

Brittle Beliefs

Does Non-Belief Work?

January 21, 2018 / Jeff Gunn

¹ Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. ² But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. ³ For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ⁴ **They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong.** ⁵ **They are free from common human burdens; they are not plagued by human ills.** ⁶ Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. ⁷ From their callous hearts comes iniquity; their evil imaginations have no limits. ⁸ They scoff, and speak with malice; with arrogance they threaten oppression. ⁹ Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. ¹⁰ Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. ¹¹ **They say, "How would God know? Does the Most High know anything?"** ¹² **This is what the wicked are like—always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.** Psalm 73:1-12, NIV

The _____ is critical. If the goal is to enjoy ease, pleasure and wealth in this life, non-belief _____.

¹³ Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. ¹⁴ All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments. ¹⁵ If I had spoken out like that, I would have betrayed your children. ¹⁶ **When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply.** Psalm 73:13-16, NIV

¹ You are always righteous, LORD, when I bring a case before you. Yet I would speak with you about your justice: **Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease?** Jeremiah 12:1, NIV

Don't be lured into playing the _____ game. Non-belief works so well it can raise _____ questions.

¹⁷ Till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. ¹⁸ Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. ¹⁹ How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! ²⁰ **They are like a dream when one awakes; when you arise, Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.** ²¹ When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, ²² I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you. ²³ Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. ²⁴ **You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.** Psalm 73:17-24, NIV

²⁶ He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, **because he was looking ahead to his reward.** Hebrews 11:26, NIV

What do I truly _____? To _____ on meaningless, shiny objects, or the eternal treasures won for me by Jesus?

²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. ²⁶ **My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.** ²⁷ Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you. ²⁸ **But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.** Psalm 73:25-28, NIV

And the *peace of God*, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7, NIV

Even now, in Christ, I know God's _____ in my life. Will anything else assure me of such lasting _____?

MEMORY VERSE

²⁸ **But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge.** Psalm 73:28, NIV

My next step: I will stay focused on Jesus and on what's truly lasting. To assist me, I'll commit to joining a growth group.

What's your next step today?

Mark it on your Communication Card.