

# Unit 3



## The Facts of Life

*Did Darwin Get Them Right?*

### TRUTH

#### by memory – Psalm 95:6-7 (ESV)

*"Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!<sup>7</sup>For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."*

#### in Bible –

In unit two of this series you learned that many scientists hold an almost religious devotion to naturalism even in the face of compelling scientific evidence that the universe had a beginning and bears the telltale marks of intelligent design.

This week you will learn how a commitment to naturalism influences many scientists' thinking about the origin of life. Since naturalists have a prior commitment to a non-supernatural explanation for all natural phenomena, Darwinism provides them with a naturalistic answer to the question of how life began.

Don't forget the importance of daily personal worship. Ask God to open your mind to His Word and to make your heart willing to obey. Remember that you can use **PRAISE** whether you use the **in Bible** passages for personal worship or not. Be sure to specifically apply God's Word to your life so that you put His truth into practice.

**P**ray First – **R**ead the text – **A**sk Questions – **I**nterpret in Context – **S**ummarize applications – **E**ngage with God

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**Genesis 1:11-13, 20-25** – This selection of verses contains the record of God’s creation of biological life – plants (day 3), then birds and sea animals (day 5), then land animals and human beings (day 6).

You will find the phrase, *"according to its kind"/"according to their kinds"* repeated throughout these verses. What does this phrase mean? How does this phrase contribute to forming a biblical worldview of the origin of life?

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**Psalm 95:1-7** – This song of praise begins with an enthusiastic call to worship the Lord, our Maker. The psalmist exhibits emotion and passion as he calls to mind that we, like all things, are God’s creatures. The fact that He is our Creator is in itself reason to worship God with joy.

Meditate for a few moments on the fact that you are God’s creature, that He is your Creator. Does this meditation stir the fires of worship in you? Write your thoughts and feelings that this knowledge rouses in your heart.

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**Psalm 145** – This song of praise celebrates the majesty and compassion of God that are evident in His works of creation and providence. Bible scholars distinguish between God’s work of bringing all things into being (creation), and sustaining and governing all things (providence).

Meditate for a few moments on the wonder of God’s works in creation and providence. How does meditating on God’s works inspire praise in your heart?

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## to summarize –

Among the basic facts about God and the universe that form the foundation of a biblical worldview is the fact that God created all life. He did so within the bounds of the six days of creation, creating all living things out of the raw materials He had brought into being on the first day of creation. And to all living things, God gave the capacity of reproduction. You read in Genesis 1 that all plants and animals were given the power to self-multiply, each "*according to its kind*". So, from the very beginning, oaks dropped acorns, foxes produced litters of kits, turtles hatched from their eggs and human beings bore their children, filling the world with the creatures God had designed.

Now, as you know, this is not the popularly accepted explanation of life's origin. The scientific theory first proposed by Charles Darwin in his *On the Origin of Species* (1859), came to be widely received in the twentieth century as the *only* rational explanation for how life could have emerged and developed on our planet. *Darwinian evolution, or Darwinism*, is the theory that all living things are descended from a single, common ancestor which itself became a living being purely by random chance. From this simple, single-celled common ancestor, the vast variety of increasingly complex living species supposedly emerged by a random, unordered process of tiny mutations multiplied over immense quantities of time. In each generation of living organisms, random mutations (variations from the norm) gave some of these organisms a reproductive advantage over others in their particular environment. Over time, advantageous mutations are reproduced more successfully, while disadvantaged organisms dwindle in numbers until they die off. This process of natural selection, commonly called *survival of the fittest*, is the supposed mechanism that accounts for both the enormous quantity and diversity of species. To summarize, the Darwinian worldview proposes that a single common ancestor produced the whole array of plant and animal life (including humans) by a slow process of randomly occurring and environmentally advantaged mutations.

Many people believe that Darwin's theory is scientifically plausible, but is there sufficient evidence to prove it correct? Darwin himself knew that in order to prove his theory, scientists would need observed evidence of life naturally emerging from non-life, and evidence of transitions between species in the fossil record.

The first line of evidence was pursued experimentally in the 1950s by scientists who began mixing the chemicals that allegedly constituted the primordial goop from which the first living cells emerged. Under carefully controlled laboratory conditions they zapped the goop with electricity, heat or ultraviolet light and succeeded in creating amino acids, the building blocks of proteins present in living cells. These experiments made spectacular news that supposedly supported Darwin's theory. But, was this truly evidence that life could spontaneously, naturally emerge from non-life? No. Instead, these experiments proved that even creating *non-living* amino acids requires the carefully controlled

(unnatural) selection of materials and conditions governed by very intelligent minds (the scientists'). Yet, scientists still contend that the spontaneous generation of life *could* occur given enough time. However, in the 1960s early computer programs demonstrated that the chance of life emerging from non-life according to Darwin's trial-and-error model is essentially zero, no matter how much time is allowed. Apparently, chance mutation multiplied by time isn't a very effective mechanism of life.

Now, what about Darwin's prediction that the fossil record should contain huge numbers of transitional and obsolete (naturally rejected) species? Evolutionists have had the past 150 years of archeological investigation to gather ample evidence that all modern species share a common ancestry. Unfortunately for the Darwinists, none have been found despite the thousands and thousands of fossils gathered, catalogued and scrutinized. True, there are fossils of bird-like reptiles and remarkable similarities between many species, but nowhere have anthropologists been able to convincingly demonstrate a link between two different species despite Darwin's prediction of an abundance of such links.

The reason for this failure has a pretty straightforward explanation. Imagine a sightless species of creatures which suddenly exhibits a mutation which, over thousands of additional mutations (generations), could become a primitive, yet fully-functioning pair of eyeballs. What advantage would that species gain from any of the thousands of mutations required to eventually result in sight? – No advantage at all. Each mutation would, in fact, be a disadvantage. And according to natural selection, this disadvantaged mutation of the species should quickly die out. It is mere wishful thinking that any structure as complex as a functioning eye could randomly develop piece by piece over thousands of generations.

In fact, Darwin's own hobby of breeding pigeons demonstrates that species tend to remain true to their original, natural type. Pigeons can be bred to exhibit a wide range of physical traits such as all-white plumage or fan-like tail feathers. But, forced breeding can only go so far. The offspring become susceptible to disease and their basic form never changes, for example, they don't develop webbed feet or grow fur. This is because the forced breeding doesn't introduce new genes into the pigeon's DNA. And when no longer subjected to selective breeding, subsequent generations of the pigeons return to their natural state, losing the traits so valued by their breeders. Therefore, one must ask, if intelligent intervention cannot cause a single, permanent mutation over multiple generations of breeding effort, how logical is it to suppose that such changes could occur naturally without intervention?

In addition, Darwin's theory depends on the assumption that simple life evolves into more complex forms of life. During the 1800s this may have seemed like a reasonable conjecture. But modern science has shown us the astonishing complexity of the structure of a cell. For example, each cell in a

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human being contains 46 chromosomes, each consisting of DNA molecules that are built like tiny, twisted ladders. The "ladders" contained in the chromosomes have 6 billion rungs. To give you an idea of this order of complexity, if you could splice together and stretch out the chromosomes from all the cells in your body, your string of DNA would span the distance from the earth to the sun multiple times! The point here is that even the most "simple" single-celled creatures of our world are far more complex than Darwin ever imagined. How is it possible that the complex structures within a cell could have randomly formed and brought to life the first living organisms?

Let's review the score: No observation of spontaneous (or laboratory induced) generation of life from non-life, no evidence of transitions between any living or extinct species, and complexity at the cellular level that Darwin never imagined. Why then do so scientists treat Darwinism as a fact of life? The answer seems to be that it is a plausible theory that harmonizes with and supports their prior commitment to naturalism. Some scientists will even admit that Darwinism fills their "need" for a reasonable explanation of life that does not involve a creator. Ultimately, the debate about the origin of life is a battle of conflicting worldviews, not an argument over facts. Naturalists realize that there is much more at stake than the accepted view of origins. If naturalism is correct, then there is no God, no worship and service due to God, no afterlife, no absolute basis for law or ethics, and no unique intrinsic value of human life. The extension of these conclusions into legal issues, and medical research and practice has dire consequences that are diametrically opposed to the consequences of a biblical worldview. However, the Bible calls upon all people to acknowledge and live in accordance with this fact of life: Life comes from our Creator, and is meant to be lived before His face.

*"Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!"* (Psalm 95:6).

**online –**

Remember to visit [www.perimeter.org/discipleshipcurriculum](http://www.perimeter.org/discipleshipcurriculum) for this week's downloadable audio, video, or print resources.

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# EQUIPPING

Memorize the five Poetic books of the Old Testament using the “Learning the Books of the Old Testament” exercise. You can also use this memory aid:

“Job’s (**Job**) psalm (**Psalms**) sounded like a proverbial (**Proverbs**) sleazy (**Ecclesiastes**) song (**Song of Solomon**).”

Keep reviewing what you have memorized. This will help you reach your goal to recite all 39 books of the Old Testament and all 27 books of the New Testament in your group meeting.

How should the Biblical account of creation figure into your worldview in regards to the way you view your fellow man? If all you had was Genesis 1 and 2, what conclusions would you reach about how you should relate to other people?

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How should the Biblical account of creation figure into your worldview in regards to the way you view the natural world? What conclusions would you reach about how you should live in relation to nature?

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Imagine witnessing to someone who took an evolutionary view of life. How would you relate the gospel in word and deed to such a person?

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## MISSION – DIALOGUING

*"However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace." (Acts 20:24, ESV)*

Last week you were introduced to a conversational approach to bringing spiritual matters into conversation. The outline went like this:

- 1. Spiritual Interest?**
- 2. Spiritual Journey?**
- 3. Heard about The Answer?**
- 4. Want The Answer?**

This approach leads you to an opportunity to share The Answer with someone and plant a seed that the last five pages are of special importance. Of those who say they are interested in reading The Answer, some won't read the whole book, but many will read those last four pages. This is important because these pages contain some final thoughts for believers as well as those who are seeking answers regarding the Christian faith, causing the reader to begin thinking for the first time about which they are – a believer or a seeker.

So, where do you go from here? – You follow up with another conversation in which you want to invite him or her to join you in an investigation of Christianity using the *Life Issues* booklets. The outline below illustrates how such a conversation might progress.

### **Introducing the *Life Issues* booklets**

- 1. Read The Answer?**

"Did you get a chance to read The Answer?"

*Actively listen to his/her answer.*

- 2. What did you think?**

"What did you think about it?"

*Actively listen to his/her answer.*

"In the last few pages, the author mentioned the idea of investigating a more intentional spiritual journey using some cliff notes/spark notes type booklets called, *Life Issues*."

- 3. Interested in *Life Issues*?**

"Do you have any interest in seeing these booklets?"

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*If yes...*

"I enjoy meeting with people to help them walk through a spiritual investigation. Some are uncertain about their religious beliefs, while others admit that their beliefs aren't firm convictions that positively impact the way they think and live. In either case, people benefit from going through these booklets with someone they can bounce their questions off."

**4. Want to Investigate?**

"Would you be interested in trying the first booklet with me to see if it is helpful to you?"

*If yes...*

"Okay. Let's investigate this way: First, read the short introduction. Then, every day read some from the chapters from John's Gospel. In about a week we'll get together again to discuss your thoughts and questions."

Next week you will be introduced to the *Life Issues* booklets yourself.

Your mission assignments for this week are to re-read the last two missions sections, then try to write the conversation outlines from memory below.

**Introducing The Answer**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Introducing the *Life Issues* booklets**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_

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