

Maybe the Atheists are Correct 3/19/2021

Now that I have your attention, don't think that I'm walking away from my faith! Let me explain. Maybe they are exactly right in that nothing they have seen in the world around them, and more importantly for our discussion, *in us*, gives them solid ground on which to believe in gods, much less God.

According to the website 'atheists.org' with the header of "American Atheists":

- *Atheism is one thing: A lack of belief in gods. Atheism is not an affirmative belief that there is no god nor does it answer any other question about what a person believes. It is simply a rejection of the assertion that there are gods. Atheism is too often defined incorrectly as a belief system. To be clear: Atheism is not a disbelief in gods or a denial of gods; it is a lack of belief in gods.*
- *Atheism is not a belief system nor is it a religion. While there are some religions that are atheistic (certain sects of Buddhism, for example), that does not mean that atheism is a religion. To put it in a more humorous way: If atheism is a religion, then not collecting stamps is a hobby. Despite the fact that atheism is not a religion, atheism is protected by many of the same Constitutional rights that protect religion.*
- *Being an atheist doesn't mean you're sure about every theological question, have answers to the way the world was created, or how evolution works. It just means that the assertion that gods exist has left you unconvinced. Wishing that there was an afterlife, or a creator god, or a specific god doesn't mean you're not an atheist. Being an atheist is about what you believe and don't believe, not about what you wish to be true or would find comforting.*

According to a 2019 article published by the Pew Institute ([link](#)), these are '10 facts about atheists':

1. The share of Americans who identify as atheists has increased modestly but significantly in the past decade.
2. 8 of 10 US atheists say they do not believe in God or a higher power or in a spiritual force of any kind (literal definition of 'atheist'), but, at the same time, 1 of 5 say they do believe in some kind of higher power (note, though, none of the atheists surveyed say they believe in "God as described in the Bible.")
3. Atheists make up a larger percent of the population in Europe than in the US
4. US atheists are mostly men and younger men at that.
5. 9 of 10 US atheists say religion is not too or at all important to them, but 1 in 3 think about the meaning and purpose of life. More atheists say they often feel a sense of wonder about the universe than do Christians.
6. Atheists, aligned with most Americans, find meaning through their family relationships. However, atheists are more likely to also cite hobbies, finances and activities than are other Americans.
7. Most atheists express negative views when asked about the role of religion in society.
8. Atheists may not believe religious teachings, but they are quite informed about religion.

9. More than half of Americans say it is not necessary to believe in God to be moral, while only 2 out of 5 say belief in God is necessary to have good values
10. Americans feel less warmly toward atheists than they do toward members of most major religious groups.

Discussion:

1. What are your reactions to the above referenced content from the American Atheists and from the Pew study?
2. Discuss the following statements, keeping in mind the following:
 - Forgiveness vs. grudges
 - Hope vs. despair
 - Generosity vs. selfishness
 - Mercy vs condemnation
 - Repentance vs pride
 - Justice vs retribution
 - a. "Sometimes we speak on behalf of God when we shouldn't"
 - b. "Sometimes we don't speak on behalf of God when we should"
 - c. "Sometimes we think we speak on behalf of God, but it doesn't align with who God is (not truth)"
 - d. "We are sometimes too focused on telling others who they should be rather than showing them who we really are (in Christ)"

BONUS QUESTION:

- ***So what, then, shall we do?***