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## *Thank You for Helping Me Speak to the Youth of Today*

# Is Christianity & Karma Compatible?

By Billy Anger

## WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?

Growing numbers of self-identified Christians are claiming that the Bible and the pantheistic practice of karma are compatible. The suggestion is that the Bible teaches the concept of karma in any number of passages, only using different terminology. One example would be in Galatians 6:7, which states, “Be not deceive: God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows that shall he also reap.” Is this notion of agreement correct? Is this what the Bible is indeed teaching? Getting the answer wrong can lead to eternally devastating consequences.

Frequently a sense of compassion towards those who are suffering results in displays of generosity and help from others. This is a very natural response in most instances. The karmic viewpoint, though, discourages such demonstrations of charity because one’s suffering is seen as justice done resulting from the corrupt actions of a previous life. The idea of aiding somebody suffering poverty, sickness, and more is to block karmic justice from being served. No person is believed to carry such a right in the Yogic world. The Buddha refused to offer help to his disciples in their times of need. He taught them that suffering was a harsh reality in life and that trying to alleviate pain through external resources was wasteful. Karma is intended to motivate the devotee away from personal desires. Conversely, Jesus commanded His followers to assist the needy, heal the sick, and minister to the struggling. Where karma fails to encourage a believer to serve the community around them, Jesus succeeds.

## THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

Even a superficial look at Christianity shows a stark contrast between Yogic religions and Christianity. They are nothing alike whatsoever. Karma is fundamentally about proportional compensation for the way somebody lives. Unlike Hinduism and Buddhism, the God of the Bible knows that humans are weak and incapable of doing good without Him. Christianity clearly shows that believers do not receive what they have earned. Christians are granted everlasting life when they really deserve eternal punishment. Christians should not believe in karma because the sum of people’s works does not determine whether they are eternally saved. Only faith in Jesus Christ saves people from condemnation. Christians are granted a relationship with God the Father instead of

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the death they deserve.

Many promoters of biblical and karmic compatibility cite the Epistle of James for their reasoning. James 2:24 teaches, "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone." From this verse, some people postulate that Christians should subscribe to karma because a person's works seemingly justify them before the Lord. But looking closer at the context, one can see that faith leads to righteousness before God, and then works ensue. All of this is the result of the godly overtures of grace brought to the sinner by the Holy Spirit. Karma is about progressive advancements, not instantaneous justification that culminates with eternal life.

The Bible teaches that heaven is the destination of believers in the afterlife. This promise is based exclusively on Scripture and Jesus' numerous statements about eternity (john 14).

Karmic religions point to reincarnation. While Hinduism and Buddhism have different understandings of nirvana, both fundamentally teach that this is obtained by good works through successive earthly experiences. When a person lives a good life, they are elevated to a higher position in the next. The ascension ultimately leads to a release from reincarnation entrapment and rewards the individual oneness with the ultimate cosmic force.

Karma is incredibly different from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Knowing how to speak to these issues is imperative with the expanding influence of pantheistic religions in Western culture. An inability to distinguish between karma and the gospel leaves the Christian impotent in sharing the good news with others, especially those who embrace the beliefs that come with karma.

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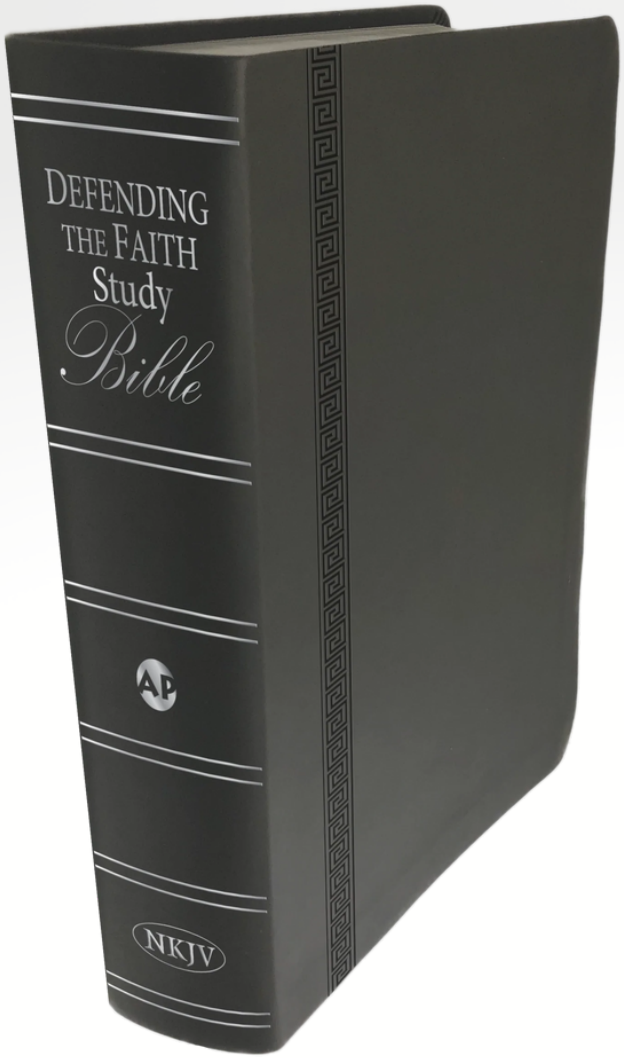

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## WHY ARE HUMANS VALUABLE?

Many people subscribing to the atheist worldview want to have it both ways. While these naturalists deny God's existence, they still maintain the belief that human beings have value. Such a proposition seems to be contradictory, however. What gives any person the authority to assign value? What is their method of valuation?And how does one arbitrate between two people with contradictory viewpoints about individual worth?

The abortion issue shines a spotlight on such an illogicality. Legislators and activists scream for the rights of women to terminate a pregnancy for any reason they see fit. Killing an unborn child is subject to the value placed on the baby by the mother exclusively under current law. Yet, should a pregnant woman be harmed in such a way that the unborn child dies during her pregnancy, the person responsible for the baby's death is subject to severe punishment under the same law. This is dizzyingly convoluted logic. Carried to its fullest extent, the value of a dog in relation to the worth of a child is subjected to the opinion of the individual. That hypothesis is wrong, and people know it intrinsically.

What makes my three dachshunds, ball python, and fancy rat trivial in their existence but my six grandchildren's lives invaluable? Mere opinion? The rules of the state? The laws of the land? Obviously not. One solitary difference between all other things and human beings is the imago Dei, the image of God. The Judeo-Christian worldview teaches that human beings are different from animals in degree and kind. This belief has served as the underpinning for Western civilization over multiple centuries. The framers of the United States prioritized this reality in the Declaration of Independence, stating that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights."

Evolution concludes that human beings are only material objects. This concept introduces the unsustainable question of determining how value is assigned to each person – height, intelligence, race, strength, gender, wealth, etc. These features are fundamentally flawed because they speak to degreed properties. You can have more or less of these things. This same line of reasoning undergirds racism and prejudice of every type. Why is a black man equal in value to a white man, and what is the justification for this opinion? If culture alone establishes standards of a person's worth, why was pre-Civil War America incorrect in its assessment of the various races? Human value being merely a social construct makes determining individual worth subjective. Citizens of the

the black community demand equal treatment and are correct in doing so. They contend that everyone from all ethnic backgrounds is equally valuable and that discrimination is anathema. That viewpoint is entirely right. Arriving at this conclusion, though, is impossible if humans are merely the collection of billions of molecules.

If there is no God, it is necessarily true that humans have no soul, for such a thing is immaterial. Atheism places value on what a species can do, as the fittest survive. If human value is determined by what a person does, then it stands to reason that their value is lost when they are incapable of performing that thing any longer. This principle would be especially problematic for those in the LGBTQ+ community. One might argue that homosexuals are less valuable than heterosexuals, for they do not create another generation. Humans would fail to exist if all people were homosexual, yet those who identify as gay and lesbian believe they are valuable and insist on being treated equally. Their demand for equality is correct, for homosexuals are likewise immensely valuable and deserving of just and equal treatment. This view, though, can only be grounded by the idea that they are made in God's image. Society has abandoned this truth, and the contradictions of subjective valuation spiral downward uncontrollably.

Genesis 1:27 says it concisely: "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Without God, all things in creation are only the product of impersonal random developments in evolution. This theory can only conclude that there is nothing that makes humans more valuable than the 8.7 million other species on this planet. It would not have mattered if humans never evolved because no species matters more than the next. Suggesting humans are special because they are human is to be guilty of discrimination known as speciesism. Only if people are made in God's image can they be different from every other living thing.

## ARE FUTURE SINS FORGIVEN?

Common teaching within Christendom contends that when a person commits their life to Christ, their past, present, and future sins are forgiven. This belief is problematic for several reasons. Among the challenges this teaching poses is its contradiction with the theory of time. According to the A-theory of time, temporal becoming is real. This means that things come into and go out of existence. In the A-theory, time is tensed, with a distinct difference between the past, present, and future. There are no such things as future sins. Sin is committed as a present action, not a future potential.If sin does not exist until it occurs, one cannot be guilty of future sin. Liability is non-existent for something that has yet to happen. If it is impossible to be guilty of something not done, neither can one require forgiveness for hypothetical sins.

Scripture provides guidelines for Christians when they do commit future sins. I John 1:9 teaches believers to confess their wrongdoing and exercise confidence in God's faithfulness to forgive unrighteousness. This instruction points to a current response to an immediate behavior.

# Wilmington Highlights

Four services in forty-seven hours completely wiped me out...yet I have not enjoyed anything as much as I did the Because You Are My God youth revival at Adoracion Y Alabanza church in Wilmington, NC. With the precipitous decline of morality in America and the victimization of the country's youth in this freefall, it was energizing to see there are still many young adults afire with love for God. The attendance at each event exceeded expectations and was marked by a passionate devotion to God.

I want to express my gratitude to everyone who participated and made the convention a rousing success. A special note of gratitude goes out to Pastors Leon and Mary Garcia for their hospitality and the authentic Mexican cuisine they fed me. It was an unbeatable combination. Also, I want to encourage youth pastor Christian Garcia. He is obviously doing an awesome job leading the next generation forward in this great walk of faith. If America had more pastors like these three, many of our culture's problems would be instantly solved.

# Quotes of the Month

William Lane Craig

*"It's no longer enough to teach our children Bible stories. They now need doctrine and apologetics."*

*"In a post-Christian, skeptical age, love on display is the most convincing apologetic."*

J.D. Greear

Charles Colson

*"If our culture is to be transformed, it will happen from the bottom up – from ordinary believers practicing apologetics over the backyard fence or around the barbecue grill."*

*“I am persuaded that men think there is no God because they wish there were none. They find it hard to believe in God, and to go on in sin, so they try to get an easy conscience by denying his existence.”*

Charles Spurgeon

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Pastor Duree Propes
201 Piedmont Road
Piedmont, SC

**May 10, 2023**
The First
Pastor James Owens
100 Conway Avenue
Laurens, SC

**May 13, 2023**
AMPED Training Center
5517 Denton Highway
Haltom City, TX

**May 24, 2023**
New Beginnings Church
Pastor Devin Wintermyer
2785 Walston Road
Punxsutawney, PA

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