*The Reason for God*

Timothy Keller, [*The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*](http://www.amazon.com/The-Reason-God-Belief-Skepticism/dp/1594483493) (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008).

Summary:

Tim Keller, Senior Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, wrote this book after discovering an unexpected reality in New York City. He saw that while many of the cultural elites running the city weren’t religious, those in the “multiethnic younger professionals” *were*. Those individuals were asking questions. *The Reason for God* was written for them, the skeptics, but also for believers. Keller proposes, “All doubts, however skeptical and cynical they may seem, are really a set of alternate beliefs.” To doubt one idea is to have faith in another. Therefore, all should examine their doubts regarding Christianity. This practice leads to increased humility and the ability to disagree without disdain. The book is split into two sections, each addressing one side of the discussion. First, “The Leap of Doubt” speaks to seven common doubts regarding Christianity, such as hell, suffering, science, and the accusation that the church is responsible for injustice. The second half, “The Reasons for Faith,” elaborates on sin, the gospel, and the resurrection.

Themes:

* Doubt. Doubt/skepticism and belief/faith are simultaneously growing in American culture.
* Belief. All doubts are really just another set of beliefs.
* Criticism. Christianity is robust enough to deal with the critiques of its supposed inconsistencies.
* Acceptance/rejection of Jesus. Jesus requires a response. His effect on the world is too great to passively label him as a good man or a prophet. His claim to be God incarnate means either he was speaking the truth or insane.

Discussion Questions:

1. What other questions come to mind or have you heard that might fit in the first section, “The Leap of Doubt”?
2. To what degree is skepticism appropriate for the Christian? When does entertaining doubt go beyond what is helpful?
3. Is Keller’s approach to these issues different from works like Lee Strobel’s *The Case for Christ*? If so, how?
4. Keller spends some time in the Epilogue discussing the responses readers might have to this book. What would you say if someone asked you how to become a Christian?
5. Does the book’s structure model the mindset needed to adequately address skeptics and believers, since the first half covers negative criticisms of Christianity, while the second half looks at positive beliefs at the core of this religion?