

The Modern Relevance of God

SPECIAL PODCAST SERIES

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To embrace sanity is to accept truth, live love, and be good.

Norberto Keppe

Thinking with Somebody Else's Head presents...
The Modern Relevance
of God Special Podcast Series

Science and Spirituality



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Are We Victims of God?

Richard Lloyd Jones:

Welcome to episode 11 of the Modern Relevance of God audio course here on Thinking with Somebody Else's Head. I'm Richard Lloyd Jones.

Well, I heard it again last night: a character in a TV series about surviving in Berlin after the Second World War observing the horrible goings on and professing, "I don't believe in God anymore because how could a loving God allow this to happen?"

How many times have you heard some version of that? Usually it's a Bruce Willis-like character in a war zone in some desolate African country squinting his eyes and muttering weightily, "God abandoned this place a long time ago."

The writers mean this to be profound. a world-weary comment on the state of Man, but it's really overly simplistic. It reminds me of the obese young woman who sued her mother in court because mom was the reason she was fat.

I don't see God's hand in evil and terror, but I sure do see Man's. Isn't it a little unethical of us to blame God for actions we've been taking for millennia? Like the serial killer who blames his victims for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, blaming God for our wars and cruelty also avoids the crucial missing condition: our participation. After all, if the hammer is only a tool that can be used for good or harm, aren't we, the ones making the choice?

I remember a famous investment banker stating, "My goal is to make money. I cannot and do not look at the social consequences of my actions." And then going on to say that the only thing to stop people like him were regulations - thus, basically admitting that inner morality has long been abandoned. "It's just business," is how we justify anything we would feel bad about if we thought about it for a second. We've become experts, haven't we, at blaming others for what we are doing. But this doesn't absolve us of blame; it merely illustrates our corruption in avoiding the responsibility. Are we victims of God? Episode 11 with Claudia Bernhardt Pacheco.

Claudia Bernhardt Pacheco:

This morning, I was talking to a client, she lives in the United States. She lost her husband. And he was a great guy, as many men in the world, they are great guys.

Jones:

He was a fireman, right?

Pacheco:

Yes. And a pianist.

Jones:

He was a piano playing fireman. That's about as high a value as you can get.

Pacheco:

Yeah. So, he was not able to play that much anymore and to compose as he wished because he had an accident in one of the fire fights. But she was talking about God and being linked to God because she misses her husband very much. But you know, when I asked her, "What do you free associate your husband with?", she said, "Endless love, stability," and the third thing I forget now. So, what she depends on now is on her own feelings of love and her own stability that comes from her feelings of love. Like feelings of love, they exist by themselves, inside of us. She doesn't need her husband to love. She can feel feelings of love by herself. And when she cuts this from her life, she loses her stability totally. And she cannot go to church just to ask God to bring her a better situation. She will have to relink to feelings of love inside of herself. So, a church doesn't mean anything if the person doesn't have an inner life, an inner spiritual attitude.

Jones:

Yeah, that's something deep because we think that it's coming from the church or even the Bible or these sayings, and it's a deeper internal experience.

Pacheco:

Yes, it is. We have this inside of us anyhow. And if you start thinking that you miss a person, you miss parents, you miss money, you miss better recognition, you start feeling a victim. Victims of God. Why does God allow this to happen?

Jones:

That's the common idea.

Pacheco:

And I have another client that is treating drug addicts. She's like volunteering in this work. And she comes in, sometimes she bursts into like a revolt against God. "Why does God allow this to happen? People being born in such horrible situations and this and that. Where is God?" And I told her, "Every person knows deep inside when they're doing wrong. Every drug addict knows that drugs are not good. He's doing something evil against himself. And they are feeding the demonic system of drug trafficking. And the culture of drugs. So they are supporting this with their own money."

Jones:

And all the money that's made from that. And even the legal drugs, alcohol there's a lot of money made from that.

Pacheco:

So, the first time they took drugs, when they started, they knew they were doing something against goodness. Against consciousness. And they started. Now, they can even be feeling victims of God. And this is very bad because they are angry at God, they cut off the link with God inside of themselves, so they lose all their possible protection, strength, energy,

Jones:

And chance of recovery, really ...

Pacheco:

And chance of recovery. So, I told her, "You see them like this, and you must know that each one of them got addicted because of their free choice. And God never, ever will interfere in a free choice."

Jones:

Yeah. That's a fundamental aspect of God, isn't it?

Pacheco:

Yes. He never interferes. He's never imposing ... Well, God never disrupts your inner life and yourself and your privacy. He never interferes, and taking away your freedom and your privacy. God respects privacy, this is so beautiful. And so how come, then, she blames, God? God is always there. He's always receptive. He's always accepting children that want to go back to him and embrace him.

Jones:

I find Claudia's discussion about God here comforting – and you know, comfort in acknowledging something bigger than myself has actually been hard to admit. Somehow, recognizing my dependence on something other than my own resources has felt like weakness.

My personal journey of spirituality and purpose has meant confronting a lot of these modern conceits and beliefs. That "belief in God is a sign of a weak mind" thing I mentioned back in episode 9. Seems I absorbed that defiant, be-your-own-person, Marlboro Man attitude over the years and experiences, and my more recent journey of discovery and purpose has led me to reconsider and ponder the validity of that as a meaningful worldview.

Much like I guess C.S. Lewis must have. Lewis abandoned his belief in God when he was just a kid, out of disillusionment that God had not healed his mother of cancer until, much later, after considerable reflection and intellectual inquiry, giving in and

returning to belief. And not as a last resort either, but as the only point of view that made sense, that gave him hope for alleviating the suffering in the world.

And he arrived there with some difficulty, too; Lewis called himself “the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England.” Except, of course, for the difference in countries, I can relate most earnestly to Lewis.

It was intellectual struggle that finally led Lewis to a conviction that faith was reasonable; for me, it was Norberto Keppe’s science that got me to re-considering the God-is-dead, Nietzschean conclusions I and many of my friends had adopted, mostly without thinking too much about them. Keppe writes in his monumental book, *Glorification*, that he’s attempting a more complete scientific comprehension of the Creator, thus revealing the true God that institutionalized religion has hidden from us. It’s the science that brought me to this place – physically to Brazil but more importantly spiritually to this understanding of the relevance of God.

But I think we need to look deeper at why something so important is so dismissed or even despised by so many. An important mystery to investigate. Which we’ll do in episode 12.

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