

**The best explanation & source for the arts & stewardship in view of societal development:**  
(1) What can best account for human creativity, both unity & diversity? (2) What can best explain the universal signatures of art & value judgments cross-culturally? (3) What can best offer the greatest enrichment of the arts & what arts can best enrich society? (4) What about stewardship of time, resources, & energy that will best benefit artists & society? What should relationship be between the arts, society, & morality?

**How do we best account for 20 longings that flow from our universal human condition?**

1. Authentic love: to love & be loved in return
2. Beauty
3. Destiny or Adventure worthwhile
4. Identity? Who are we? Where did we come from? Where are we going?
5. Lasting fulfillment
6. Goodness
7. Lasting hope
8. Someone or something to believe in?
8. Forgiveness in view of wrongdoings
9. Redemption or atonement
10. Immortality
11. Justice
12. Meaning & purpose of our lives
13. Peace & contentment
14. Purpose/relevance
15. Restoration
16. Significance & value
17. Sublime experiences
18. True & lasting pleasures
19. Ultimate Intelligibility
20. Wholeness:

When our existential longings & needs are not fulfilled, emptiness still follows us even after our goals are achieved, & pleasures are vaporous, & material goods, popularity, looks, power, recognition, or wealth do not fill the void within, there are at least two conclusions:

Our existential needs cannot ever be met; nothing will ever satisfy us. Thus, we are left exhausted or resigned to live for punctuated moments of happiness in a reality that is the accidental and mindless product of time, energy, and chance...

OR

There exists a personal and infinite God who is the only One who can satisfy our deepest longings, needs, and expectations. Thus, we are intimately pursue Him while enjoying but not living for that which is vaporous. The questions becomes what good arguments & evidences do we have for God's existence.

**Compared to the Judeo-Christian Worldview, atheism is wrought with difficulties in following 7 ways: (1) logical coherence; (2) empirical adequacy; (3) Existential relevance; (4) Workability; (5) Viability; (6) Explanatory Power; (7) Ethics & Aesthetics.**

## 13 Areas Atheists have to Answer

1. Everything ultimately came from Nothing
2. Order from Chaos
3. Harmony from Discord (e.g., Intelligent Design; Anthropic Principle)
4. Life came from Nonlife
5. Reason came from Irrationality
6. Personality came from Non-personality
7. Morality came from Amorality
8. Universal Natural, Moral Law from Non-Conscience
9. Beauty came from Nonbeauty (e.g., universal signatures of order, complexity; intensity)
10. Joy came from time, energy, & chance
11. Altruism from Materialism
12. Problem of Abstract Realities (e.g., logic; math)
13. Information from NonMind (e.g., DNA)

~ First 7 adapted from Robert Morey, *The New Atheism And the Erosion of Freedom* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, Publishers, 1986), 98.

Intellectual honesty demands that we question modern scientific truth-claims as we do when religious, myths, or supernatural based truth-claims are made. (1) We should never be "doctrinaire" about macro-evolution, "scientific" claims people make, or even the worldview of skepticism. (2) Investigate every serious truth-claim! What we may discover is that scientific claims are merely philosophical postulations. (3) Conclusions should not be made (a) prematurely nor (b) emotionally & this applies to scientific, naturalistic truth-claims as well. (4) Bombastic, emotionally driven statements are not helpful in any thoughtful inquiry. (5) Do not commit the fallacy of reductionism by focusing one area to the neglect of all related areas.

## Inability to Ground Objective Moral Law in a Atheistic, Materialistic Universe

While one may be sympathetic & sensitive to the problems of evil & suffering, to claim God does not exist because of the reality of evil actually affirms God's existence. Consider C.S. Lewis' self-observation:

[As an atheist] my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?" ~ *Mere Christianity*, 45.

"Because if there's evil, there's good. If there's good there has to be a moral law. If there's a moral law there has to be a transcendent moral lawgiver. But that's what the skeptic is trying to disprove and not prove. Because if there is no moral law giver, there's no moral law. If there's no moral law there's no good. If there's no good there's no evil. So what's the question, really? The strongest argument against the existence of God actually assumes God in the objection." ~ Dr. Ravi Zacharias

**1. There must be an objective moral law; otherwise**  
(a) There would not be such great agreement on its meaning. (b) No real moral disagreements would ever have occurred, each person being right from his own moral perspective. (c) No moral judgment would ever have been wrong, each being subjectively right. (d) No ethical question could ever be discussed, there being no objective meaning to any ethical terms. (e) Contradictory views would both be right, since opposites could be equally correct.

**2. This moral law is beyond individual persons and beyond humanity as a whole** (a) It is beyond individual persons, since they often sense a conflict with it. (b) It is beyond humanity as a whole, for they collectively fall short of it and even measure the progress of the whole race by it.

**3. This moral law must come from a moral Legislator because:** (a) A law has no meaning unless it comes from a mind; only minds emit meaning. (b) Disloyalty makes no sense unless it is to a person, yet people die in loyalty to what is morally right. (c) Truth is meaningless unless it is a meeting of mind with mind, yet people die for the truth. (d) Hence, discovery of and duty to the moral law make sense only if there is a Mind or Person behind it.

**4. Therefore, there must be a moral, personal Mind behind this moral law.**

~ Dr. David Elton Trueblood

## Inescapability of Nihilism

As pointed out by Dr. William Lane Craig in debate with Paul Kurtz: If the theist is wrong, this doesn't mean that the atheistic humanist is necessarily right by default. Nihilism could be right. But nihilism is morally undesirable (e.g., Nazism).

If Theism is false, then why think human values are special?

If Theism is false, then where is the basis for objectivity duty?

If Theism is false, then what is the basis for moral accountability?

If Theism is false, why even be altruistic?

One concern the atheist, naturalist, or strict materialist must face is how can they be certain there is no spirituality or immaterial realm? How can one prove a universal negative like "God does not exist?" How does one keep from committing the fallacy of reductionism by claiming reality is only physical when we know so little against backdrop of space, time, & even history? Are we no looking at reality through a keyhole given the finitude of our minds?

## The Problem of Depravity

How do we best account for human selfishness, wickedness, & dark impulses within?

"The depravity of man is at once the most empirically verifiable reality but at the same time the most intellectually resisted fact." ~ Malcolm Muggeridge.

Humanity, whether educated or not, is not naturally good.

Atheism cannot adequately account for humanity's selfishness & the consequences that flow from our depravity.

**The Longing for Grace:**

We possess a longing for atonement, forgiveness, peace within, & redemption for the wrongdoings we have committed to others & ourselves.

## Euthyphro Dilemma:

(1) If we say something is Good because God wills it, then good is arbitrary; Or (2) If we say God wills something because it is good, then goodness exists independently. But this ancient argument is actually a false dilemma. (3) God, by his very nature is good. In other words, by his own Person, God is the standard of goodness. His divine commands are expressions that flow from His infinitely perfect nature. Therefore, moral values are not independent of God nor are arbitrary because God's own nature necessarily defines what is good.