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MORE ON GOD ASSESSES US

Apparently people get confused over the ideas that (a) God assesses us when we die but (b) we might not be an immortal soul. God might end us totally after assessing us. If we are not an immortal soul, then what kind of person (being) are we? Why bother to act well while still alive? Only if we are a soul and we are immortal does “getting assessed” seem to make sense.

We don't have to be a soul and, if we are a soul, we don't have to be immortal, to do the right things for the right reasons. To do the right things for the right reasons is more important than whether we are a soul and, if we are a soul, whether we are mortal or immortal. If we focus on doing the right things for the right reasons, then issues about soul or not soul, mortal or not mortal, will take care of themselves. If we focus on whether we are a soul and whether we are immortal, then likely we will not do the right things for the right reasons. Focus first on what is important.

I get confused when other people get confused over what seems not a big issue. One way to think about this issue is similar to what happens when we limited humans assess things. Those things don't have to be an immortal soul for us to assess them and for us to say how long they go on. They don't have to be an immortal soul to do the right things for the right reasons. God does the same with us. In the end, it doesn't matter if we are an immortal soul, a mortal soul, or not a soul. The goal still is to do the right things for the right reasons, follow the Golden Rule, follow “applies equally”, respect persons, and try hard to make the world better.

Assume we don't know if dogs go to heaven. Assume dogs don't go to heaven or hell. Assume they end when they die. Assume dogs are less than a soul but more than a machine and more than a lump of dirt. So what? We can still assess them. Some dogs are still better than other dogs for particular purposes or overall. Some dogs we want to be around and some we don't. Some dogs we want around our families and some we don't. Some dogs we want as guards and some we don't. There is no perfect dog. We act toward a dog according to his-her abilities, personality, and training. Some dogs we want to breed and carry on a line. Other dogs we don't, even if we loved them while they lived. We forgive a lot from dogs because dogs don't always know what they do. We like dogs that do the right things more than dogs that don't do the right things. We like dogs that do the right things for the right reasons more than dogs that don't. You don't want to have to beat the crap out of a dog six times a week to make it do the right things and not do the wrong things. You don't want to have to carry a pocketful of dog treats all the time to make a dog do the right things and not do the wrong this. All this is not hard to understand.

Assume plants don't go to heaven. Assume they are more than a machine or a lump of dirt. We can say all the same things about plants. Some we look at and some we eat. Some we want to keep and use in breeding; and others we don't. We respond to different plants not only according to their particular

individuality but also according to their type. We respond to roses and pecan trees differently. None of this is hard to understand either.

Think of your favorite car. It is less than a soul but more than a lump of dirt. It has its time, and then it is gone. Trying to prolong it past its time is not good for the car, you, or the world. Not all cars are the same, not even of the same make and model, even if they have similar histories. "I named it Brad". Some cars are better for some things while some cars are better for others. We can, do, and sometimes must, assess cars. When the day comes, we will do the same with robots. Is R2D2 the best robot ever? What about Data?

Think of your favorite search engine, electronic game, browser, or programming language. These are less than souls but more than a lump of dirt. Whether they are merely a machine or more than a mere machine depends on how we look at "machine" and will be a topic of interest in the future. Yet we can, do, and must assess them.

Humans spend enormous amounts of wasted energy and time assessing sports, clothing, cell phone plans, and politics. I am amazed there are rankings of rock songs, rock albums, rock performers, operas, symphonies, and TV shows by genre.

What if we are only robots, machines, with very good software? So what? God can and will still assess us. If God wishes us to keep going, he will arrange for us to keep going, until he no longer wishes for us go keep going. The fact that we meet God after death does not require that we be a soul or an immortal soul. Whether we are a soul or an immortal soul or not does not bear on whether God assesses us after death. What we are does not bear on whether we have to act well, do the right things for the right reasons now. Wake up.

The fact that we don't have to be a stereotypical immortal soul for God to assess us, coupled with the fact that God does assess us, (a) does not prevent us from being an immortal soul and (b) does not mean for sure (b1) we are an immortal soul or (b2) we are not an immortal soul. We might or might not be a soul. We might or might not be immortal. We can't tell from the fact that God assesses us. Even if we are more than a mere material rock, even if we are more like art, an idea, or a computer program, we might not be an immortal soul, and we don't have to be an immortal soul to do the right things for the right reasons and for God to assess us. That (a) we can do the right things for the right reasons, or not, and (b) God will assess us, do not mean we are not an immortal soul or are an immortal soul. Immortal soul or not immortal soul, soul or not soul, are not relevant to the facts that we need to do the right thing for the right reasons and that God assesses us. Wake up.

I don't care whether I am an immortal soul or not. God has the right to end me even if I am a soul and even if I would be immortal if he did not end me. It's not up to me. There is no point in fretting over what is not up to you. I think God ends a lot of people after they die. I still have to try to do the right things for the right reasons. I won't succeed but I have to try.

Start trusting God to do the right thing by you regardless of what you are. If God doesn't do that, then who will? Not you. Stop worrying about whether you are a soul or are immortal. Start doing the right things for the right reasons. If you like to think hard about these issues, do so. The ideas in this note should get you to relax more, not tie you into more knots.

If to think of yourself as an immortal soul helps you to do the right things for the right reasons, then do so, but also consider the issue. If it helps not to think of yourself as an immortal soul, as in Buddhism or in some science, then do so, but also consider the issue. If worrying whether you are an immortal soul gets in the way of doing the right things for the right reasons then you must totally overhaul your beliefs and acts. If it helps to think of yourself as more like a work of art, social institution, computer program, or math theorem than like a lump of dirt or a simple machine, then do so, but also consider the issue further.

Don't get angry at other people if they come to different conclusions than you about persons, souls, and immortality but still do the right things for the right reasons. Emulate them.

If you think confusion over these issues causes some people to behave badly then try to explain to them what is important, that is, the importance of doing the right things for the right reasons. It rarely works to get them to do the right things for the right reasons if first you try to convince other people to have the same beliefs as you about what is a person, a non-person, souls, an active being but not fully a soul (bird), and the immortality of souls. It usually does not work if you try to convince them first that there are no souls and nothing is immortal. You can have those conversations after you agree approximately on the right things and the right reasons, and realize your limitations.

What is more important: (1) Doing the right things for the right reasons and getting assessed by God even if you are not an immortal soul, even if you vanish, OR (2) being an immortal soul? What do you think Jesus would say? Then accept it and say the same. Focus on what is most important first and what is less important will take care of itself. Focus on doing the right things for the right reasons; and whether you are a soul, a machine, a program, or something else, will take care of itself. Focus on doing the right things for the right reasons; and the mortality or immortality of your self will take care of itself. If you try hard to have it both ways you risk losing (1), and I would much rather keep (1).

The topic of another note: Insisting that we are an immortal soul is a way of forcing God and, combined with other religious tactics, a way of forcing God to send us to heaven. You don't want either. Trying to force God almost always backfires, as it has with insisting we are an immortal soul and we can get God to send us to heaven. Instead of making us more secure and better able to do the right things for the right reasons, it twists us into knots and makes us do bad things for bad reasons. Again, trust God and take care of your immediate tasks.