

## Despair can be cheerful

Christianity says that despair is a sin. It is a sin against hope in God. This doctrine is dangerous if you are unlucky enough to be one of the many people who has undiagnosed depression.

An atheist who is dying and who believes death is the end can still be a cheerful person. You would expect them to be in despair. They simply recognise that things are not going to get any better and they manage to smile through it all. They prove that having faith in oneself means that one can find joy even in the worst of life. The good things about feelings is you can feel something and its opposite at the same time.

If you do not have faith in your ability to adapt and accept instead of causing more distress for yourself, you may ask God for help. Are you looking for him to do magic for you? Or do you want him to use natural means for you to help yourself?

Asking for magic is dangerous. If nothing happens you will blame God or yourself or both. If something happens, you may think it is the magic and not you. You lose out on the confidence that comes from realising your own work is your own work.

If you are going to depend on your own strength and ask God to use natural means to help you win and keep this strength, you are actually affirming that you know you have power to get that strength. God in this case is optional. It is not really about him but about your faith in yourself.

If God is so great, why does the believer who suffers and dies alone endure such despair and loneliness? The unbeliever who has good friends does far better. It is people you need not God.

Christianity may say that the opposite of faith in God is despair. We say the opposite of faith in God is faith in oneself. Faith in oneself helps make it possible that even despair will not cripple your spirits. It is despair that is the opposite of hope. Hope leads to disappointment and anger and resentment. You can despair in such a way that you avoid these three curses. That is how you can feel reasonably good though you despair.

If you can kill yourself but will not then your life has enough meaning. Meaning is a spectrum and all have it to different levels. Suicides lose it for a while but if they were able to be brought back from the dead the sense of meaning would probably resume and keep them alive. Meaning is not very joyful if it is just an alternative to dying but that shows how resilient the human race actually is and how it does not need religious props to get meaning.