

God and the meaning
of life: is the
existence of god
necessary for life to
be mea...

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Most people find it difficult to accept the stressful events of life such as the death of a loved one, serious injury, bankruptcy, divorce, etc, especially when something “senseless” events happens. How can family and friends come to terms with a death of a talented college student, not even 20 years old? Through its emphasis on the divine and the supernatural, religion allows us to “do something” about the calamities we face. In some faiths, adherents can offer sacrifices or pray to a deity in the belief that such acts will change their earthly condition (Schafer 93). On a more basic level, religion encourages us to view our personal misfortunes as relatively unimportant in the broader perspective of human history or even as a part of an undisclosed divine purpose. Friends and relatives of the deceased college student may see his death as being “God’s will,” or as having some ultimate benefit that we cannot understand now. The existence of God is necessary for social change and social control.

In most cases a belief in God gives life more meaning. Most of human history has been about survival, trying to find the means to put bread on the table and protecting your family. Very few have had the luxury to sit & contemplate the meaning of life.

Belief in God and the after life gives the believer meaning beyond day to day survival. Parents who have to feed their children through a tube implanted in the stomach, or suction the saliva out of their kid’s mouth, knowing their child will be in a wheelchair for the rest of their life, turning to religion as a way of coping and to find the meaning beyond the day to day hardship (di Muzio 4). According to some, questions about the meaning of life are

inextricably bound up with questions about God and religion. Without God, it is suggested, humanity amounts to little more than a dirty smudge on a ball of rock lost in an incomprehensively vast universe that will eventually bare no trace of us having ever existed, and which will itself collapse into nothingness (Petersen 187).

So why bother getting out of bed in the morning? If there is a God, on the other hand, then we inhabit a universe made for us, by a God who loves us, and who has given us a divine purpose. That fills our lives meaning. Theists often argue that, without God and immortality, human life would be meaningless (Di Muzio 15). If each individual person passes out of existence when he dies, then what ultimate meaning can be given to his life? Does it really matter whether he ever existed at all? It might be said that his life was important because it influenced others or affected the course of history. But this only shows a relative significance to his life, not an ultimate significance. His life may be important relative to certain other events, but what is the ultimate significance of any of those events? If all the events are meaningless, then what can be the ultimate meaning of influencing any of them? Ultimately, it makes no difference.

One may argue that if you believe there is a God, then that would serve as a moral authority governing all others with who rests the ability to dictate a meaning? This, however, begs a similarly complex follow up question about whether God exists. In this case, you cannot prove that God exists, thus cannot prove there is an objective meaning to life, and end up settling on a subjective meaning anyway. If God does exist, then presumably one could

derive an objective meaning to life. If God does not exist, then who is the moral authority? Who has the right to say what is meaningful and not meaningful? So, with that reasoning in mind, God would be necessary to assert that there was an objective meaning to life). It remains that life can be meaningful to an individual with or without a God, but that meaning is subjectively derived from within each individual.

From the Christian perspective the Bible tells us that God created the Universe and everything in it. After setting in place all the necessary conditions for life, he created the creatures of the air, sea and land. Lastly, he created man and woman. Just as an artist writes his name on his painting to identify himself with that work for others to know, God leaves an indelible and unmistakable mark on His creation with his signature work - humans. Humans are different from every other living creature, the Bible says, because we are made in the image of God. This is the reason why we understand obvious concepts like justice, love, hate, anger, mercy and compassion.

It is a testimony to the entire Universe that God's last creation is also His most magnificent and most like Him. In other words, although all of creation glorifies God, man being His signature work should glorify Him most. The Christian search for a meaningful life therefore starts from our recognition to the above. Any attempt to stray from this point would lead to a path that is inconsistent with His reasons for creating us in the first place. It may not end in a disaster, but it's certainly not optimal.

Although it might be true that the question of meaning and purpose in life has no bearing on the reasonableness of either theism or atheism, the fact remains that it is an important concern of many theists (Schafer 24). If someone brings it up, it is because their belief in a god is, at least in part, predicated upon the idea that their god provides meaning and purpose to their lives. This is not a bad thing, however the problem lies in the fact that they cannot imagine that anyone's life can have meaning and purpose unless it happens on the same terms as their life. In their case, at least, the only way they would ever abandon theism will be if they realize that meaning and purpose can come from themselves instead.