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Phi101: Introduction to Philosophy

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Reading Questions Week 8

Blaise Pascal's famous argument for belief in God is known as Pascal's Wager. It makes the case that believing in God is a better bet than not, as the potential reward for doing so is infinite (eternal life in heaven), as opposed to the potential reward for disbelieving in God, which is either limited (only a finite amount of time in this life) or nonexistent (if God exists and punishes disbelievers). Although Pascal's wager has its detractors who claim it is not a valid justification for faith in God, it is still a powerful justification for faith in both philosophy and theology. Pascal's Wager claims that a person should believe in God because it is a logical wager with a potentially limitless reward.

Pascal advises a person to act as if they already believe in God by focusing on the evidence of God's existence in the natural world and cultivating a mindset of reverence for God. Even if they do not or did not have a strong sense of religious commitment, Jesus also exhorts them to engage in religious activities. Finally, he exhorts them to consult those who have already staked their bet and discovered faith in God for direction.

According to Kierkegaard, faith is a subjective experience involving a close contact with God. He disagreed with the notion that religion can be supported by reason or science

and held that it required an individual's subjective response to God's call. His focus on the individualized nature of faith and the value of devotion to oneself had a significant impact on the growth of existentialism. I appreciate this knowledge was given to me after the reading because in our discussion 8 , I spoke about how I thought that science and religion working together wouldn't be such a bad thing once you still glorify the Lord and still Give him his credit. But I guess that depends on a person's mental model.

According to Kierkegaard, there are two approaches to life and the pursuit of truth: subjectivity, which is based on human experience and individual interpretation, and objectivity, which is based on factual facts.

A lack of personal dedication and independent judgment in the search for spiritual truth, according to Kierkegaard, could have resulted from relying too heavily on objective standards and outside authorities. This is due to the possibility of feeling detached and disengaged from one's personal experience of God when one only takes an objective approach to faith.

In the end, rather than involving objective certainty, Kierkegaard's concept of truth for a "existing" human contains confusion. Truth, according to Kierkegaard, cannot be determined or proven in an objective manner by means of logic or empirical evidence. Truth, on the other hand, is a personal and individual experience that calls for a leap of faith as well as a readiness to accept danger and uncertainty.