

Calling the Bluff

(6 Bad Bets in the Game of Life)

Whatever

August 22, 2010

Intro:

Materialism:

The belief that the physical universe is all there is and that the only thing that really matters is material well-being and wealth.

Nihilism:

The belief that there is no objective truth or morality and that life is random and meaningless.

If You Want to Know if Someone's Playing a Bad Bet or a Sure Bet, You Have to Call Their Bluff So You Can See the Cards in Their Hand:

1. What Are the Cards in the Materialism Hand?

A. Damaged Relationships:

Luke 12:13-14:

Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, **tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.**" Jesus replied, "**Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?**"

B. Misplaced Priorities:

Luke 12:15-21:

Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; **a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.**" And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.'¹⁹ And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. **Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.**' "But God said to him, 'You fool! **This very night your life will be demanded from you.** Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself. **This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.**"

C. Worry, Stress, & Anxiety:

Luke 12:22-30:

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, **do not worry about your life**, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.²⁴ Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! **Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?**²⁶ Since you cannot do this very little

thing, why do you worry about the rest? "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ²⁸If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! ²⁹And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; **do not worry about it.** ³⁰**For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.**

***Materialism is a Bluff, So Choose God**

Luke 12:31-34:

But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

2. What Are the Cards in the Nihilism Hand?

A. Frustration:

Ecclesiastes 1:12-18; 2:1-11:

I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven. What a heavy burden God has laid on men! ¹⁴I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; **all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.** **What is twisted cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted.** I thought to myself, "Look, I have grown and increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge." Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, **but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind. For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief.**

B. Anger & Hatred:

Ecclesiastes 2:17-19:

So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. **I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun,** because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. ¹⁹And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. **This too is meaningless.**

C. Despair & Exhaustion:

Ecclesiastes 2:20-23:

So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. ²¹For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. **This too is meaningless and a great misfortune.** ²²What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? ²³**All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.**

***Nihilism is a Bluff, So Choose God**

Ecclesiastes 12:1, 13-14:

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them"... **Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.** For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.