

Doctrine of Vanity

1. Theologian and philosopher Immanuel Kant (April 22, 1724 – February 12, 1804) taught that while knowledge of God may remain uncertain, it is in humanities best interest to live as if God exists.
2. Opponents of Kant said that just because the idea of there being no God is a bleak concept, it does not necessarily mandate the need for faith in such a Being.
3. All philosophical theories find themselves between two poles.
 - Full body theism
 - Nihilism
4. Nihilism concludes that there is no God, there is no meaning to life, there is no significance, and no sense to human existence.
5. The Wisdom Literature of the Hebrew Scriptures wrestled with these two extremes.
 - There is life as it is experienced “under the sun”. *Ecclesiastes 1:3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?*
 - There is life as it is experience “under heaven.” *Ecclesiastes 1:13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.*
6. In modern terms, Immanuel Kant spoke of the noumenal world, and the phenomenal world. There is the world of transcendence, and the world which is observable.
7. Life under heaven is the noumenal world. Life under the sun is the phenomenal world.
8. The author of Lamentations argues that if there is no God, then life under the sun, life in the phenomenal world ends, and can be summarized with the phrase, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”
9. The expression, “vanity of vanities” is an expression of superlatives. We see this concept in the New Testament where Christ is called the “King of kings” (Rev. 19:6). Christ is the supreme King. He is the supreme Lord.
10. The word, “vanity”, when used by the author of Lamentations is not referring to pride, but to a state of emptiness. There is futility to life if there is no God. Everything we do is futile. Humanity is lost in a vicious cycle of meaninglessness. The sun rises and sets, and rises again. This is the philosophy of nihilisms.

Macbeth, Act 5 Scene 5 “

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
 To the last syllable of recorded time,
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
 And then is heard no more. It is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing."

11. There are few philosophers who go to the extreme, and embrace nihilism.
12. Some embrace full body theism, and seek to defend it.
13. Humanism, which is currently very popular in society, borrows from both ends of the spectrum because it is extremely naïve.
14. The Humanist tells us that there is no God, and our origins come from nothing. Our origins come to us accidentally, from a meaningless event, and our lives are moving towards annihilation. Therefore, our lives are meaningless in origin, and meaningless in destiny, and yet the Humanist fights for human rights, and human dignity.
15. The Humanist have both feet planted in midair. The Humanist denies what is affirmed, and affirms what is denied.
16. The Humanist denies God, but insists on God like honor with freedom to choose, freedom to be, freedom to live with respect. The Humanist wants to have meaning. They are resting on sentiment. They are without courage to go where atheism drives them, to nihilism.
17. There is no reason to believe in, or fight for, human dignity if all of life is a cosmic accident. But the Humanist borrows from the Judeo-Christian world a value system of "oughtness" and insist that others ought to act in a certain way.
18. The Humanist has no moral basis for this sense of oughtness. The Humanist has no rational basis for any sense of oughtness. They are hopelessly inconsistent.
19. The Bible teaches that without Christ, all of humanity is without hope.
 - *1 Corinthians 15:17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*
20. If there is no God to establish the universe, then there is no foundation for hope, in time, or in eternity.

- 21.** The practical problem is that the consciousness of humanity screams out for significance. We want our lives to have meaning. We want all that pours out from our labor, from our blood, sweat, and tears to have meaning. If there is no meaning, we would want to end our labor, and our misery.
- 22.** Albert Camus (1913 – 1960), a twentieth century philosopher, embraced the meaninglessness of life, and concluded that the only significant decision a person could make is when, and how to end their own life in suicide. He died in a car accident in January, 1960, at the age of 46. But then, in his world, what did that matter?
- 23.** There is a natural attraction to the idea of there is no God, no day of judgment, no personal accountability before a Supreme Deity, until the outworking of such a philosophy is realized.
- 24.** If there is no God, then it does not matter what we say or do. It does not matter if a person kills, rapes, robs, or is kind, gentle, and decent. These are all useless passions, if there is no God.
- 25.** The practical problem is that human life is marked by caring, and by compassion. But what if all that we care about is worthless? What if all that we love is meaningless? Then all our passions mean nothing. Individuals are nothing more than grown up germs, sitting on a vast cosmos, that is running down to extinction. The brave soul says, “I will embrace annihilation, and will not run to religion to escape the meaninglessness of life.”
- 26.** The Christian smiles at such foolish reasoning because the Christian understands that it is the Humanist, it is the worldly wise that is running to escape reality.
- 27.** People run to government, they run to Communism, they run to Socialism, they run to Hedonism, they run to pleasure, in order to find meaning. Maximize your pleasure, minimize your pain. In the words of pop psychologist Timothy Leary (October 22, 1920 – May 31, 1996), “Turn on, tune in, and drop out.” Put daisies down the barrels of rifles. Escape.
- 28.** Drugs, rock music, sexual perversions, and other forms of aberrant behavior reinforce the message to escape the pain of reality.
- 29.** The supreme drug to escape reality, according to the Secular Humanist, is religion, the opiate of the masses (Karl Marx).
- 30.** Christians are accused of using their faith as a crutch. A Christian might concede that point, and note that a crutch is exactly what a cripple person needs, and every person has been crippled by sin.
- 31.** While the Secular Humanist might taunt the Christian, the Secular Humanist cannot explain why man is universally religious.

- 32.** The Secular Humanist might try to say that the main reason people universally believe in God is psychological fear. They are afraid of the consequences if there is no God. Without God we are doomed. Therefore, to escape nihilism, we leap back to God.
- 33.** The irony is that it is the Secular Humanist who does not want to fear God, and so leaps all the way to nihilism. That is his crutch to escape reality.