

Q&A: Imagine you are Atheist, and cannot believe in God no matter how much you want to, what would you live for?

Asked by Anonymous.

The hypothetical in your question suggests some form of internal disconnect between wanting to believe and not being able to believe. I would like to think I would live for a true resolution of that disconnect – holding the tension with intellectual and emotional prowess until a satisfactory outcome is found.

But that's probably an overly optimistic view. Given a clear understanding of the inclinations of my own heart, mixed with my own experience of “there but for the grace of God I go” and “there despite the grace of God I went”, I suspect I would cover the tension with some temporary comfort and be a purveyor of some form of vice or another and live to soothe my existential angst by using people.

Q&A: What is your current reason for living?

Asked by Anonymous.

Thanks for the question. There will be a more complete answer when I write about the recent season of my life soon.

But the simple and quick answer is this: worship. My reason for living is to worship God.

Why? Beyond the fact that that is simply the Right Thing to Do... Building on the scriptural premise (to borrow the words of the Westminster Shorter Catechism):

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, [a] and to enjoy him for ever. [b]

[a]. Ps. 86:9; Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:36; I Cor. 6:20; 10:31; Rev. 4:11

[b]. Ps. 16:5-11; 144:15; Isa. 12:2; Luke 2:10; Phil. 4:4; Rev. 21:3-4

... I have been very aware in the last while that God is the single constancy in life. All other values, purposes, ambitions, feelings and even relationships, while real and precious (even when difficult) are fleeting and unreliable.

In the end, the reason I live is because God, and God alone, is faithful.

Q&A: In Heaven, those who endured bad things on Earth are comforted... implying we'll remember what we'll be comforted for. Can you add

your opinion to this?

Anonymous asks this question and references Luke 16:25.

I don't have much to add to the implication. The comfort of heaven doesn't seem to be a matter of controversy. Neither do I think it's controversial to draw the implication that we'll remember our earthly lives. Those conclusions seem sensible.

I don't know if I'd draw on that Luke 16 passage (the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus) to make the point though. The passage is a parable, a story, not a record of actual events. And it is making the point about the hardness of hearts that "would refuse to repent even if someone rose from the dead."

When it comes to our final state and our eternal hope the best place to go is the end of Revelation where in the account of the new heaven and new earth we have, for example, in 21:4 –

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (KJV)

And in terms of remembering the former things, on a larger scale we are told of the new city of God that "They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations." (21:26, ESV).

It seems that we can invest in things of eternal worth in the here and now!

The other implication in your question is a sense quid pro quo – bad things here, good things there. While there is a sense of "reward" or "prize" when talking about eternal destiny (Paul uses the imagery in Philippians 3, for instance), and while there is also a sense of justice and wrongs being made right, the comfort of heaven is not a payment for bad things done now. That is, it's not about being given a hardship's

worth of comfort in order to make up for what we've been through, rather it is an abundance, an outpouring, a more-than-enough-ness of comfort into which we enter.