

JESUS > RELIGION

The Story Behind The Story:

Exodus 32:25-29, 40:1-5, Leviticus 1:1-9

Why Religion Is Worthless:

Hebrews 7:11-28, Psalms 110

- (1) If religion could have **saved us**,
then Jesus wasn't **necessary**.

- (2) If there was a need for a new type of **priest**,
then there was a need for a new type of **law**.

Simply following the **Bible** can't **save** you.

- (3) Jesus' priesthood was not a **position**,
it was a **promise**.

- (4) Jesus did for us what no **religion** could.

- (5) Jesus is **enough!**

It's Time To Leave Your Religion:

Romans 3:23, 5:8, 6:23, 8:9-10, 12:1-2

Food for Thought for the week of March 18, 2018

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

This week starts a spring break for many of us that may bring back some great childhood memories of breaking free from school for five weekdays. No early alarm clocks, teachers, homework, bell schedules and class rules for a whole week. Ironically, our study this weekend in Hebrews 7 celebrates the same type of newfound freedom by stating how we are now released from the structure of religion because of who Jesus was and what he did for us. Using our school spring break analogy, religion makes God the angry principal and us the scared students, while Jesus makes God our Father and us his dearly loved children.

In the famous upper room of the Last Supper, the night that Jesus knew he would be led to his death, he told one last story to break his disciples free from religion. Read John 15 in three different sections as outlined below, and watch as Jesus separates religion and relationship in one of his final talks with his followers.

1. In John 15:1-8, what is the one thought that Jesus is impressing on his disciples, and how can we do that in our lives today?

John 15:1-8 *New International Version (NIV)*

The Vine and the Branches

¹⁵ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

2. In John 15:9-12, Jesus moves from the gardening story and gets very specific. What is it that we need to do to show our love for God, what will that result in, and what is our example for how to do it?

John 15:9-12 *New International Version (NIV)*

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

3. In John 15:13-17, Jesus makes this all about relationship, not merely following a set of rules or regulations. These verses are filled with encouragements and motivations. Jot down which ones jump out at you.

John 15:13-17 *New International Version (NIV)*

¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

Looking back at what you just studied, what do you need to do, change, or act upon as a result of what you learned?