



# **Church? BUT... I'm not religious!**

And anyway...don't all religions lead to God?

And anyway...I can worship God in my garden or walking in the forest better than in church.

And anyway...I'm not even sure there is a God!

Churchgoing in the U.K. is in decline. Whereas there was a time when almost every person went to church sometimes, nowadays it isn't even "christenings, weddings and funerals" because we have naming ceremonies, civil ceremonies and non-religious funerals. So, is church still relevant in the 21st century?

First let's ask what "being religious" is all about. I've heard many people say that someone has "got religion" or "is very religious". They usually mean that the person has changed and become pious, or talks a lot about God or professes some kind of life-changing experience. As soon as someone starts talking about being in touch with God, talking to God or hearing God's voice an element of suspicion as to their sanity enters the conversation!

But, actually, a lot of very ordinary sane and intelligent people DO talk to God and claim a relationship with him!



So, can I be “religious” without leaving my brains at the door? And is it about being religious anyway?

If God exists then can I have a relationship with him and still be “normal”?

Can I actually talk to God?

First, lets get rid of the “religion” word!

For most of us that conjures up the idea of something not relevant to ordinary life. Or maybe a crutch to take us through hassles in life that I shouldn’t really need.

The Bible says that true religion is about action, it’s about caring for others, it’s about living life the way God intended.

Christians actually want to talk more about ‘Relationship’.

So, let’s start at the beginning.

Genesis, the first book of the Bible, talks about men and women being made in the image of God. Also David, an Old Testament Israelite King described as “a man after God’s own heart”, wrote:

“For you created my inmost being ; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made”

In other words :

- ◆ Each of us is made with a spiritual, as well as a physical part
- ◆ We are designed to function in relationship with God
- ◆ Each of us is individual, special and known to God

You might not think of yourself as religious. But you are spiritual! You have a spiritual nature made to relate to God. That, I suggest, is an inescapable fact!

## **What are we going to do about the spiritual part?**

A philosopher once wrote that all of us have in us a “God-shaped” hole. In other words a need to relate to God to be complete. Without him a human has something missing!

The Bible puts it just a little differently.

“Your iniquities have separated you from your God”

or, in the New Testament,

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

That may not be the sort of language we use nowadays but the message is that God has made us spiritual beings to function in a particular way. He has also not made us robots but beings with a free will. The choices we have made have taken us away from God’s way and from the relationship he intended us to have with him.



CC-ART.COM

So, put simply, we are spiritual intended to relate to God.

Every man and woman is now separated from God by an inherited bias towards wrongdoing. In this sense ‘wrongdoing’ means not living lives which come up to God’s perfect standards. “Sins” and “iniquities” are the Bible’s words for this failure.

The message of the Bible is that every single one of us is affected. Let’s face it, most of us would admit we don’t actually live up to our own standards and expectations. Let alone God’s!

### **Is it all bad news?**

Thank God, no! The Christian message is that the relationship can be restored! Life can be the way it was supposed to be!



## **The answer is the cross of Jesus!**

We have failed to live up to God's standards and so we cannot relate to God. BUT, Jesus Christ (the Son of God) DID live up to those standards.

The result of our failure is that we will face life and eternity out of touch with God, not ever being the people we are supposed to be and with no hope of life after death.

However, the Christian message is that Jesus Christ took on himself all of our failures (iniquities and sins) and died on the cross as a punishment. That is God's punishment that should have come to us.

Having done this he was restored, by God's power, to life and is now in a position of power in heaven.

So, you may not be religious, but you are spiritual.

You may not be particularly wicked compared to some but you are part of the human race that has failed to reach God's standard of perfection.

Today you can be all that God meant you to be.

It's not about being religious. It's about being put right with God by believing in Jesus Christ, accepting what he says about your life and accepting what Jesus has done at the cross.

It probably will mean you'll start going to church!

**Want to know more?  
Got questions?  
Come and see us at  
Thursday Coffee morning  
9.30 — 1.30**

