

Why Are People Disinterested In Religion? (Why Are People Not Going To Church?)

Sunday AM 04/25/21

Introduction:

Surveys show what most of us already knew, people are going to “church” less and less. Most people are not interested in talking about their religious beliefs or having a Bible study. One place I preached we tried doing a survey going door to door. Many were not willing to talk with us. My wife asked one man if he would be willing to have a Bible study, and he said no. He was a preacher at a local church in that town. Going back to the survey, the trend away from religion is generational as younger people see less and less of a role religion has in their lives. Why?

I) The Absence of Personal Pain and Suffering

A) Most people are living in relative comfort.

1. We see people starving or going through tough things on tv but personally we are ok.
2. Plenty to eat, heat in the winter, air conditioning in the summer, doctors when we get sick.
3. As posted on Facebook, what other country can you see a person wearing designer clothes, Air Jordan sneakers, with a \$1,000 iPhone complaining about the harshness of life?

B) Those who followed Christ were not living in comfort.

Matthew 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. **24** Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with

various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. 25 Great multitudes followed Him--from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

Matthew 11:28 *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

1. These people knew poverty, sickness, servitude.
2. They were the downtrodden and they were seeking something better.

Luke 4:18 *"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;*

3. You don't have to be poor physically to be poor in spirit.

II) Emphasis on Pleasure and Entertainment.

A) People are consumed by sports, recreation, and entertainment.

1. They go hunting, fishing, ball games, have their children involved in some kind of sporting activity.
2. They do not have time to study their Bible, go to worship on Sunday morning, or a Gospel Meeting.
3. For some this is their religion, in the movie Bull Durham there is the line, the church of baseball.

“I believe in the Church of Baseball. I've tried all the major religions, and most of the minor ones. I've worshipped Buddha, Allah, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, trees, mushrooms, and Isadora Duncan. I know things. For instance, there are 108 beads in a Catholic rosary and there are 108 stitches in a baseball. ... It's a long season and you gotta trust. I've tried 'em all, I really have, and the only church that truly feeds the soul, day in, day out, is the Church of Baseball.”

B) Seeking first the kingdom of God requires us to put God first, ahead of our pleasure and entertainment.

Matthew 6:33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

1. What happens when you catch the big fish? Or win the big game?
2. Your soul is eternal. What is of more value, your soul or a ballgame?

Matthew 16:26 "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

III) One Religion is As Good as Another

A) That slogan is being practiced by many today.

1. Most don't study because if one church is as good as another, doctrine does not matter.
2. In a society where trophies are given out for participation, organized religion is seen as unimportant and non-essential.

B) Jesus promised to build His church.

Matthew 16:18 "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

1. The word church is singular and not plural. It is made up of individuals and not denominations.

Acts 2:47b And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

2. No denomination ever saved anyone, even the denominationalists say that.
3. The church established by Christ is the saved, the body of Christ.

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

4. A person cannot be saved outside of His body.

IV) People Don't Want To be Told They Are Wrong.

A) PMA rules the day.

1. Religion is being sold like soap or cologne.
2. It has become the wrong kind of service industry.
3. Sin is a dirty word few mention in sermons or Bible studies.
4. Going to church to be forgiven or transformed and worship God is lost on many.

B) Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit coming and His work.

1. It was not to make us feel warm and fuzzy but to convict us.

John 16:8 "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: **9** "of sin, because they do not believe in Me; **10** "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; **11** "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

2. The Gospel is intended to touch our hearts.

Acts 7:51 "You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. **52** "Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, **53** "who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."

3. Paul spoke to Felix about the judgement to come.

Acts 24:25 Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."

4. I would compare it to going to the doctor. Most of us go only when we realize we are sick. People will not pay attention to the Gospel until they realize they need it.

V) The Constant Attack on Religion

A) Over the last 40 to 50 years religion has been under attack.

1. "The battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a

religion of humanity — utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to carry humanist values into wherever they teach. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new — the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism.”—John J. Dunphy, *The Humanist* 1983.

2. In various classrooms religion is ridiculed, morality is attacked, and young people are indoctrinated.
3. Entertainment glorifies promiscuity, vulgar language, situation ethics.

B) The Bible must be taught in the home and pulpit

1. The responsibility ultimately rest on parents shoulders.

Ephesians 6:4 *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

2. The constant teaching at home can be greater than the schools, tv, or peers.

2 Timothy 3:14 *But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, **15** and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

3. The Bible must be taught and respected as authoritative.

2 Timothy 4:2 *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all*

longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

Conclusion:

In the Bible we read of the days of judges when the people drifted away from God, was oppressed, repented. Then we read of Judah in the days of Jeremiah when the people did not want the word despite God's discipline.

Which will it be today?