

The Search for Meaning

in the Modern Age

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Chapter One – Why Religion?

Many go through life without ever pondering the deeper issues of life, like where did the universe come from? Why is earth so perfectly adapted for life when other planets are not? Why am I alive and what happens after I die? But the famed author Leo Tolstoy once said, “Without knowing what I am and why I am here, life is impossible.” So I would challenge you to take a little time to stop and think about life. Go stand on the shore and stare out at the sea, or lie on the grass and gaze into the sky, or go outside on a dark night and marvel at the stars while pondering the meaning of it all. Where did the universe come from? How did it begin? Why am I alive? What will happen to me after I die?

While science has theories about the origins of life, the very fact that they are called “theories” means these mysteries are still unsolved. These theories are simply man-made speculations to try and explain life without religion, through scientific evidence, but it can never be done. Even the greatest scientist will admit that there is no real answer to the origin of life. No scientific theory can explain the beginning. That is why religion exists. Religion is the search for answers to the deeper questions of life: Where did the universe come from? Why am I alive? What happens after we die? Solving these, and other deep issues, is the purpose of religion.

What if your life is a gift? What if you were given this life for a reason? What if there is a meaning for your life and you are supposed to discover that meaning? Multitudes don’t search for answers to the greatest questions of life because they don’t care, but the

moment we begin to ponder the meaning of life is the moment we break through the veil of complacency and we really begin to live! Author and humorist Terry Pratchett writes, "If you do not know where you come from, then you don't know where you are, and if you don't know where you are, then you don't know where you're going. And if you don't know where you're going, you're probably going wrong." Sadly, I fear many are going in the wrong direction.

So often we begin our journey of life with such high hopes and dreams, only to be finally let down, discouraged, and disappointed by life. Then, in the end, we die. Ironically, as high as our hopes may be, life must end in tragedy. The moment we are born, we slowly begin to die. Death comes to all of us, and yet most of us don't like to think about it. As a result, most people are not ready when they die. Others concoct theories about death, and have hopes of life after death, but their hopes are not based on concrete philosophy as much as on feelings. It does not matter what you think will happen after this life ends if you are wrong. To this most essential question, we must find the truth.

Those who criticize religion will fail to find the keys beyond the grave because religion will give you the answer. Religion is the key to solve the mysteries of life. In fact, religion shows the path to finding life beyond this life. Those who fail to seek religion will also consequently fail at finding life beyond this life. That's why religion is so important. So many people like to criticize religion, and yet everyone is heading toward death, and no one likes to think about it, so we die unprepared. Why would we fail to prepare for this

profound event? The most important thing in life is to be ready for death, and yet we must find out how to get ready. The answer to this, and other mysteries, is found in religion.

Religion reveals the key to getting from this life to the next life and yet so many people refuse to look at religion. Perhaps they think religion is not cool, or too unscientific, or merely for weak people, so they not only fail to discover their purpose in life, but they also fail to prepare for the next life. As a result, many will tragically fail to reach the next life, losing out on the wonderful gift of eternity. However, for those who want to find the passage from this life to the next, religion is the key. Still, let us be warned that this is not an easy search. There are many different religions, and many roads that wander off the path of truth, but there is only one correct path.

Today, many like to say that all religions lead to the same end. They say, "As all rivers run to the sea, all religions lead to life," but this is not true. Just as there is only one correct answer to a simple math problem, there is only one correct answer to how the world got here, why you are alive, and how you can find the next life. There is one correct path, and your job is to find that path. While this may seem difficult, all who search with their whole heart are promised to find the true path. The problem is that most people are not really willing to search with their whole heart. They search half-heartedly and give up their search just as easily as they started it, never finding answers. Still, those who really search for answers will find them.

Imagine that someone tells you that there is a suitcase with a million dollars buried in a nearby field, just beneath the surface, and you can have all the money in it if you can find it. How long and hard would you dig for the treasure? Would you only dig in a couple of spots, then give up? Of course not! You would continue to dig until the entire field was dug up! And yet the chance to live forever lies before each of us. All we have to do is find the answer to the mysteries of life, and yet so few people are willing to dig! If you really want to find the key to eternal life, you must put forth the effort to search, and I would encourage you to start by searching the number one best-seller resource.

The best-selling religious book of all time is the Bible. While some call this a Western book, the Bible has been embraced by people in every culture. It is a book without limits, but some would like people to believe it is a fairy tale, only for Western culture, and that the stories have no relevance for us today. In spite of this, the Bible has proven to be a divinely inspired book on many levels. Not only has it predicted the future repeatedly, including the rise and fall of nations, but it has supernaturally changed countless lives. Billions of people across the globe have had their lives miraculously changed by reading this book.

Every year the Bible is the number one best-selling title around the world. Why? Could it be that this book has real answers to the mysteries of life? Could it be that this book tells us what the meaning of life is, why we are here, and the best path to travel? Could it be that this book informs us how to get from this life to the next life? Clearly, this book must be different than other

books for it to be the world's number one best-seller every single year. Year after year, millions around the world convert to Christianity because this religion offers real answers to life's mysteries, real help for this life, and real advice on how to find life beyond the grave.

You may choose not to believe in God, or the Bible, and you may claim that religion is for fools, but you have no answers of your own, so who is the fool? Wouldn't it be more foolish to refuse to look when one book is offering so much? Think about it. Imagine that you are living in poverty. Your house is small and dirty, and a man hides a million-dollar diamond in your home and says you can have it if you find it, but you refuse to look. You tell the man, "I don't believe you hid a million-dollar diamond in my home," so you refuse to look, and you live out your life in poverty. All the time, you could have been rich if you had simply searched, but you refused to look because you didn't want to look foolish. So who is the fool?

Think about it. If there was even a tiny chance that the diamond could be in your house, you would be a fool not to at least check, and yet many people refuse to read the Bible, when it is offering so much more. It is offering us a life of joy and peace. It is offering meaning and purpose in life. It is even offering us hope beyond the grave; the hope of eternal life in a place where there is no pain or tears. Even if there is only a tiny chance that the promises of the Bible are true, you should read the entire book as if you were looking for treasure. You would be a fool not to at least look, and God's promise is, if you "seek" Him, He will reveal Himself, and give you "everlasting life" (Jer. 29:11; John 3:16).