

Opposing Views: Is there a need for religion?

By Kyle Sanders

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Something isn't right in this world. Violence, fear, death, sadness, destruction -- this world has been facing rough times lately, and at this pace, will continue to fall apart.

But there is hope, and I believe that this hope is religion.

For as long as I can remember, I've grown up in a Christian household and have attended a Baptist church. My parents were big on that. I fully believe that God sent his son, Jesus Christ, to die for me, and I believe that this is the most important thing in my life.

Growing up in a Christian family has showed me that even through everything the world is facing, faith in God keeps me going. But what is faith? I define it as having full confidence, trust and assurance in God.

Since the beginning of time with Adam and Eve, one thing came into the world - sin. And this sin will continue to cause everything that is wrong, and you can't escape it.

But there is hope. This hope is offered to everyone in the world, and I have realized that many people aren't aware of what it means to follow Christ. Following Jesus doesn't mean that life gets easier; it actually means that you'll come to obstacles in your life that you can't face alone, and that's when you know you must look to God.

I have never experienced anything in my life that would cause me to lose faith. But from what I've seen, anytime someone without faith experiences hardships without God, they feel loss and abandonment. They say they're not taking it out on God, but that is exactly what they're doing.

It's inappropriate at the time, to tell that person that "it's okay" or that "everything is fine" or that "this is all part of God's plan". I've seen this happen far too often and see why someone would get angry about that. But for me, to take it out on the one person who is the reason you're alive, is beyond my understanding.

If someone were to tell me that I went all the way across the world to Kenya for a God that didn't exist, I would find that as wrong. In order to experience the feeling that led me on a mission trip to Kenya, one must have faith that is firm - a faith that is built not on sinking sand, but on a firm foundation.

I have nothing against agnostics, or anyone who doesn't believe in Christianity. And I fully go through life hoping to show everyone that there is someone in my life that has changed me.

As a Christian, I believe that God offers His merciful love to everyone on this world, but He can't be around sin. And when we sin, we push him away.

We've fallen short of the glory of God and I feel that agnostics do not understand this undying love that God has for them, and everyone.

The Hyphen aims to create fair and balanced views on every topic. This issue editors Kyle Sanders and Tristan Jackson discuss the topic of religion. While the pair have differing views, the two remain friends and respect the opposing view.

By Tristan Jackson

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Imagine a nine-year-old boy.

This boy loved his dad more than anything. They were best friends, and they did everything together.

But then his dad gets sick. His family and friends said he'd be okay, but he wasn't. So when the boy's dad goes to the hospital, the boy prays to God every night to save his dad -- his best friend.

But He doesn't save him. In the middle of the boy's third grade class, he's called to the office and taken to the hospital where his dad is staying. At nine, the boy holds his dad's hand as he breathes his last breath.

I was that boy.

For weeks after his passing, people told me God has a plan -- that everything happens for a reason. Worst of all, they'd say one day, I would see him again.

The way I looked at it, though, religion didn't pull through for me. All those nights I prayed for my dad to get better, those nights were wasted.

My story has a point, and it's not to tell you I miss my dad, or how losing my dad was some life-changing event. While true, neither are what I'm getting at. I want to share this story because it is how I lost faith, and why.

What I'm saying is I do not believe in God. I am agnostic. If you are looking for a reason for me not to believe in God, or any religion at that, start reading this story again from the beginning.

For years, it was something I was very quiet about. To this day, I'm sure some of my best friends don't even know because I know how people feel about it. I've heard my own friends say they hate non-believers.

There will always be people who hate me for what I am (or am not), but there are always people who love me for who I am too, and I've learned to live with that.

There is nothing wrong with atheism. To me, Christians who love their God and do not judge are the people who understand what the religion is really about, and I applaud them. My friend Kyle, a devout believer and who I'm writing with, is one of these people.

An observation I've made is every atheist has their reasons, as do I. I'm not mad at religion, or God, or anything really. It may seem like one bad break is the reason for my loss of faith, and maybe it is. But even if losing my father was my reason, I think it would have happened anyway.

Some will tell me I am immoral, but I disagree. My purpose is to make other people happy, and my happiness comes from the joy of the people around me.

What I'm trying to say is Christianity and morality don't necessarily go hand-in-hand. Neither do atheism and immorality. There are just as many bad Christians in the world as bad atheists, and vice versa.

I hope what people get out of my story is not that I, along with many others like me, am not a bad person for what I choose to believe. I have my reasons, and I do my best to be a good person while choosing not to follow God.

Photo by Sam Gatewood

