

# The Problems with Religion

(Insights from Romans 2:17 - 3:10)

Pastor Bob Johnson, Grace Point Church, October 1st, 2017

## Three More Things We Can't Count On To Make Us Right With God:

1. **A Religious ...** (2:17)  
(Jeremiah 6:13-15, 14:13-14, Ezekiel 13:8-10)
2. **A Religious ...** (2:17-24)  
(Romans 3:20; 7:7-9, John 5:39-40, John 13:17, Heb. 10:26-27)
3. **A Religious ...** (2:25-29)  
(Ezekiel 33:31-32, Isaiah 29:13)

## Five Follow-Up Questions ...

1. **Regarding Jew's Uniqueness** (3:1-2)
2. **Regarding God's Faithfulness** (3:3-4)
3. **Regarding God's Righteousness** (3:5-6)
4. **Regarding God's Graciousness** (3:7-8)
5. **Regarding Man's Sinfulness** (3:9-10)

## Two Summary Truths To Take Home ...

1. **Religious people need Jesus just as much as ...**  
(James 2:19)
2. **When religious acts \_\_\_\_\_ repentance, God is...**  
**When religious acts \_\_\_\_\_ repentance, God is...**  
(Isaiah 1:10-20)

## This Week's Discussion Guide:

**Welcome to "Week 4" of this Fall season of our small groups at GPC!** Our small groups are where folks move from 'believers' to 'belongers'. May we receive lots of encouragement and support and deepening friendships as we meet together this fall to pray, support and study God's Word together.

## Looking Back:

Each week we'll look back and have an opportunity to share with our group how the past 7 days went and also share a few things to help us get to know each other better. An important part of meeting together is to share the good news and also the not so good news so we can celebrate together and pray for each other. What is something encouraging or not so encouraging that happened since our last meeting?

Last Sunday Bob shared from Romans 2 how religious labels, education and rituals fall short as 'salvation strategies'. Who in our group can summarize what that means?

There are a lot of things we can put too much trust in only to find out later they don't measure up. Can you think of a few things people put too much trust in when maybe they shouldn't?

To help us get to know each other a little better, let's share a little of our religious upbringing if you had one. When did you first start attending a church? What label/denomination etc. was it related to? What was something positive that you can recall from your religious upbringing if you had one?

During your upbringing or later on, when did you first begin to understand that being religious and having a relationship with God were two different things? What resource or person helped you understand the difference?

Each week in 'looking back', we also want to give each other the opportunity to look back since our last meeting and have an opportunity to share how we applied something to our daily lives that God prompted us from the Bible.

## Looking Up:

As part of looking up and seeing what God can teach us this week, was there anything from last Sunday's message that particularly caught your attention, challenged you or needs some clarification?

1. Last Sunday we heard that religious rituals alone can't make us right with God. Whether we call them religious rituals, spiritual disciplines or practices, these sometimes can be viewed in a negative light. While there are some justifiable reasons for this, it's also true that spiritual disciplines can be beneficial for us if done with the right motives. As you go through the following verses, reflect on some reasons why the disciplines referred to might be done for the wrong reasons and then how they could be done for the right reasons.

Acts 22:16, Mark 12:41-44, Matthew 6:9-13, Matthew 26:26-28

How might these disciplines help you personally if you were to focus on doing them with the right motives? Can you think of any other spiritual disciplines you incorporate into your week? If so, what are they and how do they help you?

2. Although reflecting on God's Word is not enough to bring us salvation, reading and following what it says can help us become more mature. When we read God's Word to apply truths to our lives, God wants us to have confidence to believe it is true. (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17) At times, what the Bible says can be hard to believe when it goes against how we see ourselves or what we feel we deserve. How does knowing God's word is inerrant (without error) affect how we view the following verses?

Ephesians 2:4-7, Ephesians 2:10, Ephesians 2:21-22

After reading the above verses, how would you summarize our part in God's great plan?

3. A major theme from last Sunday's message was that when it comes to our faith in Jesus, it is more about relationship than rituals. Jesus often modeled for us how to have a loving relationship with others. What can be learned from God's Word and how Jesus modeled relationship building that we could apply to our relationships?

Colossians 3:13, Matthew 9:36, Ephesians 5:15-20, 1 Peter 3:8-9

Which of the verses we just read is most challenging for you to apply when it comes to your relationship with others?

## Looking Forward:

This last section is based on passages like the one below.

*But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23 For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25 But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.*

*James 1:22-25 (NLT)*

Let's all take a few minutes to silently pray and reflect back on this last week's message and what we discussed in our group. As we reflect, let's all pray and ask God for a specific application that He might prompt us to live out this week.

To help us as we reflect, here are some possible applications to get us thinking ...

- Become more familiar with sharing the gospel by reviewing some Bible verses that help explain the gospel and then practice sharing the gospel with a family member or friend this week.
- Make a list of 5 people that are not Christ followers (yet) and pray for them every day for God to help them understand they are loved by God who desires to forgive their sins and adopt them into His family.
- Decide to have a consistent solitude time with God by reading the Bible and praying every day this week.
- We learned from Romans 2:29 that circumcision is really a matter of the heart as we live to please Him and love others. Ask God this week for ways you can please Him by serving and caring for others as opportunities come your way.

As we look forward to this week, let's pray for one another!