



# God hates religion

It's true, God hates religion!

You might wonder "How on earth God could hate religion? Ridiculous! God loves religion. GOD IS RELIGION! Or at least He's completely in favour of it... surely? Saying that 'God hates religion' seems like talk of 'Peace keeping Missiles' or 'Cold heat'. Impressive contradictions designed to catch our attention.

But its true, God does hate religion. And the reason is that **religion is not relationship**. Religion is all about us trying to impress God with large buildings, sacrifices, good works and inspirational cultural achievements. But, and this may be hard to hear, God's just not interested in us impressing him.

The reason isn't that surprising when you think about it. It's simply that, whilst human achievements might be truly wonderful, our hearts aren't. In fact, the human heart is dreadful.

During Jesus' ministry on earth there were some who thought that washing their hands might make them clean before God. Jesus responded that it's what comes out of a person's heart that makes them unclean. He said:

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'

You see, Religion is like washing your hands to clean your heart – hopeless window dressing. You may as well put a band aid on cancer! And God hates that we do it. He hates that we pretend that religion is the answer. In the Bible God says, "They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."

What God wants is relationship. Not on our terms with our rules and rituals. He doesn't want us to **do** something to establish relationship with him. No, He's **done** what needs to be done. You could say, God's already done the *religious thing*. He sent his son Jesus to die on the cross to pay for our sin so that we can have friendship with him. Jesus' death is the only offering that pleases God. It is the only religious sacrifice that God accepts.

One way of thinking about this is that Religion is what we try to **do** to please God whereas Jesus' death and resurrection is what God has already **done** that saves us.

So, how can you respond to what God has done? In prayer:

**Prayer:** Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to save me. Please forgive me and help me now to live with you in real relationship.