

God Or No God – How Do You Wager?
(Rev. Dr. John Bartol)

“Not to believe in God is to be condemned to a senseless universe.”

Theodore Dostoevski

As a student of philosophy, I discovered what is called “Pascal’s Wager.” Blaise Pascal was a brilliant mathematician and philosopher who became convinced that when we decide to leave God out of our lives, we have everything to lose and nothing to gain. He argued that in making our decisions about God, we will never understand everything in advance, so we have to wager between two basic choices – “God is or God is not!”

Pascal sets forth the obvious truth that if we have a firm faith in God, we are at no serious disadvantage in this life and at considerable advantage beyond the grave. But, if we reject God and find out later that there is a future life, we are most unfortunate. Believers in God, proved wrong, lose nothing but unbelievers proved wrong, in regard to their convictions, lose everything.

To sum up Pascal’s conclusion: “Atheism is a risk too extreme for any thinking person to follow. A desire to live without God in both time and eternity must be the gravest error imaginable. Do not hesitate, then: “Follow where the evidence leads and wager that God exists.”

In today’s world especially, the gospel of Christ is good news. We can receive freedom, forgiveness, hope and fulfillment. All this comes at a cost – the life and death of Jesus Christ and it is offered to us free. We are person’s, loved by the God who created us in His image and came to this earth to die for us.

And our response? In the midst of all the setbacks and disasters of this world we should search for the God who at first searched for us. Pray in your own words or you can make the following prayer your own: “God, if you exist, and I don’t know if you do, I want to tell you that I am an honest seeker after truth. I pray that in some way you might reveal yourself to me. I come to you with the consent of my mind and my will, ready to believe and obey. Amen”

As I look back over my Christian life it has not always been easy. I faced some rejection, pain and perhaps some financial loss because of my beliefs. However, the love, hope, peace, joy and friendships that have filled my life as a follower of Christ, are treasures, I would not trade for anything.

I firmly believe that when a person engages in an honest search for God, he or she will not be disappointed. The promise, “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13); is the key to a meaningful, faith filled life.

“To have faith is to believe what you cannot see, and the reward of faith is to see what you believe.” Augustine