



WHY



BELIEVE?



*Discussion Guide*





# Why Believe?

## *Discussion Guide*

by Neil Shenvi

*Why Believe?: A Reasoned Approach to Christianity* makes the case that the evidence for Christianity is both comprehensive and compelling. The book is structured around four independent arguments: The trilemma (chapter 2), the resurrection of Jesus (chapter 3), the credibility of the Christian worldview (chapters 4–5), and the uniqueness of the gospel (chapters 7–9). Shenvi interacts extensively with the work of atheist scholars throughout the book, providing responses to both popular and academic objections. He also addresses three of the most common and salient arguments against God’s existence: the problem of evil, evolution, and divine hiddenness (chapter 6).

This discussion guide provides a brief overview of each chapter and offers questions designed to promote reflection, engagement, critique, and further study. It can be used in schools, book clubs, Sunday school classes, or small groups. It’s also meant to help both Christians and non-Christians probe the book’s arguments more deeply.

## Introduction

In this short chapter, Shenvi asks why anyone should attempt to answer or to even ask the question “Why believe that Christianity is true?” Certainly, religious discussions can be socially awkward and emotionally charged. So why not just ignore the issue? Shenvi describes his own background and explains how he became a Christian as a graduate student through reading the books of Oxford professor C. S. Lewis, knowing his future wife Christina, and attending church.

### Questions for discussion:

1. What is your experience with conversations about religion? Are they uncomfortable? Thought-provoking? Antagonistic? Interesting?
2. What are some preconceptions you have about religious/non-religious people?
3. Shenvi argues that we can't “sidestep questions of religious truth” (p. 19) for the sake of human flourishing because a proper understanding of human flourishing may depend on whether some particular religion is actually true. Do you agree?
4. What is appealing about the idea that “all religions are equally true”? What are the difficulties associated with this belief?
5. If we believe that at least some religious statements are false and that others are true, is it still possible to avoid interreligious violence and hatred? How?
6. Shenvi claims that “the tragedy of human existence absolutely and finally strips us of any claimed right to apathy” (p. 23). Why? Can we acknowledge the depth of human suffering and still not care whether Christianity is true?
7. C. S. Lewis wrote “Christianity...if false is of no importance and, if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important” (p. 24). What did he mean?

## The Trilemma

Chapter 2 asks us to consider C. S. Lewis's famous trilemma, which is described in his book *Mere Christianity*. Lewis points out that Jesus cannot be reasonably characterized as a good but merely human teacher. Given his extraordinary claims, Jesus was either a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord. However, Lewis was speaking to people who largely believed that the biblical accounts of Jesus were generally reliable. Thus, Christians need to defend the historicity of the New Testament accounts of Jesus's life in order to restore the force of Lewis's argument.

Shenvi offers several independent lines of evidence for the reliability of the Gospels, from the accurate textual transmission of the New Testament manuscripts, to the accounts of ancient non-Christian historians, to the inclusion of geographical place names, to Jesus's Jewish context, to the frequency of proper names in the Gospels and Acts. Based on these pieces of evidence, he concludes that there is ample reason to think that the Gospels are generally reliable, in which case the trilemma is valid: we must either reject Jesus as an evil megalomaniac or embrace him as the Son of God.

### Questions for discussion:

1. Had you ever heard of C. S. Lewis's "liar, lunatic, or Lord" argument before? If so, where did you first hear it?
2. According to Shenvi, many people today dismiss the New Testament Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) as largely fictional or legendary. What are some of the reasons people believe this to be the case?
3. If we dismiss the textual transmission of the Gospels as unreliable, what would that mean for how we view other works of classical literature like Homer's *Iliad* or Josephus's *Antiquities*?
4. New Testament scholar Bart Ehrman suggests that the Gospels were produced by a decades-long game of "telephone." Is this a plausible hypothesis? Why or why not?

5. The Gospels record the correct frequency of first-century Palestinian Jewish names. Try to guess the correct frequency (i.e. percentages) of the 8 most popular names given to babies in 1972. The answers can be found in the endnote.<sup>[1]</sup> How close were you? Why is this relevant to the historicity of the Gospels?
6. Throughout this chapter, Jesus's words in various Gospels are quoted at length. What did you find most surprising? Most comforting? Most challenging?
7. Jesus undeniably transformed history. Who are some other historical figures who had a similar impact? Whose teachings and moral example are regarded with equal esteem? Who else made the kinds of claims that Jesus did? Apart from Jesus, is there any overlap in these lists of historical figures?

## The Resurrection

At the end of chapter 2, Shenvi offered two reasons to accept Jesus's claims rather than rejecting him as an evil megalomaniac. In chapter 3, he presents a third, independent reason to accept Jesus's claims: his resurrection. Secular historians and Christians alike have affirmed that Jesus died on the cross 2,000 years ago on a day that Christians celebrate as Good Friday. However, Christians insist that Jesus did not stay in the tomb, but was physically resurrected to life and immortality on the Sunday after his death. If that actually happened, it would give us an additional reason to believe that Jesus was who he claimed to be—the Son of God—and did what he claimed to have done—died for his people's sins. But did the resurrection really happen?

Shenvi presents a historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus based on four pieces of evidence: 1) Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried, 2) Jesus's tomb was found empty soon after his death, 3) Jesus's disciples sincerely believed that they had seen him alive again after his crucifixion, 4) Paul, a persecutor of the church, believed that he had encountered the risen Jesus and immediately converted to Christianity. Strong historical arguments can be marshaled in support of each of these claims. Moreover, when secular scholars attempt to explain these four purported facts, they often construct remarkably implausible scenarios, involving mass hallucinations,

grave robbers, and even identical twins. Finally, chapter 2 established that the Gospels themselves are historically reliable sources, which means we cannot easily dismiss their account as nothing more than pious fictions.

### **Questions for discussion:**

1. At the beginning of the chapter, several quotes from non-Christians affirmed that the historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus is quite strong. Did this surprise you? Why or why not?
2. Many religions include miracle claims, but the Bible tells Christians that if the resurrection didn't happen, then "your faith is in vain" (1 Cor. 15:17). Does that statement affect your view of the importance of the resurrection?
3. Paul was a persecutor of the church before becoming a Christian. How does that affect his credibility as a witness to the resurrection?
4. What incentives do people generally have to lie about their experiences? Did the apostles have any of these incentives to lie about their experiences? Do you agree that the apostles' willingness to die provides evidence for their sincerity? Why or why not?
5. How do our assumptions color our assessment of evidence? How much evidence would it take to convince you that an acquaintance had won a neighborhood raffle? The state lottery? The national lottery? What if it were a friend? A close friend? A family member? What if it were a notorious con artist? A trusted family physician?
6. Can you invent a more plausible naturalistic explanation for the evidence than the ones presented in this chapter? What are the strengths and weaknesses of your proposal?

## God and Revelation (Part 1): Nature

Whether or not someone considers the resurrection a plausible explanation will depend strongly on whether or not he thinks there exists a God who could have raised Jesus from the dead. In the next two chapters, Shenvi presents evidence for God's existence, drawn from nature outside us (chapter 4) and God's moral law within us (chapter 5). When we consider these various arguments, we should ask which worldview best explains the various pieces of evidence he provides.

In chapter 4, Shenvi presents four arguments for the existence of God based on nature. First, he argues that God explains why mathematics is so successful in describing nature. God also explains why human beings are uniquely capable of understanding this mathematical structure. Second, he argues that God is the First Cause that brought the universe into being in the finite past. Third, he argues that God is the explanation for the universe, answering the question "Why is there something rather than nothing?" Finally, he argues that God explains why the fundamental constants of physics are so delicately balanced to allow for the existence of a life-permitting universe.

### Questions for discussion:

1. Which of the four arguments presented did you think was the weakest?  
The strongest?
2. Atheists often appeal to "necessity" to explain the mathematical structure of the universe and its reason for existence. In other words, they argue that the universe had to exist and had to have this particular structure. Does "necessity" answer the "why?" question? Are there some "why?" questions that simply can't be answered?
3. How are humans similar to other animals? How are we different?
4. If we believe human beings are created in the image of God, how should that change our perception of our value? Our treatment of others?
5. The fine-tuning of the universe certainly possesses the appearance of design.

But is it possible to know whether something that possesses the appearance of design is actually designed? How do we distinguish natural rock formations from a sculpture, or a river from a canal?

6. Some physicists suggest that we may one day discover that the universe has always existed or that some “theory of everything” explains cosmological fine tuning. Can we be confident that these predictions will come true? Why or why not?
7. Imagine that the books in a library contained a complete and perfect catalog of all scientific knowledge. What fraction of books in the library did humanity possess in 1000 BC? In AD 1000? In AD 1800? In AD 1900? In AD 2022? How should a recognition of the limits of our scientific knowledge affect our approach to God?
8. If you believed that God knew every cell in your body and every atom in your cells, how would that change your thoughts about him? About his commands?

## God and Revelation (Part 2): The Moral Law

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul insists that God has revealed himself through the things he has made. However, he also affirms that God has revealed himself through his moral law, which he has written on our hearts. Every human being recognizes that some actions are good and that others are evil. Though our consciences are fallible and can be suppressed, they still testify to God’s righteousness, justice, and holiness. We can use this moral experience to make two distinct arguments for God’s existence.

First, if God does not exist, then objective moral values and duties do not exist. Objective moral values are qualities like kindness, compassion, and generosity that are good whether or not human beings acknowledge their goodness. Objective moral duties are binding obligations that we “ought to” perform whether or not we acknowledge these obligations. If God does not exist, then there is no basis for

objective moral values or duties. Thus, if we recognize that such values and duties do in fact exist, then God must exist.

Second, a similar argument can be run for the intrinsic goodness of truth and our moral obligation to seek the truth. If God does not exist, then truth is not intrinsically good and we are under no obligation to seek to know whether or not God exists. Consequently, if we recognize that truth is intrinsically good and that we are morally obligated to seek to know whether God exists, then God must exist.

### **Questions for discussion:**

1. We can demonstrate the truth of objective physical facts like “water is composed of oxygen and hydrogen” with scientific experiments. Can we demonstrate the existence of objective moral facts like “murder is wrong” with scientific experiments? Why or why not?
2. If someone believes that they are living in a computer simulation or that the universe and all of our memories were created 10 minutes ago and merely appear much older, what evidence would demonstrate that they are wrong? If someone believes that objective moral facts do not exist, what evidence would demonstrate that they are wrong? Do these examples show that statements can be true even if we cannot provide evidence to convince a determined skeptic?
3. While atheists cannot, by definition, consistently affirm both premises of the moral argument, Shenvi points out that some atheists affirm premise 1 (“If God does not exist, then objective moral values and duties do not exist”) and that others affirm premise 2 (“Objective moral values and duties do exist”). Is it reasonable for atheists to affirm either of these premises? If both premises are reasonable, then are Christians reasonable to affirm both premises along with the conclusion that God exists?
4. Do you have any common phobias (fear of flying, fear of heights, etc.)? Have you sought to overcome them? Why or why not? If our perception of moral facts is actually an illusion, should you work to overcome it? Why or why not?

5. On p. 121, Shenvi imagines an “amorality pill” that would annihilate all your feelings of guilt and shame without impairing your ability to feel joy and happiness, so that you could live however you wanted without being encumbered by your conscience. Would you take the pill? Why or why not?
6. What are some examples of “hard truths” that could, at least potentially, diminish a particular person’s flourishing? What are some examples of “hard truths” that could, at least potentially, diminish a whole society’s flourishing? Would it be moral or immoral to avoid seeking to know whether these “hard truths” were—in fact—true?
7. If an atheist tells a Christian “you should seek to know the truth of atheism” or “you shouldn’t believe comforting falsehoods,” what basis do they have to make those claims? If the Christian replies “no thanks; I like my beliefs and I’d prefer to keep them,” have they done anything wrong?
8. There is a stark difference between knowing *about* someone and knowing them personally. How is this distinction relevant to knowing *about* God versus knowing God personally? Are the arguments presented in chapters 4 and 5 sufficient for knowing God personally?

## 6

# Arguments Against God

While chapters 4 and 5 present arguments for the existence of God, chapter 6 presents three common arguments *against* the existence of God: the problem of evil, evolution, and divine hiddenness.

First, the problem of evil argues that the existence of evil either makes God’s existence impossible or at least highly unlikely. How could a loving, all-knowing, all-powerful God permit so much evil in the world? Various *theodicies* attempt to explain the claimed contradiction between God and evil through appeals to human free will, the development of virtue, the interconnectedness of events, and our limited human ability to discern the reasons behind God’s actions. However, Christianity provides additional theological and philosophical resources to answer the problem of evil: the

perspective of eternity, the demonstration of God's justice and mercy, and the suffering of Jesus.

Second, evolution is offered as an alternative to God's creative activity. Atheists argue that if evolution can account for all contemporary biodiversity, then God is unnecessary. According to prominent evolutionary biologists, the three core tenets of modern evolutionary theory are: 1) change over time, 2) universal common descent, and 3) speciation through random mutation and natural selection. Given this definition of evolution, the major point of contention is the atheist's claim that "random" mutations rule out divine guidance. However, Shenvi argues that there are both philosophical and scientific reasons to deny this assertion.

Finally, the hiddenness of God is used as evidence that God either does not exist or does not have the characteristics ascribed to him by Christians. If God is truly loving and omnipotent and desires us to believe in him, then he would have given us more evidence than what we currently have. Shenvi offers two responses. First, he points out that evidence for God's existence is encountered in all our most basic questions about reality. Consequently, we cannot argue that God has not provided any evidence or that this evidence is inaccessible. But, more importantly, Shenvi argues that our sin, and not a lack of evidence, is the primary barrier between us and God. Consequently, we can't admonish God for failing to provide us with more evidence when more evidence is not what we ultimately need.

### **Questions for discussion:**

1. What is the strongest argument against God's existence that you've encountered?
2. How has your own life or the life of someone you know been affected by evil? Can you know whether good will eventually come out of this experience?
3. If atheism is true, does evil have any objective meaning or purpose? If not, does this lack of objective meaning and purpose make evil a bigger or smaller problem for atheism than for Christianity?
4. If God does not exist, what is the standard by which we determine that something is "evil"? If God does not exist, how do we distinguish something that is objectively evil from something which we merely subjectively dislike?

5. How did your parents meet? What are all the small, seemingly random events that could have prevented their meeting? Think about the ramifications if they had never met (you and your siblings and all your descendants in perpetuity would not have existed, etc.). Does the “randomness” of the events that allowed your parents to meet rule out God’s sovereignty over history?
6. Do you think it’s plausible that aliens intentionally brought the first life form to earth? Why or why not? If we take the possibility of an extraterrestrial origin for life seriously, should we take the possibility of a supernatural origin for life seriously as well? Why or why not?
7. Can you think of examples in your life where your desires or preferences clouded your judgment? Can you think of examples in other people’s lives? How do we overcome such biases?
8. Have you read the entire Bible? Does anything in it make you uncomfortable or even repel you outright? If you found out that it was completely true, would that change your feelings towards those parts of it? How does this discomfort affect the problem of divine hiddenness?

## The Gospel (Part 1): The Uniqueness of Christianity

In chapters 7–9, Shenvi argues that the best argument for the objective truth of Christianity is the gospel itself—the message that Jesus came to die for our sin and was raised to life for our justification. This claim may seem strange: how could a message itself be evidence of the truth of that message? But, in fact, the argument follows a fairly intuitive structure. Shenvi asks us to imagine that we collapse during a game of pick-up basketball. Our teammates attempt to diagnose us and offer advice on how to best treat what they all believe is a minor injury. In contrast, a bystander runs over to us, screaming that our life is in danger. Turning to us, she whispers, “You can’t feel your legs and you can’t move.” Despite the crowd’s skepticism, we trust her and demand to be taken to a hospital, because we know she is right: we can’t feel

our legs and we can't move. The woman's unique ability to diagnose our real physical condition means we're justified in trusting her. In the same way, if Christianity is able to uniquely diagnose our real spiritual condition, then we're justified in trusting it.

To make this argument work, it needs to be established that Christianity makes unique claims about fundamental, existential realities and that these unique claims are true. In chapter 7, Shenvi argues that Christianity is unique in making two such claims: first, that we are radically sinful and second, that we need rescue. He provides a brief overview of four other major world religions and shows that they do not diagnose sin as the fundamental human problem and therefore do not prescribe rescue as our only hope.

### Questions for discussion:

1. In your experience, could most Christians you know articulate the arguments presented in chapters 2–5? In your experience, could most atheists you know provide counterarguments to the arguments presented in chapters 2–5? Does this fact show that Christianity is false? Or that atheism is false?
2. Many Christians appeal to religious experiences of various kinds (e.g. answered prayer, experience of God's presence, etc.) to justify their belief in Christianity. Do these experiences provide them with a good reason to think that Christianity is true? Why or why not? Does a lack of such experiences provide atheists with a good reason to think that atheism is true? Why or why not?
3. Atheists sometimes argue that Christianity is merely a form of "wish fulfillment." Does the Christian doctrine of sin fit that description? Do Christians *want* to believe that they deserve eternal punishment? And could the converse be argued? In other words, could a Christian argue that the atheist's *denial* of the doctrine of sin is merely a form of "wish fulfillment"? Why or why not?
4. Almost all religions include concepts like "wrongdoing" or "evil actions." How does the Christian view of sin differ from, say, the Muslim or Buddhist view?

5. Colloquially, the word “salvation” often functions as a synonym for “going to heaven” or “being accepted by God.” Is this what Christians mean by “salvation”? If “salvation” is better understood as “rescue,” does that better explain why non-Christian religious studies scholar Stephen Prothero claims that “only Christians seek salvation” (p. 188)?

## The Gospel (Part 2): Christianity and Sin

In chapter 8, Shenvi offers several independent lines of evidence to support Christianity’s unique claim about the radical sinfulness of human beings.

First, human history tells a story not of peace and harmony but of war and bloodshed. In genocidal episodes scattered across time and space, humans have committed unspeakable acts of evil. Anthropology shows that such violence is present in cultures around the world. The sexual abuse of women and children is likewise widespread, bullying is common even in kindergarteners, and Milgram’s famous Yale experiments showed that most people would act as an accomplice to torture and homicide if they could shift responsibility onto an authority figure.

But second, and more importantly, we have immediate access to our own sinfulness through self-reflection. Our worst moments, not our best, show us what we are truly capable of. Testing our lives against our own professed moral standards, let alone against the standard of secular philosophers, or various religious sages, or Jesus’s teachings, shows us how woefully short we fall. In light of these considerations, “the Christian explanation becomes not only plausible but unavoidable: something is deeply, radically wrong with us” (p. 209).

### Questions for discussion:

1. Jesus taught that the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength and that the second greatest commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself. Do you keep those commandments? If you had to estimate, what percentage of the day do you spend loving God with all your heart and loving your neighbor as yourself?

2. Throughout this chapter, Shenvi quoted first-hand accounts of genocide. Do you think the perpetrators of these acts thought of themselves as “evil”? Why or why not?
3. In the 1960s, Milgram conducted a series of experiments showing that a majority of participants were willing to administer potentially fatal electric shocks, provided they were encouraged to do so by an authority figure. If you think you would have been among the minority who refused to do so, why do you think so? How confident are you?
4. On pp. 202–203, Shenvi compares sin to a cancer that has infected humanity. In some of us, the disease may not yet have spread as far, but all of us are on a trajectory that leads to corruption and death. If that were true, what would we expect to see as children grow and develop? What would we expect to see in our own lives with respect to our own vices?
5. Think about the worst action you’ve ever committed, or the worst thought you’ve ever had. How would you feel if everyone you met immediately knew that about you?
6. Is a person moral if they are trying hard to act and think morally, regardless of whether their actions and beliefs are actually moral? For example, if a dictator sincerely believes that one ethnic group is sub-human, is he moral if he treats them like animals for the sake of some other ethnic group?
7. What are the motivations (e.g. desire for power and fame, self-centeredness, greed, etc.) that lead tyrants and murderers to extreme acts of immorality? Do any of those same motivations lie behind your immoral actions? Do any of those same motivations lie behind actions that others would consider moral (e.g. working hard, giving to charity, etc.)?

## The Gospel (Part 3): Christianity and Salvation

The final component of the “argument from the gospel” is Christianity’s proposed solution to human sinfulness. One could accept that human beings are radically sinful and yet still insist that sin can be fixed through education, therapy, political change, meditation, prayer, or a return to traditional values. While Christianity doesn’t deny that these suggestions may improve people’s behavior and even their happiness, it emphatically denies that they can ultimately deal with sin. Shenvi offers two arguments to support this claim.

First, if sin is a transgression of God’s moral law, then it cannot be offset by any amount of good works. Even human law recognizes that serious violations demand punishment. Sincere expressions of remorse from a murderer may move a judge to pronounce a lighter sentence, but they will never justify him in declaring that murderer innocent. In the same way, God insists that every violation of his law must be met with perfect justice.

Second, if sin is a corruption deep in the heart of every human being, then forgiveness alone is also insufficient. When a person has truly grasped that their sin is destroying them, ruining their life, and poisoning their relationship with God and with others, they would be devastated if God refused to offer them cleansing in addition to forgiveness. Christianity alone promises that God does not merely offer pardon but a new heart, freed from its bondage to sin.

### Questions for discussion:

1. Did it surprise you to learn that both the Old Testament and New Testament teach that God will punish sin and that “the wages of sin is death”? What are some popular ideas about the differences between the “God of the Old Testament” versus the “God of the New Testament”?
2. Jesus frequently warned people about God’s judgment and wrath against sin, to the extent that even many secular scholars believe it was a cornerstone of his teaching. Why do you think many people are uncomfortable with this picture of Jesus?

3. Shenvi talks about a “moral ledger,” the (wrong) idea that God keeps a record of our actions and that salvation depends on accumulating enough moral credit to offset our moral debts. Is this how human laws work? Is this how healthy human relationships work? If God judged us on the basis of our “moral ledger,” what would be the outcome?
4. We recognize that the grievousness of a moral offense depends in part on the person offended. For example, slapping a stranger versus slapping a close friend versus slapping your spouse is increasingly heinous. Based on that reasoning, how serious are sins against an infinitely good God?
5. Do you struggle with or have you ever struggled with an addiction? How did you come to realize it was a problem? How did you feel about it before coming to that realization? How do you feel about it now?
6. Shenvi argues that we are all sin addicts because we can't not sin. Do you agree?
7. How does salvation by grace, the doctrine that God rescues us entirely as a gift and entirely apart from anything we deserve, protect us from both despair and self-righteousness?

## Conclusions

In his concluding chapter, Shenvi summarizes the arguments from his book and raises a few final issues. First, our discomfort with what Christianity teaches must be subordinated to the question of whether Christianity is true. Our dislike of Christian doctrine is no reason to conclude that Christianity is false, any more than our dislike of atheism is a reason to conclude that atheism is false. Second, all religions and worldviews have apparent problems and points of tension. Hence, we should examine our own views with the same critical scrutiny that we apply to Christianity or to anything else. Third, Christianity—if true—demands from us a response of repentance and faith. Repentance should be understood as far more than merely “not doing bad things.” Rather, it is a radical change of mind about who God is and what sin is. Similarly, faith is not bare intellectual belief, but trust in and reliance on God’s

promises to forgive us through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Fourth, God does not merely rescue us as individuals. He also calls us into the community of the local church, where we can learn to love him more, share our joys and sorrows with other Christians, and live out the new life to which he's called us. Finally, faith is not a blind leap in the dark, but a step of trust based on what we know about ourselves and what we know about God. "Take [God] at his word," Shenvi concludes. "Trust him. He is worth it" (p. 254).

### Questions for discussion:

1. Before you read *Why Believe?*, did you think it was possible to believe Christianity on the basis of reason and evidence? Do you now believe that it is possible to believe Christianity on the basis of reason and evidence? Why or why not?
2. The four main arguments presented in the book are independent, in the sense that we could find one argument convincing without finding the other arguments convincing. However, the arguments are clearly complementary in that each argument reinforces and strengthens the others. Elaborate. What are some ways that, say, the trilemma is bolstered by the evidence for the resurrection? Or that the "argument from the gospel" gives additional credibility to the divine inspiration of the Bible?
3. Which of the book's four main arguments did you find most compelling? Least compelling? Why?
4. Are there any arguments for atheism or against Christianity that you wish Shenvi had discussed? Which ones? Which scholars agree with or disagree with these arguments?
5. If you're not a Christian, what are your major objections to Christianity?
6. If you are a Christian, has this book given you greater confidence in the truth of Christianity?
7. Which topics mentioned in the book would you like to explore more?

<sup>[1]</sup> From ssa.gov:

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Male Name</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Female Name</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
1	Michael	4.3%	Jennifer	3.9%
2	Christopher	3.1%	Michelle	1.8%
3	James	2.8%	Lisa	1.7%
4	David	2.8%	Kimberly	1.6%
5	John	2.6%	Amy	1.6%
6	Robert	2.6%	Angela	1.5%
7	Jason	2.2%	Melissa	1.4%
8	Brian	2.2%	Stephanie	1.0%