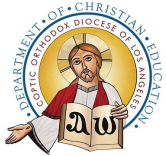


# Absurdity of Life Without God Pt. 1

Department of Christian Education



# Introduction

- **Man is the cosmic “orphan.”**
  - Only creature that asks “why.”
  - Other animals have instincts to guide them.
- **As a result of the Modern Human “enlightenment” that resulted in getting rid of God**
  - (1) you are the accidental by-product of nature
  - (2) you are the result of reason and non-eternity
  - (3) you are the result of matter plus time plus chance
    - no reason for your existence
    - only thing that for sure awaits you is death.
- **Man thought that in getting rid of God that he had freed himself**
  - He actually orphaned himself.

# Introduction

## If there is no God:

- Man's life becomes ultimately absurd
- No afterlife:
  - man and the universe are doomed to death
  - man like all biological organisms must die.
- Life: Infinitesimal moment compared to the universe
- We come head-on face-to-face with "The Threat of non-being."

# Introduction

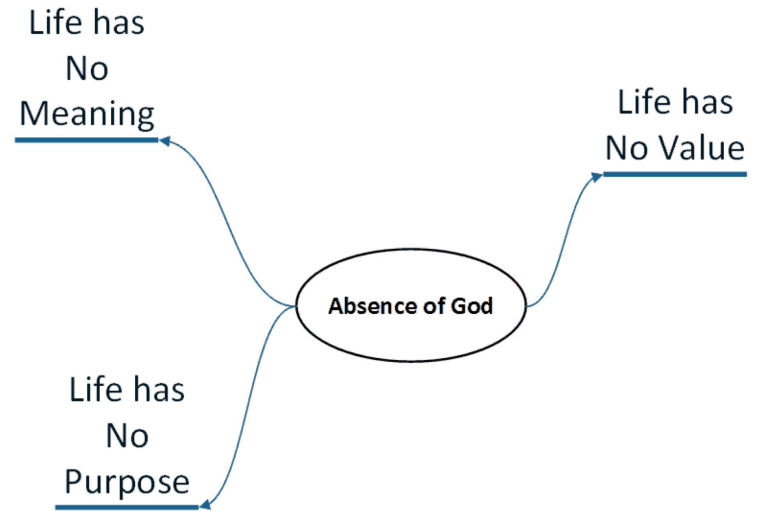
**William Craig:** *“The day that my father said that “someday I will die,” as a little boy, the thought had never occurred to me, I was filled with sadness and cried and cried. My father assured me that it is far off, but it did not matter because I knew that it would happen in the future. As I grew old I realized that it will happen no matter what and yet it left deep sadness inside of me. It affected the child that still lives inside me.”*

**Jean-Paul Sartre observed:** *whether our time on earth is several hours long or several years makes no difference if you lose eternity.*

# Introduction

**The universe too, faces a death of its own:**

- The Universe is expanding/galaxies are growing further and further apart
- Over time it grows colder as energy is dissipating from it
- Stars will dim and all matter will collapse. No vibrant Universe.
  - No escape! No hope!



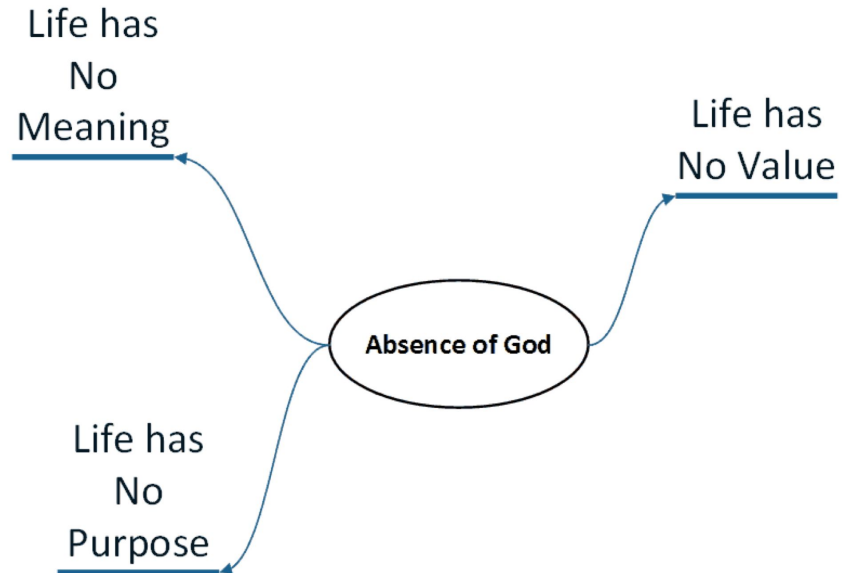
# Introduction

## No God:

- Man and Universe are doomed, like prisoners awaiting execution.
- No immortality.
  - Life itself becomes ultimately absurd.

## Consequences of life without God:

- No ultimate meaning
- No ultimate value
- No ultimate purpose



# Consequence 1: No Ultimate Meaning

Relative vs Ultimate Significance

- Life becomes ultimately absurd, it has no meaning.
- If each individual lives and passes out of the list of existing humans:
  - What ultimate meaning is there to this existence?
  - Does it matter if he lived at all?

# Consequence 1: No Ultimate Meaning

## Relative vs Ultimate Significance

- If you affect others throughout your life:
  - Relative significance to the person's life.
- It has a significance to some or many events
- But if all events will end in nothing:
  - What is the ultimate significance of his contributions?



# Consequence 1: No Ultimate Meaning

Relative vs Ultimate Significance

## The Big Bang

- Suppose it had never occurred, what ultimate difference would it make?
  - No difference, because the world will be doomed anyway.
- Mankind becomes like a swarm of mosquitos/pigs
  - The big bang that coughed them up will eventually swallow them up again.
- All our life's activities will ultimately become insignificant

# Consequence 1: No Ultimate Meaning

Relative vs Ultimate Significance

- **It is not just immortality that man needs.**
  - Mere duration of existence does not suffice to make that existence meaningful.
  - If there were no God, then existence still has no meaning.

# Consequence 1: No Ultimate Meaning

Relative vs Ultimate Significance

- **The existence of man without God.**
  - He would be like a man on a vast planet finding himself alone (no God), having two containers, one with poison and one for immortality.
  - Realizing that he is alone forever, he decides to drink the glass of poison, but to his horror he finds that he drank the one for immortality.

*This is our life with an accidental choice to “kill God” and live without Him. No God, but life goes on and on, but it is meaningless.*

# Consequence 1: No Ultimate Meaning

## Literary Examples

*Read, Samuel Beckett's (Waiting for Godot): He portrays two men carrying out mindless conversation while awaiting the arrival of a third, who never comes.*

- Or think of a stage of junk, and the audience stares in silence at it for 30 seconds, then the curtain closes!!
  - This is life with nothing after it; lots of aimless activity just to pass the time till the bell rings.

# Consequence 1: No Ultimate Meaning

## Literary Examples

- **Sartre:** In his play “No Exit”, asserts that life is hell, final line of the play “let’s get on with it”, elsewhere he calls it the “Nausea of Existence”
- **Albert Camus:** Writes at the end of his brief Novel “The Stranger” insightfully that he discovers that life has no meaning without God to give it one.
- **French Biochemist, Jacques Monod, “Chance and Necessity”** - Man finally knows that he is alone in the indifferent immensity of the Universe.

# Consequence 2: No Ultimate Value

1 - If life ends in the grave, and that is it, then intrinsically there is NO difference in how one lives.

- **(Russian) Dostoevsky:** “if there is no immortality, then all things are permitted.”
- **Based on author, Ayn Rand in “The Virtue of Selfishness”:** you can just live for yourself and that is perfectly commendable.
- Sacrifice for another person would be stupid, for life is too short if you live it for another person.
  - **Marriage:** giving to one who gives to you
  - **Parenting:** why should I have children whom I will spend my life supporting

## Consequence 2: No Ultimate Value

**Keigh Nielson, a theist philosopher, attempts to justify the viability of ethics without God, he writes at the end:** *“we have not been able to show that reason requires the moral point of view, or that all really rational person unhoodwinged with ideology or myths , need not be individual egoists or classical a-moralist, reason does not decide here, the picture that I depicted for you here does not please me, rather depresses me, for pure practical reasons, even with a good knowledge of the facts, even that will not take you to morality.”*

- In other words, he concluded that having reason does not lead to having morality.

# Consequence 2: No Ultimate Value

**2 - If there were no God, then there is no objective standard of right or wrong. (*Sartre: moral values are just the expressions of personal taste and/or socio-biological evolution*)**

- Who is to judge the values? The Concept of morality?
- To say that something is wrong with no God existing to forbid it, has no meaning at all.

**3 - No Objective right or wrong, only our cultural and personal subjective judgment. For who could say whose values are right or wrong?**



# Consequence 2: No Ultimate Value

**4 - To deny the goodness of something because it is forbidden by a law-giving God is perfectly intelligible, but to say it is wrong without the existence of God who forbids it is not:**

- Apart from God the concept of moral obligation is void, for whom are you obliged to? Whom are you accountable to?
- Without God, the judge is the person or the culture, hence all judgments become relative; there is no absolute right and wrong.

# Consequence 2: No Ultimate Value

**5 - Consequently, war, crime, evil, cannot be called wrong in an absolute sense. On the other hand also, equality and fairness cannot be praised.**

- No one can say that anyone is right or wrong in the absolute sense!!!
- It has to be all relative, depending on the society you live in. So hence there are no absolutes.
- What is wrong in the US may be right in other places.
- What is right today could be wrong tomorrow, depending on whose voice we choose to listen to.
- People as a group evolve into deciding what is right and what is wrong.

# Consequence 3: No Ultimate Purpose

**1 - If at the end of one's life there is just death standing with open arms, then what is the goal of life; all for nothing, no purpose.**

- So without God, there is no purpose for the existence of the Universe.
- What is the universe, it must be pointless, no purpose or goal for its existence; just expanding to “terminal” coldness.

# Consequence 3: No Ultimate Purpose

**2 - Consequently, Man would have no purpose for existence.**

- **H . G. Wells:** “The time machine”
  - Travels to the future to discover the destiny of man, he writes in the novel:
    - *“the world was silent, all the sounds of man, cries of birds, hum of insects..., all was over”*

*then the time traveler returned, but to what??  
to merely an earlier point of rush towards  
oblivion?? (no hope)*

# Consequence 3: No Ultimate Purpose

- **T.S. Elliot:** *this is the way the world ends, this is the way the world ends, this is the way the world ends, not with a bang but with a whimper.*
- **In the book of Ecclesiastes:** fate of the sons of man, is the same as the end of beasts.
  - Futility of pleasure, wealth, political fame, his verdict: Vain of Vanity.
  - This is the end of man if he had no ultimate purpose for existence; A long-term one, not just for a short life.

# Consequence 3: No Ultimate Purpose

- Man and Universe, we are just accidents:
  - no reason for existence
  - man is a freak of nature
  - man and insects are the same
  - just two accidents of nature.

# Consequence 3: No Ultimate Purpose

**We are victims of a sort of a genetic and an environmental roulette.**

- Psychologists following Freud would say that our actions are the result of sexual tendencies.
- Sociologists following B. F. Skinner argued that all of our choices are determined by conditioning, so freedom is an illusion.
- Biologists like Francis Crick regard man as an electrochemical machine altered by a genetic code.

# Gravity of Alternatives

*We have to ponder deeply on the gravity of the alternative life which culminates from the absence of God.*

**When you assert that God does not exist**

- you are a miscarriage of nature thrust into an ending dying universe for an infinitesimal period.
- You are an accident with a timer, expiring without a reason to be there.
- Life is rendered to be without reason.
- Man and Universe exist for no purpose, since the end is death
- Man and Universe came to be to no purpose since they are just a blind chance.



# Gravity of Alternatives (Fredrick Nietzsche's Story)

*Fredrick Nietzsche tells the story of a madman who bursts into the marketplace, and cries out "I seek God, I seek God." People in the marketplace, not believing in God, laughed, so he said, "Did He get lost, is He hiding, Gone on a voyage and immigrated?" He cries out, "We have killed God" How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves? He threw his lantern to the ground and said "I have come too early, this tremendous event is still on its way, it has not yet reached the ears of man." He predicted that someday people will embrace Atheism and people will embrace Nihilism which is the destruction of all meaning and value. Like the crowd in the story, people go on their way.*

# Gravity of Alternatives

To answer Nietzsche question, here is how people will comfort themselves:

- To live in internal comfort, the Atheist offers for us to live life as:
  - Facing the absurdity of life bravely, and
  - Live valiantly.
- **Bertrand Russel's solution:** *"we must build our lives on the firm foundation of the unyielding despair only by recognizing that the world is really a terrible place, then we can come to terms with life."*
- **Camus offers the solution:** *"Life is absurd, grasp that and live in love with one another"*

# Final Thoughts

## So why do we need God?

- God → hope
- No God → Despair
- Existence of God is vital to the existence of man.
- “If God is dead, then Man is dead too”
- We need God to give value to the work we do, and the people we choose to be
  - His value endures beyond this world and what we see