

Should I Hate Religion?

1. Millions of people _____ with the idea that it's ok to love Jesus but hate religion.
2. The problem is that Jesus _____ hate religion. He hates _____ religion.
3. Missing this important _____ can lead to erroneous beliefs.

What Is Religion?

“An organized system of beliefs, ceremonies and rules used to worship a god or a group of gods.”

- Simply a _____ term for any set of beliefs about a god or gods.
 - Carries no inherent evaluation of the _____ of those beliefs (or the behaviour of those who hold them).
4. Religion has become the _____ for all the things people don't like.
 5. Religion – by definition – _____ do any of those things.

False Religion

6. Jesus often clashed with the _____.
 - The Pharisees _____ kept the law.
 - People often have this _____ relationship in mind.
7. In Luke 11:37-52, Jesus criticized the Pharisees for:
 - Tithing, but neglecting justice and the love of God,
 - Love the most important seats in the synagogues, and
 - Loading people down with burdens they could not carry.
 - It was never about being _____.
 - Mark 12:38-40
 - Matt. 15:8
 - Rom. 7:12
 - Matt. 5:17-18
8. Jesus _____ other aspects of the “organized system of beliefs” (religion) the Jewish people had:
 - Jesus went to the synagogue (Luke 4:16).

July 27, 2022

- Jesus taught in the synagogue (Mark 6:2).
- Jesus considered the Old Testament to be God's Word (Matt. 15:3; Mark 7:13).
- Jesus observed Jewish religious traditions such as:
 - Passover (John 2:13),
 - The Festival of Tabernacles (John 7:2, 7:10), and
 - The Festival of Dedication (John 10:22).
- When Jesus was preparing for the end of His earthly ministry, He told Peter that he would be the rock on which He would build His church (Matt. 6:18).

9. Jesus told His _____ to “*make disciples of all nations*” and to baptize people, “*in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” (Matt 28:19).

10. There is no need to _____ Jesus from religion that is true.

Are We Splitting Hairs?

11. Assuming religion is a bad thing can lead people to incorrect _____ that affect their relationship with Jesus.

- The nature of _____,
- The _____ of the Bible, and
- The importance of the _____.

“While it seems popular to think Jesus came to build an army of sorts for God, and to then organize his followers to build him an empire on earth, I personally don’t subscribe to such a concept. In fact, I think Christ came to do the opposite; I believe he came to end empire thinking and bring each of us back to a personal, individual experience of God. . . . The thoughts and questions that God stirs my heart with — and the answers I find — are never going to be the same as everyone else, because my relationship with God is personal. Contrary to this is organized religion. Religion creates a corporate identity. When we buy into religion we end up speaking, sounding, even looking like everyone else within that corporate branded identity. Same thoughts. Same beliefs. Same well-defined doctrines.”

(Mick Mooney)

- He abandons the notion of objective _____.
- He values his own insights over God’s _____.
- He believes a _____ identity is a bad outcome of religion.

12. A core aspect of a Christian’s _____ is our connection to the body of Christ.

13. True religion _____ God.

Three Key Points

- I. Jesus doesn't hate religion – He hates false religion.
- II. Religion and relationship with Jesus are a false dichotomy. Christianity is a religion *centred* on relationship.
- III. The assumption that religion is a bad thing can lead people to incorrect conclusions that affect the nature of their relationship with Jesus – including a lowered view of the nature of truth, the authority of the Bible and the importance of the church.

Opener

- How would you define religion – not just Christianity, but religion in general?
 - (use the definition we used earlier.)
- What kinds of words do you think come to mind when people think of religion?
 - (talk about any positive or negative associations your child mentions and explore why people have such different thoughts about religion.)

Going Further

- Sometimes people say they hate religion but love Jesus. What do you think they mean by that?
 - (If your child is old enough/mature enough, play the Jefferson Bethke video. It's got a couple of mature themes; maybe pre-teen. Search Jefferson Bethke Why I Hate Religion – it's about 4 minutes)
 - (Listen to how he describes religion and discuss how that differs from the definition you discussed.)
 - (For younger kids, just list some of the things Bethke says religion is and discuss how those are bad things – but those things don't define religion)
- How do you think Jesus sees religion?
 - (Emphasize Jesus hates false religion – give examples from clashes with the Pharisees – but that true religion glorifies God)
- If a person says they hate religion but love Jesus, what impact do you think that might have on their faith?
 - (use the Huffington Post quote as an example to discuss how this view can lead someone away from Jesus).

Application

- How would you respond to that writer's concern that in organized religion everyone has the same beliefs and well-defined doctrines?

Should I Hate Religion?

1. Millions of people resonate with the idea that it's ok to love Jesus but hate religion.
2. The problem is that Jesus doesn't hate religion. He hates false religion.
3. Missing this important distinction can lead to erroneous beliefs.

What Is Religion?

"An organized system of beliefs, ceremonies and rules used to worship a god or a group of gods."

- Simply a descriptive term for any set of beliefs about a god or gods.
 - Carries no inherent evaluation of the truth of those beliefs (or the behaviour of those who hold them).
4. Religion has become the buzzword for all the things people don't like.
 5. Religion – by definition – doesn't do any of those things.

False Religion

6. Jesus often clashed with the Pharisees.
 - The Pharisees strictly kept the law.
 - People often have this turbulent relationship in mind.
7. In Luke 11:37-52, Jesus criticized the Pharisees for:
 - Tithing, but neglecting justice and the love of God,
 - Love the most important seats in the synagogues, and
 - Loading people down with burdens they could not carry.
 - It was never about being religious.
 - Mark 12:38-40
 - Matt. 15:8
 - Rom. 7:12
 - Matt. 5:17-18
8. Jesus validated other aspects of the "organized system of beliefs" (religion) the Jewish people had:
 - Jesus went to the synagogue (Luke 4:16).

July 27, 2022

- Jesus taught in the synagogue (Mark 6:2).
- Jesus considered the Old Testament to be God's Word (Matt. 15:3; Mark 7:13).
- Jesus observed Jewish religious traditions such as:
 - Passover (John 2:13),
 - The Festival of Tabernacles (John 7:2, 7:10), and
 - The Festival of Dedication (John 10:22).
- When Jesus was preparing for the end of His earthly ministry, He told Peter that he would be the rock on which He would build His church (Matt. 6:18).

9. Jesus told His disciples to “*make disciples of all nations*” and to baptize people, “*in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” (Matt 28:19).

10. There is no need to separate Jesus from religion that is true.

Are We Splitting Hairs?

11. Assuming religion is a bad thing can lead people to incorrect conclusions that affect their relationship with Jesus.

- The nature of truth,
- The authority of the Bible, and
- The importance of the church.

“While it seems popular to think Jesus came to build an army of sorts for God, and to then organize his followers to build him an empire on earth, I personally don’t subscribe to such a concept. In fact, I think Christ came to do the opposite; I believe he came to end empire thinking and bring each of us back to a personal, individual experience of God. . . . The thoughts and questions that God stirs my heart with — and the answers I find — are never going to be the same as everyone else, because my relationship with God is personal. Contrary to this is organized religion. Religion creates a corporate identity. When we buy into religion we end up speaking, sounding, even looking like everyone else within that corporate branded identity. Same thoughts. Same beliefs. Same well-defined doctrines.”

(Mick Mooney)

- He abandons the notion of objective truth.
- He values his own insights over God’s revelation.
- He believes a corporate identity is a bad outcome of religion.

12. A core aspect of a Christian’s identity is our connection to the body of Christ.

13. True religion glorifies God.

Three Key Points

- I. Jesus doesn't hate religion – He hates false religion.
- II. Religion and relationship with Jesus are a false dichotomy. Christianity is a religion *centred* on relationship.
- III. The assumption that religion is a bad thing can lead people to incorrect conclusions that affect the nature of their relationship with Jesus – including a lowered view of the nature of truth, the authority of the Bible and the importance of the church.

Opener

- How would you define religion – not just Christianity, but religion in general?
 - (use the definition we used earlier.)
- What kinds of words do you think come to mind when people think of religion?
 - (talk about any positive or negative associations your child mentions and explore why people have such different thoughts about religion.)

Going Further

- Sometimes people say they hate religion but love Jesus. What do you think they mean by that?
 - (If your child is old enough/mature enough, play the Jefferson Bethke video. It's got a couple of mature themes; maybe pre-teen. Search Jefferson Bethke Why I Hate Religion – it's about 4 minutes)
 - (Listen to how he describes religion and discuss how that differs from the definition you discussed.)
 - (For younger kids, just list some of the things Bethke says religion is and discuss how those are bad things – but those things don't define religion)
- How do you think Jesus sees religion?
 - (Emphasize Jesus hates false religion – give examples from clashes with the Pharisees – but that true religion glorifies God)
- If a person says they hate religion but love Jesus, what impact do you think that might have on their faith?
 - (use the Huffington Post quote as an example to discuss how this view can lead someone away from Jesus).

Application

- How would you respond to that writer's concern that in organized religion everyone has the same beliefs and well-defined doctrines?