

Don't Let Religion Get in the Way of Your Relationship with God

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Religion can easily get messy and confusing. In addition to the most popular religions, there are hundreds of “new” or “mainstream” religions. When you add in the multiple denominations within Christianity, it is easy to get overwhelmed and see how the whole idea of religion loses its meaning.



Unfortunately, religion is often used to give people false illusions about God. Many religions teach that you must do various things to achieve blessing from the god or gods. For this reason, religion then becomes a constant obstacle course or checklist depending on the faith tradition. You may have experienced religion where it felt like you had to jump through hoops to be accepted or feel acceptable. Or, you may have been taught that good works is necessary to get into heaven.

But, that’s what separates religion from a relationship with God. Jesus came to set us free and give us the opportunity to live in relationship with our Heavenly Father. No hoops. No checklist. No religion required. Let’s look at this idea more closely.

Don’t Try to Use Religion to Become Holy

It’s natural for us to want to know and understand our Creator and try to understand the sacred. However, whenever a religion focuses more on helping individuals grow holy rather than grow in relationship with God, there may be something wrong. Today, you’ll often hear about new religions that help individuals “transcend” to the sacred without acknowledging God at all. This idea may sound intriguing, but we were designed to long for a relationship with our Creator – not to become god-like ourselves.

As 1 Corinthians 8:5-6 proclaims, “For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many ‘gods’ and many ‘lords’), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.”

Additionally, many people fall into the trap of believing they can become more holy by doing everything their religion requires of them. This type of checklist holiness also skews the ultimate goal a relationship with the Savior.

Don't Place People or Religion Above God

If you place people or religion above God, you are bound to be let down. Nothing and no one is bigger than God Almighty. Unfortunately, many people have been taught more about religious traditions than a meaningful relationship with God. For example, people tend to take part in various religious church traditions without even understanding the purpose. Therefore, it is not surprising for people to feel these things are chores, duties, obligations, or hollow tasks.

There are also those who value people like their pastors, priests, religious leaders over God. They hold these people on pedestals, or they feel they cannot get close to God without first approaching those who they have deemed “more holy.” It is easy to believe some people can have a closer relationship with God, but the Bible explains that anyone with faith in Jesus can have an intimate relationship with Him.

Hebrews 4:14-15 explains, “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Jesus is our great high priest, and we can approach God’s throne because of what has been done for us in Christ – not what we have done to merit His approval. We can go to God with our prayers directly through Christ. There is no need for any human mediator.

Don't Overthink It

Sometimes religion is confusing simply because we overthink it. If you find yourself feeling bogged down, focus your attention on Jesus. Rather than being caught up in all the religious “stuff,” read the Gospels. When you are tempted to walk away from religion, ask yourself if this is because of Jesus or because of religion. When you become engaged in new theology, question whether these religious ideas point to Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life.

Do Choose Relationship

Whereas religion confuses you or lets you down, a relationship with Jesus is rich, meaningful, and life-changing. Instead of having to check boxes to prove your worth to a powerful deity, Jesus offers love, acceptance, and forgiveness for those who come to Him in faith. In fact, 1 John 3:1[a] exclaims, “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are called a child of God, and He lavishes His love upon you. Isn’t that amazing? (See John 1:12 also)

Too many people lose sight of a relationship with Jesus because they become fixated on religion. Often, these are misguided attempts to find their worth and gain an understanding of the sacred. For those individuals, I point to Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3:16-19:

“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

Lynn Austin

3/27/2018, 1:38:54 PM

This was very interesting. Thank you for sending it.

Kositino Turaga

1/31/2020, 6:42:48 AM

Very interesting read being up all night trying to understand God was laying this in my heart

Charlie Troy Rodriguez

4/10/2020, 11:38:55 PM

very inspiring biblical lesson. religion is not important, relationship w Jesus Christ is the most important.

Martin Hawley

4/15/2020, 2:59:51 PM

I am very glad this resource was helpful to you.

Marianna Albritton

6/19/2020, 10:23:20 PM

Very helpful, Thanks for this!

A close relationship with God is possible for everyone.

Regardless of your past circumstances and mistakes, there is always a chance for you to develop a relationship with the Creator.

Please read my blog: 4 Ways to Develop a Close Relationship with God

Hope this will also help. Thank you and God Bless you..

Scott

6/24/2020, 8:28:03 AM

Beautifully well said! I found this after searching for ways to deepen my relationship with God. Almost to the point of following step-by-step daily actions. This brought me back to His truth and prospective. Allowing His Spirit to mature my faith. Thank you brothers & sisters in Christ!

Lisa White

7/2/2020, 4:04:26 PM

Thank you for sharing! I prayed Paul's payer Ephesians 3:16-19. Jesus has shown me mercy and his love is real to me. I never want religion to interfere with my relationship with my Lord

Leon zuniga

8/6/2020, 2:54:28 PM

I like