

WEEK 3: “Aren’t we better off without religion?”

[WARM-UP]

[DISCUSS]

*“What if I told you
Jesus came to abolish religion?”¹*

[READ]

Religion [ri-lij-uh n] (noun)

A set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving **devotional** and **ritual observances**, and often containing a **moral code** governing the conduct of human affairs.
(Dictionary.com)

Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel			
4:19	Calls to follow	18:15-17	Affirms Church Discipline
4:23	Teaches in Synagogue	26:17	Observes Holy Day (Passover)
5:17	Fulfills Law	26:26-28	Institutes Lord’s Supper
16:18	Builds Church	28:19-20	Calls for Baptism/Obedience

How does this fit with Matthew 15:1-9? James 1:26-27?

Q: Is Jesus (or the Bible) opposed to organized religion? **NO! (He opposes empty religion)**

[THINK]

Q: Is Biblical religion beneficial (or are we better off without it)?

- Relationship/Community
- Giving Over Receiving
- Discontent of Money Love
- Work as a Calling
- Happy in All Circumstances
- Gratitude
- Self-Control/Perseverance
- Forgiveness
- Higher Purpose



Q: Is there a **universal measuring stick of morality** (sized by self-evident truths) to which all of us can assent? Is evolutionary altruism a good source of morality?

“Of course, we need only open a newspaper to see that religious beliefs can cause harm. But to say that religion is bad for you is like saying, “Drugs are bad for you,” without distinguishing cocaine from life-saving medication”²

TAKEAWAYS:

- Evils have been done in the name of religion, but it isn’t fitting to say all religion is bad.
- Religion gives a better ground for morality than other claims of morality can give.

Next week: “How can you take the Bible literally?” (Chapter 6)

¹ Jefferson Bethke “Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus || Spoken Word.” YouTube. Accessed Sept 16, 2019.

² Rebecca McLaughlin, *Confronting Christianity*, 2019, p. 21