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Who Needs God?

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JAY: Have you ever thought about your need for God, Phil?

PHIL: Need for God? What are you talking about? I have a good job, a great family and a nice big house. We have all of our physical needs met and some pretty expensive toys, too. Why would I possibly need God? We really *don't* need God to live fulfilled lives. I'm doing just fine, thanks.

JAY: But I have a question. What does it mean to really *live*?

PHIL: Living is not being dead.

JAY: So — would you say that a person in a persistent vegetative state is *truly living*?

PHIL: No . . . I guess not. You need some sort of personal meaning in this world to truly "live."

JAY: Right. So where does that meaning or value come from?

PHIL: It can come from a lot of places. It can come from your family or your job or whatever makes you happy. It can even come from God, I suppose, if that's what works for you.

JAY: What if a person is not feeling fulfilled or happy, as you put it. Are they then meaningless? Does a person somehow lose value when things go badly for them? Stalin, Pol

Pot, Hitler, and Mao all have a legacy of genocide — and all, "coincidentally," endorsed a worldview in which humanity has no Divine Judge or inherent worth. Do you think what they did was wrong?

PHIL: Of course it was!

JAY: What makes it wrong? Without God we are just cosmic accidents. Without God there can be no inherent meaning or purpose to our lives. Without a real, objective, purpose for our existence we have no ultimate value in the universe. So it seems that we need God, if for no other reason than to justify protecting the innocent. Would you agree with that?

PHIL: I see where you're going with this. You're trying to trap me into agreeing that I need God to have a purpose or value in life. But I just don't think it matters how we find meaning in life — and I don't really care how we got here.

JAY: But I bet you *act* as if your life has inherent value, don't you?

PHIL: What do you mean?

JAY: You would probably protect your interests or your family from harm, and you treat your children as if they really matter, right?

PHIL: Sure, everyone does that. Those things *do* matter . . . to me and my family.

JAY: So the truth is, you really *do*

care about what gives life meaning. And that is to be expected because we cannot live as if life has no value. Depressed and suicidal people are treated as if something is wrong and needs to be addressed. We *must* live with the assumption that our lives have a purpose in order to *truly live*. You said so yourself.

Furthermore, we expect others to act as if our lives matter as well. How can you say that things "matter" to you but at the same time suggest that it doesn't matter "why" they matter?

PHIL: I'm getting a headache.

JAY: Okay — you expect people to treat you and others with respect, right?

PHIL: Of course. That's because things work better for everyone when we do.

JAY: But if the *only* reason we respect one another is so that

circumstances are more favorable for our survival, then our lives do not have any real, intrinsic value. We're just temporary creatures living out a façade, applying false meaning to each other so that everything just "works better," — while we exist for no apparent reason.

PHIL: I'll admit that there is something very empty in the picture that you've just painted.

JAY: Empty indeed. So consider this — God created us for a reason, giving us *true* purpose. This gives us intrinsic value and a real basis for respecting one another. God also provides us with an answer for the things that have gone wrong in this world through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus. Without God, life is truly empty. So in order to *truly live*, we all do need God. Can you see that?

PHIL: *Hmmmm.*

