the existence of God.

We have not proved very much about God yet. Is He good?

Does He love us? Is He a Trinity? We have not proved any of that. But we have disproved atheism, at least.

2. The Argument from Design

Here is a second proof. It proves not only that God exists but also that God is supremely intelligent. Basically, it argues from the design in nature to the Designer of nature.

If you see a picture, you know not only that there is a painter who caused it but also that the cause is intelligent, because the picture is ordered, intelligently designed. An animal can throw random blotches of paint on a canvas, but that is not a picture, because it has no intelligent design, no deliberate order in it. Its cause is not intelligent.

If you see a plane flying overhead, you do not think it just happened by chance. You know someone with intelligence designed the plane and is flying it.

But the universe that contains the picture and the plane has much more order and intelligent design in it than either the picture or the plane. Animal intelligence is not enough to account for pictures or planes. Only human intelligence is. But human intelligence is not enough to account for all the design in the universe. The design in the human body is so complex that every single cell in your body stores more information than all the books in all the libraries in the world. We did not invent our own bodies. We cannot even invent trees. "Poems are made by fools like me, but only God can make a tree."

If there is intelligent design, there must be an intelligent Designer.
The following section is not part of the argument itself but a kind of addition to it. Science has discovered what is called the “anthropic principle”. This principle means that the universe was “fine-tuned” for human life to appear. If any one of dozens of aspects of the universe had been a tiny bit different, we could never have lived. For instance, the temperature of the universe a few seconds after the Big Bang that began it was trillions of degrees hotter than the sun. If it had been a tiny bit hotter or colder, carbon molecules could never have appeared. And all life is based on carbon. If the earth had been slightly nearer the sun or slightly farther away, the plant-and-animal food cycle that supports human life could not have appeared. The same thing would have been true if the moon did not control the tides as it does or if water had a slightly higher or lower freezing point. The universe seems to be not only designed, but designed for us.

Now if “God is love”, then He created and designed the universe not just for mankind in general but for each one of us, each concrete individual. For that is how love works. You can’t love “humanity” because it’s just an abstraction, a concept. You love real people, and they all come by ones, one at a time. So God created the universe for you. Think of that next time you see a sunset, and thank Him for the picture He painted to put on the walls of your mind.

When He created us, He foresaw that we would sin and that He would have to redeem us by dying for us. (Nothing takes God by surprise.) And of course, that—the redemption of man by the Incarnation, suffering, and death of Christ—was also done out of love: love not just for “humanity” in general but for each individual, for you, for me. If you had been the only one who sinned, He would have gone to every bit of the trouble He did in fact go through, just to save you.

It was the love of you that kept Him on the Cross, not the love of “humanity”. It was all part of His design.

In God’s world, nothing happens by chance. Not the world itself, not you, not your redemption. Nothing is blind chance, nothing is subrational; all is design. But the design is not rational in a human sense. It is an amazing, utterly unpredictable design from a divine Mind so profound and mysterious that no human mind can fully fathom it, and from a divine Heart so loving that no human heart can imagine it.

3. The Argument from the Human Brain

The most complex design in all the universe is found in the human brain. The human brain is far more sophisticated than any computer, but it resembles a computer in many ways. Now, we all know that computers don’t just happen. They are designed. And the operating systems in them, the software, are also designed. So what is the cause of the design in the human brain?

There are only three possible answers. Either the brain just happened, by chance, or it was designed by intelligence; and if it was designed by intelligence, then either that intelligence was trustable, because it was wise and good, or it was not trustable, because it was dark and evil. In other words, (a) chance, (b) something like God, or (c) something like the Devil caused our brains.

But if either chance or the Devil caused our brains, we have no reason to trust them or anything they do. Would you trust a computer designed and programmed by chance, by the random throwing of marbles onto its keyboard? Would you trust one designed by a liar and a deceiver? Of course not. So unless some
wise and good being, some superhuman intelligence that is totally trustable, designed the computer we always use, namely our brain, we have no reason to trust any of our thoughts at all, including all science and common sense and logic.

Of course, this being may have used a long, slow evolutionary process to make the human brain. Science may tell us a lot about how and when that happened but not about who made it happen. Science cannot see the invisible Mind of the Creator and Designer—it can see only His visible products.

4. The Argument from Desire

Everyone desires to be happy. Not just contented or satisfied (that gets boring after a while) but deeply and truly happy. In fact, we desire more than happiness—we desire joy. How much of it? Not just some joy, or joy mixed with some misery, but total joy. And not just for one minute or one year but forever. Ask your own heart. You can find that desire in yourself. Remember the happiest moment in your life: was it enough? Didn’t it feel like the appetizer to a greater meal, or like a few sounds from a more beautiful music? And did you want that happy moment to go away? Of course not. But it did.

No one ever gets the total joy that we all long for in this life. The best life in the world is not enough. If you owned everything in the universe, you would still not be completely happy.

We all want infinite joy, and there is nothing infinite in this world. So if there is no God, if there is nothing beyond this universe, then no human being can ever find this total joy that we all most deeply want.

All the things and people we love on earth give us tastes of joy, but we want more of it. In fact, there is no limit to our desire for true joy. We have an infinite, unlimited desire for joy. We have an infinitely deep hole in our heart that needs to be filled with an infinitely deep good that can give us infinitely deep joy. Nothing but God can do that.

But what reason is there for believing there really is an infinitely good and loving and joy-giving God who can fill that infinite hole, can satisfy that infinite desire? Just because you have a desire for something does not mean you will get it.

That is true: just being hungry does not mean you will eat. You might starve. But being hungry does mean that food really exists somewhere.

Everyone has a natural and innate desire for infinite joy. That does not mean that everyone will get it. But it does mean that it exists somewhere. If there is hunger, there is food. If there is thirst, there is drink. If there is curiosity, there is knowledge. If there is loneliness, there is society. If there is sexual desire, there is sex. If ducks by nature long to swim, there must be water somewhere.

So this desire for our own complete fulfillment, our own infinite happiness and joy, is a very good reason for believing that there must be an infinitely good being who can fulfill that desire for the infinite good—in other words, God.

Saint Augustine summarized the meaning of human life beautifully in one sentence, saying to God, “You have made us for Yourself, and [that is why] our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”
5. The Moral Argument

A fifth argument is the argument from morality. This argument begins with the fact that we know that some things are really right and others are really wrong. (We all know this, even when we pretend not to. There are some things we just can’t not know.) We know we are under a real moral law and that we are judged by it. It is not just our subjective feelings or opinions that make things like love, justice, honesty, and courage good. They are objectively good, good in fact, not just good in feeling. They really are good even if they don’t feel good. And it is not just our feelings or opinions that make things like hate, injustice, greed, dishonesty, lust, and cowardice bad. It is their real badness that makes us feel bad about them and think of them as bad, not our feeling and thinking that makes them bad.

To experience the moral law, to experience moral obligation, is to experience being under the moral law, not over it. We did not make the moral law that binds us all. We make civil laws, the laws of nations, and not all human beings are bound by the laws of any one nation. The laws of nations change from one nation to another and from one time to another, but the laws of true morality do not. It’s never morally right, in any nation, to hate, to murder, to steal, or to commit adultery. Even if it’s legal, that doesn’t mean it’s moral.

But how does the moral law prove God? By the principle of cause and effect. An effect has to have an adequate cause. We have seen that the moral law is not made by us but is given to us. If the moral law is given, who is its giver? Where did this real moral law come from, if not from the will of the all-good God, the perfectly moral lawgiver?

If morality came from us rather than being given to us, it would be like the rules of a game. If you made the rules, you can change them. If you agree to play nine innings of baseball and you get tired after six innings, you can change the rules and stop the game without feeling guilty. But you can’t do that to morality. You can’t change the rules and make good become evil and evil become good. You can’t make Hitler good and Jesus evil by changing the rules. We can change the rules of games and the laws of states because we invented them in the first place. But we didn’t invent human nature, so we can’t change its rules.

But if the moral law does not come from us, from our minds and wills, where could it come from but from the all-good God, who created us and designed us, who designed our human nature and the moral law for human nature? Where else could morality come from? From something less than us? From chance? From animal instincts? From the need to survive physically? No, for how could something less than us have such authority over us?

Let’s go through the two steps of this argument once more: (a) morality is real, (b) therefore, God is real.

a. Everyone admits that true morality has authority. Everyone admits that you should never disobey your moral conscience. Even people who don’t believe we all stand under the same objectively real moral law, even people who believe that morality is merely subjective and can vary completely from one person to another—even these people believe in this one moral absolute, at least: always obey your conscience. It’s always morally wrong to deliberately disobey your conscience.

b. But why? What gives moral conscience such absolute authority? If conscience is the voice of God speaking to each
human heart, that explains why conscience has such authority. But nothing else explains it. If conscience is only the voice of society, or of your parents, why must you always obey it? Society is not always right. Parents are not always right. If conscience is only a feeling, or an instinct, why must you always obey this feeling or instinct rather than other ones? None of our other feelings or instincts has that absolute authority. Nothing less than God can explain the absolute moral authority of conscience. Morality is real because God is real.

6. The Argument from Miracles

Our sixth argument is the argument from miracles: if miracles happen, they must have a cause. Everything that happens has an adequate cause. But a miracle is an event that nothing in nature can cause. For instance, no force in nature can bring back the dead. The only adequate cause of a miracle is a supernatural being.

But miracles do happen. There is plenty of good evidence for them. For instance, there is much evidence for Jesus' Resurrection. (See chapter VI.) Therefore, there must be a miracle worker, and only God is literally a miracle worker.

7. The Argument from the Jews

The Jews are history's biggest public miracle. By every known law of human history, they should have perished many times. Long lines of tyrants from ancient Egypt's pharaoh to modern Germany's Hitler have tried to wipe them out. Yet they have survived and thrived. They have contributed far more to Western civilization than any other people, even though they are far less in number than hundreds of other peoples. They stand out as no other people has ever stood out in all human history.

This is a fact. And there are only two possible explanations: either the Jews are responsible for their success or God is. The Jews' claim (and the Bible's) is that it is God's doing, that God chose them, that they are His "chosen people". This is really the humblest possible explanation of the fact, for the only other explanation is that they did it all by themselves.

Half the world today believes in the God of the Jews: over two billion Christians and over a billion Muslims. No one else knows God as one, infinitely powerful, infinitely wise, infinitely good Creator, Revealer, and Person (I AM).

Most of the world also believes in the Ten Commandments, which are the moral basis for Western civilization. No moral law has ever been as perfect, as perfectly preserved, and as powerful and persuasive as these commandments that God gave to the Jews through Moses.

How did the Jews convince over three billion people to believe in their God and His laws? Was that their doing, or was that God's doing?

8. The Argument from the Saints

If there is no God, then the saints are the biggest fools in history, because next to Jesus himself, they are the closest to Him and the most intimate with Him. If there is no God, then the better and more saintly you are, the more wrong you are, the more stupid you are about life and its meaning.

If there is no God, then everyone's two deepest desires contradict each other: the desire to be good and the desire to be
God more important in his life than He did. No one's teaching depended more on God's reality than His teaching did. No one was as dependent on God as He was.

Everyone admires His Teaching. But He said that His teaching was not his own but was from His Father, God. Everyone admires His moral goodness, His goodwill. But He said that He came into the world not to do His own will but the will of His Father. If God the Father does not exist, Jesus is insane—as insane as a forty-year-old man who still believes in the Tooth Fairy, prays to the Tooth Fairy, never does anything unless the Tooth Fairy tells him to, teaches only what the Tooth Fairy teaches, and tries to get everyone in the world to believe in the Tooth Fairy and love the Tooth Fairy and trust the Tooth Fairy to give them salvation and eternal life and complete happiness.

And you can make the argument from Jesus much stronger than words, in the same way as you can make the argument from the saints much stronger than words: by meeting Him. Read the Gospels, as if you had never read them before. Imagine you are one of the first-century Jews who met Jesus for the first time. If you let yourself meet Him, you will see. You will not see insanity.

10. Pascal's Wager

Our last argument does not prove that God exists, but it proves that believing in God is much more reasonable than not believing in God. The argument is called "Pascal's Wager", after Pascal, a seventeenth-century French philosopher, scientist, and mathematician. He invented the world's first working computer among many other things, such as the vacuum cleaner.

wise, the desire for moral goodness and the desire for truth and knowledge. For if there is no God, then the more saintly you get, the more you believe in this nonexistent God and trust Him and love Him. In other words, the more good you get, the more stupid you get, the more you live a lie, a falsehood, an illusion, like a grownup still believing in a four-year-old's invisible playmate.

Albert Camus, the great French novelist, was an atheist who deeply worried about this puzzle. In his novel The Plague, he has his hero, Dr. Rieux, risk his life to save thousands of people from a deadly plague, because Dr. Rieux believes that the meaning of life is to be a saint. He also believes that you can't be a saint without God. But Dr. Rieux is an atheist and believes that there is no real God. One of those three beliefs must be false. No one can live with that puzzle for long. Either he will have to come to believe in God as the saint-maker, or he will have to stop believing in sanctity. You can be both a moral person and an atheist at the same time, but it will eventually tear you apart inside if you think about it deeply, as Camus did.

But the best form of the argument from the saints is not just thinking about the puzzle of how you can be a saint without God, but meeting some truly saintly persons. Go meet Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity or some Carmelite contemplative monks or nuns, and you will see it. The wisdom and the happiness just shines from their eyes.

9. The Argument from Jesus

If there is no God, then Jesus Christ, the most admired man in history, is really the biggest fool in history. For no one made
and public transportation. Try reading his *Pensées* sometime. They are one thousand short but striking little notes about the meaning of life written for ordinary people, not specialists.

Atheists can’t be *certain* there is no God. Most of them are really agnostics rather than atheists. “A-gnosis” in Greek means “no-knowledge”. An agnostic is one who does not know whether or not there is a God, or one who claims that no one can know whether there is a God.

If you do not know whether God exists or not, what is the reasonable thing to do?

If there is no proof, you have to take a chance. You wager. You bet for or against God.

But betting that there is a God is the only bet that can ever pay off. If God exists and you bet on Him, look what you can win: God! But if He exists and you bet against Him, you’ve lost Him. He offered you eternal life for free, and you turned it down.

But what if He doesn’t exist? Then there’s nothing to win and nothing to lose, so it makes no difference in the end.

So, according to Pascal, the only possible way to win is to bet for Him, and the only possible way to lose is to bet against Him. Believing in God is the best bet in the world.

CONCLUSION

If you don’t know whether God exists or not, what should you do? If you don’t *know* the truth, you should *seek* the truth. Wonder. Look. Inquire. Seek. Even if you don’t believe in Jesus, you can believe in Jesus’ promise, “Seek and you shall find.” You can’t even be a scientist without believing that, for science means seeking the truth about nature because you hope to find it. So let’s use the same principle about seeking the truth about whether there is a God. Let’s really look! Let’s look for evidence, for data.

Where shall we look? If you wonder whether atoms exist, perform the appropriate experiment: look at molecules under electron microscopes in laboratories. If you wonder whether the Loch Ness Monster exists, perform the appropriate experiment: go to Loch Ness and explore it with submarines and cameras. If you wonder whether monkeys can be taught to talk, perform the appropriate experiment: get some monkeys and try to teach them. If you wonder whether selfishness exists, perform the appropriate experiment: look into your own heart and life. And if you wonder whether God exists, perform the appropriate experiment: pray.

You can pray even if you are an agnostic or a sceptic. You can pray “the prayer of the sceptic”: “God, I don’t know whether You exist or not. I may be praying to nothing. But I may be praying to a real You. So if You are real, please let me find You. Because even though I don’t know whether You exist or not, I do know that I ought to be honest and that I ought to believe whatever is the truth.”

Jesus said, “Seek and you shall find.” If we truly believe that, then we should dare to say to the sceptic that if he is truly honest and prays that prayer, it is certain that he will eventually find the truth. Challenge him: “What are you afraid of?”