

# Message Notes

## Jesus vs Religion - Round One

# Scripture Passages

(taken from the New International Version)

**Introduction** - "Ready for a fight!"

**Today's Message:**  
**Jesus vs Religion: Round 1**  
*The Subtle Poison of Religion*  
Luke 11:37-44

**The Invitation** - Luke 11:37  
*Who were the Pharisees?*

**The Shock** - Luke 11:38  
*"Jesus, you didn't wash your hands!"*  
  
*Handwashing and Jewish Culture*

**Jesus Responds** - Luke 11:39-44

1. The underlying problem (11:39-41)
2. Woe #1 - Forest and Trees (11:42)
3. Woe #2 - Important Seats (11:43)
4. Woe #3 - Unmarked Graves (11:44)

**Back to the Problem: Freeze-Frame on The Pharisee's reaction**

*What's your problem? RELIGION!!!*

*Treichler's Definition of Religion:*

*Ways to Respond to God*  
#1 - Irreligious

#2 - Religious

#3 - Gospel-Centered Life

Religion vs The Gospel

**Gospel Application** - "Losing my religion"

**Luke 11:37-44**

<sup>37</sup>When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. <sup>38</sup>But the Pharisee was surprised when he noticed that Jesus did not first wash before the meal.

<sup>39</sup>Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. <sup>40</sup>You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? <sup>41</sup>But now as for what is inside you—be generous to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.

<sup>42</sup>Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

<sup>43</sup>Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the marketplaces.

<sup>44</sup>Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which people walk over without knowing it."

**Luke 7:36-50**

<sup>36</sup>When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.

<sup>37</sup>A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. <sup>38</sup>As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

<sup>39</sup>When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

<sup>40</sup>Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said.

<sup>41</sup>"Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

<sup>42</sup>Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

<sup>43</sup>Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

<sup>44</sup>Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

<sup>45</sup>You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. <sup>46</sup>You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. <sup>47</sup>Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."

<sup>48</sup>Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

<sup>49</sup>The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

<sup>50</sup>Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

**Isaiah 29:13**

The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.

The Gospel of  
**LUKE**

Setting His Face to Jerusalem  
Luke 9:51 to Luke 19:44

## **Luke 11:37-44**

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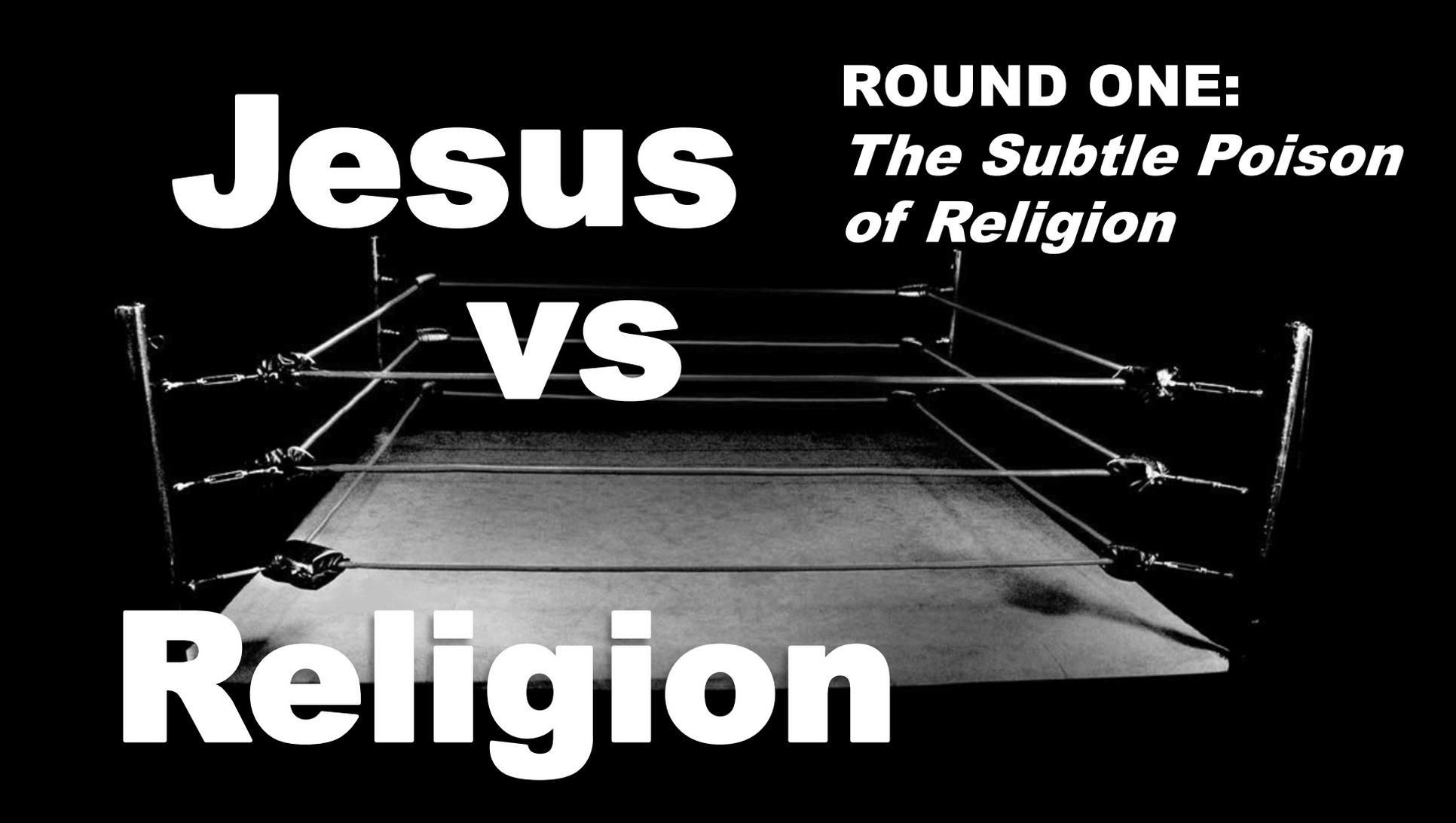
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**Jesus**

**vs**

**Religion**





**Jesus**

**vs**

**Religion**

**ROUND ONE:**

*The Subtle Poison  
of Religion*



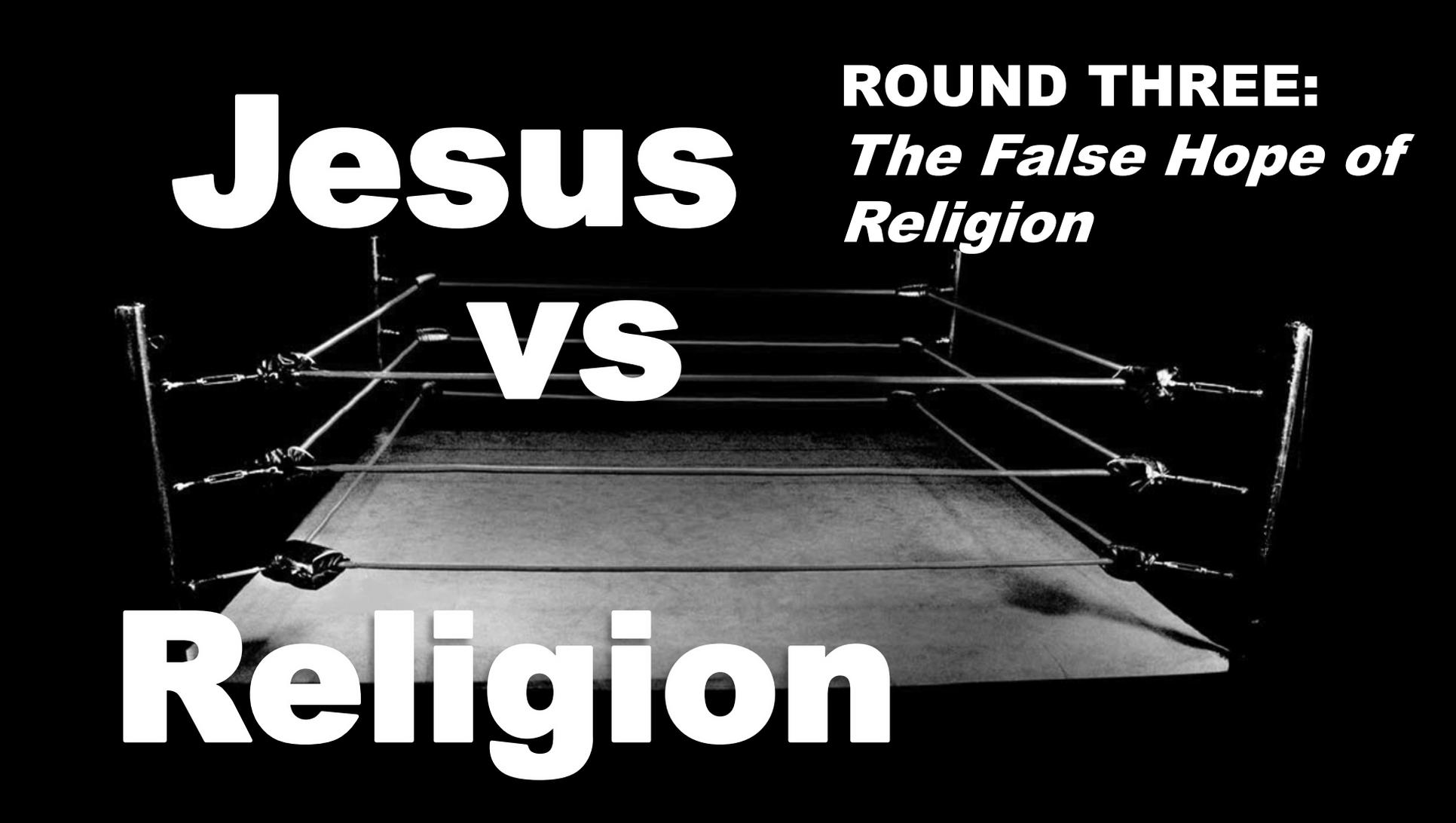
**Jesus**

**vs**

**Religion**

**ROUND TWO:**

*The Danger of  
Being "Right"*



**Jesus**

**vs**

**Religion**

**ROUND THREE:**

*The False Hope of  
Religion*

**Today's Message:**  
**Jesus vs Religion: Round One**  
*The Subtle Poison of Religion*  
**Luke 11:37-44**

# The Invitation – Luke 11:37

## Luke 11:37-44

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# Last time we saw the Pharisees in Luke:

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“Who is this who even forgives sins?”

<sup>50</sup>Jesus said to the woman,  
“Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

## *Who were the Pharisees?*

Without the benefit of historical hindsight, one could naively suppose that the Pharisees would follow Jesus. They were not upper-class, like the Sadducees, but came from the common people, as did Jesus. They were committed to holy living. The very name *Pharisee* means “the separate ones.” They were thought to be holy men, the true community of Israel. When a man became a Pharisee, he first endured a probationary period up to a year in length, during which time he had to prove his ability to keep the rituals of the Law.

# Who were the Pharisees?

Many of the Pharisees were scribes, experts in the Law who so revered it that they hedged it in with extra protective laws. As the *Mishnah* says, “Tradition is a fence around the Law” (Aboth 3.14). They loved the Law, God’s Word. Full entrance into the pharisaic community came, after a probationary period, when a man pledged to observe all the laws regarding purity and tithes.

The Pharisees drew a hard line between themselves and the masses, who did not keep the Law as meticulously. The conflict between the Pharisees and the masses was largely due to the people’s neglect of tithing. The Pharisees were exemplary.

~ R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word, 20–21.

# The Shock – Luke 11:38

*Jesus, you didn't wash your hands!*

## Luke 11:37-44

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# Handwashing and Jewish Culture

The hands are susceptible to uncleanness, and they are rendered clean [by the pouring over them of water] up to the wrist. Thus if a man had poured the first water up to the wrist and the second water beyond the wrist, and the water flowed back to the hand, the hand becomes clean; but if he poured both the first water and the second beyond the wrist, and the water flowed back to the hand, the hand remains unclean. If he poured the first water over the one hand alone and then bethought himself and poured the second water over the one hand, his one hand [alone] is clean. If he had poured the water over the one hand and rubbed it on the other, it becomes unclean; but if he rubbed it on his head or on the wall [to dry it] it remains clean. (*Yadaim* 2.3)

# Handwashing and Jewish Culture

Handwashing before a meal in this case was not an issue of physical but of ritual cleanliness. As a behavior concerned with purity, it is not an OT requirement though it might be seen as a remote implicature of the law. ...Handwashing apparently served as a boundary-making and -keeping device (like fasting, 5:33); to overlook this practice was to mark oneself as an outsider in this community. In light of the laws of hospitality, failure to wash in this scene also constituted an insult to the host.

~ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament  
(Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 470.

**To the hand you talk**



**because listening I am not**

# “Talk to the (unwashed) Hand” – Luke 11:39-44

## 1. *The Underlying Problem*

### **Luke 11:39-41**

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<sup>41</sup>But now as for what is inside you – be generous to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.

# **“Talk to the (unwashed) Hand” – Luke 11:39-44**

## *2. Woe #1 – Forests and Trees*

### **Luke 11:42**

<sup>42</sup>“Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

# **“Talk to the (unwashed) Hand” – Luke 11:39-44**

## *3. Woe #2 – Important Seats*

### **Luke 11:37-44**

<sup>43</sup>“Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the marketplaces.

**“Talk to the (unwashed) Hand” – Luke 11:39-44**

*4. Woe #3 – Unmarked Graves*

**Luke 11:37-44**

<sup>44</sup>“Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which people walk over without knowing it.”

# **Back to the Problem: Freeze Frame on The Pharisee's reaction**



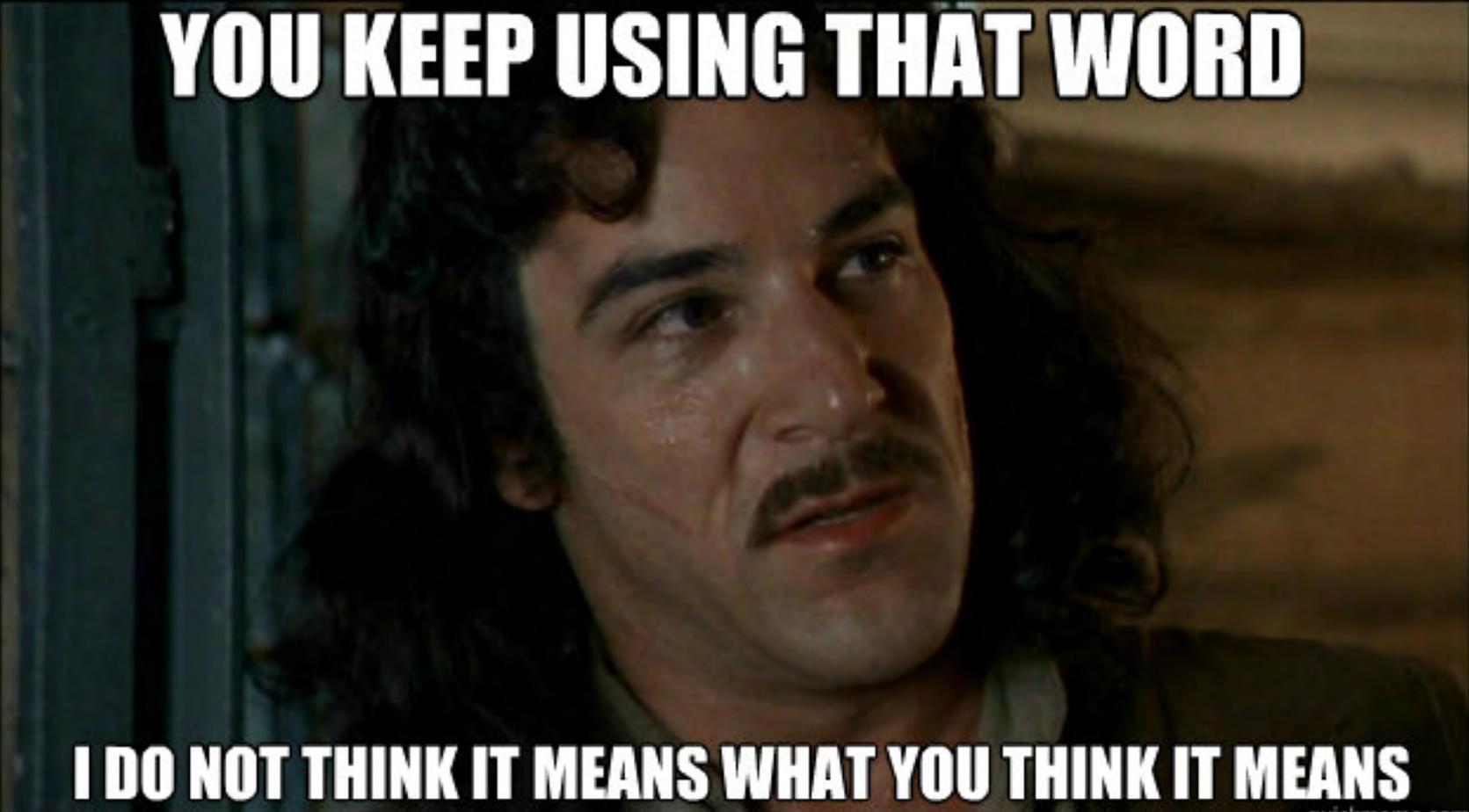
It's not that I think I'm better than you- it's just you're not as good as me.



**What made the Pharisee “better”  
than Jesus in his own eyes?**

What made the Pharisee “better”  
than Jesus in his own eyes?

**His Religion!**



**YOU KEEP USING THAT WORD**

**I DO NOT THINK IT MEANS WHAT YOU THINK IT MEANS**

# Treichler's Definition of Religion:

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## Isaiah 29:13

The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.

# Treichler's Definition of Religion:

a set of beliefs and actions that when believed and performed make a person right with God.

The absence of belief and action, proves to a person and others that this person is not right with God.

# Treichler's Definition of Religion:

Religion operates on the principle of "I obey -- therefore I am accepted by God." The basic operating principle of the gospel is "I am accepted by God through the work of Jesus Christ -- therefore I obey."

# WAYS TO RESPOND TO GOD

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## WAY #1

- Don't want God
  - Being Immoral
- Running from God
  - Shows up in all kinds of bad stuff

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- Human effort
- Trying very hard
- Using Religion and behavior to be "better" than others who don't seek God

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**REJECTION**

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STUDY GUIDE



**gospel**<sup>in</sup>**life**  
Grace Changes Everything  
EIGHT SESSIONS

TIMOTHY KELLER



# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

I obey - therefore I'm  
accepted.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

My motivation is based on  
fear and insecurity.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

I obey God in order to get things from God.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

When circumstances in my life go wrong, I am angry at God or myself, since I believe, like Job's friends that anyone who is good deserves a comfortable life.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

When I am criticized I am furious or devastated because it is critical that I think of myself as a 'good person'. Threats to that self-image must be destroyed at all costs.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

My prayer life consists largely of petition and it only heats up when I am in a time of need. My main purpose in prayer is control of the environment.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

My self-view swings between two poles. If and when I am living up to my standards, I feel confident, but then I am prone to be proud and unsympathetic to failing people. If and when I am not living up to standards, I feel insecure and inadequate. I'm not confident. I feel like a failure.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

My identity and self-worth are based mainly on how hard I work. Or how moral I am, and so I must look down on those I perceive as lazy or immoral. I disdain and feel superior to 'the other.'

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

Since I look to my own pedigree or performance for my spiritual acceptability, my heart manufactures idols. It may be my talents, my moral record, my personal discipline, my social status, etc. I absolutely have to have them so they serve as my main hope, meaning, happiness, security, and significance, whatever I may say I believe about God.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

I obey – therefore I’m  
accepted.

## THE GOSPEL:

I’m accepted - therefore I  
obey.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

My motivation is based on  
fear and insecurity.

## THE GOSPEL:

Motivation is based on  
grateful joy.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

I obey God in order to get things from God.

## THE GOSPEL:

I obey God to get to God-to delight and resemble Him.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

When circumstances in my life go wrong, I am angry at God or myself, since I believe, like Job's friends that anyone who is good deserves a comfortable life.

## THE GOSPEL:

When circumstances in my life go wrong, I struggle but I know all my punishment fell on Jesus and that while he may allow this for my training, he will exercise his Fatherly love within my trial.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

When I am criticized I am furious or devastated because it is critical that I think of myself as a 'good person'. Threats to that self-image must be destroyed at all costs.

## THE GOSPEL:

When I am criticized I struggle, but it is not critical for me to think of myself as a 'good person.' My identity is not built on my record or my performance but on God's love for me in Christ. I can take criticism.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

My prayer life consists largely of petition and it only heats up when I am in a time of need. My main purpose in prayer is control of the environment.

## THE GOSPEL:

My prayer life consists of generous stretches of praise and adoration. My main purpose is fellowship with Him.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

My self-view swings between two poles. If and when I am living up to my standards, I feel confident, but then I am prone to be proud and unsympathetic to failing people. If and when I am not living up to standards, I feel insecure and inadequate. I'm not confident. I feel like a failure.

## THE GOSPEL:

My self-view is not based on a view of my self as a moral achiever. In Christ I am "*simul iustus et peccator*" – simultaneously sinful and yet accepted in Christ. I am so bad he had to die for me and I am so loved he was glad to die for me. This leads me to deeper and deeper humility and confidence at the same time. Neither swaggering nor sniveling.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

My identity and self-worth are based mainly on how hard I work. Or how moral I am, and so I must look down on those I perceive as lazy or immoral. I disdain and feel superior to 'the other.'

## THE GOSPEL:

My identity and self-worth are centered on the one who died for His enemies, who was excluded from the city for me. I am saved by sheer grace. So I can't look down on those who believe or practice something different from me. Only by grace I am what I am. I've no inner need to win arguments.

# Religion vrs The Gospel

## RELIGION:

Since I look to my own pedigree or performance for my spiritual acceptability, my heart manufactures idols. It may be my talents, my moral record, my personal discipline, my social status, etc. I absolutely have to have them so they serve as my main hope, meaning, happiness, security, and significance, whatever I may say I believe about God.

## THE GOSPEL:

I have many good things in my life – family, work, spiritual disciplines, etc. But none of these good things are ultimate things to me. None of them are things I absolutely have to have, so there is a limit to how much anxiety, bitterness, and despondency they can inflict on me when they are threatened and lost.

# WAYS TO RESPOND TO GOD

## WAY #1

- Don't want God
- Being Immoral
- Running from God
- Shows up in all kinds of bad stuff

## WAY #2

- Want God
- Human effort
- Trying very hard
- Using Religion and behavior to be "better" than others who don't seek God

## WAY #3

- Wanting God
- Acknowledge helplessness & hopelessness of sin
- Trust Jesus ALONE

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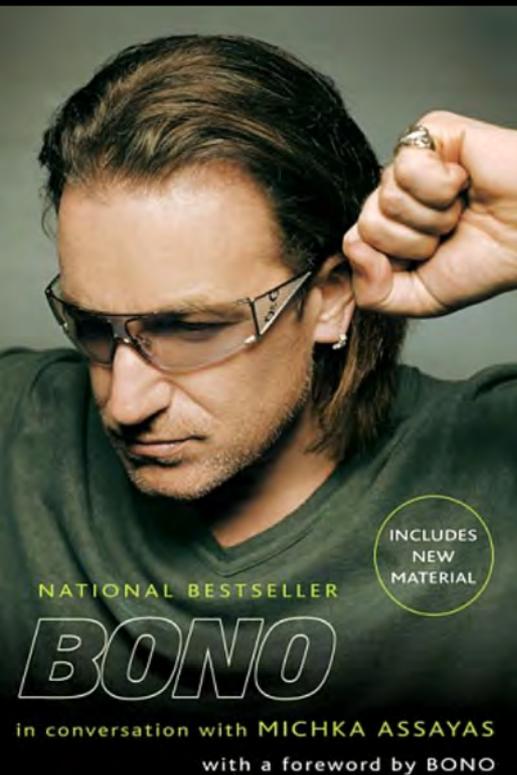
ACCEPTED

You see, at the center of all religions is the idea of Karma. You know, what you put out comes back to you: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, or in physics; in physical laws every action is met by an equal or an opposite one. It's clear to me that Karma is at the very heart of the universe.



And yet, along comes this idea called Grace to upend all that “as you reap, so you will sow” stuff. Grace defies reason and logic. Love interrupts, if you like, the consequences of your actions, which in my case is very good news indeed, because I’ve done a lot of stupid stuff.





I'd be in big trouble if karma was going to finally be my judge. I'd be in deep s[tuff]. It doesn't excuse my mistakes, but I'm holding out for grace. I'm holding out that Jesus took my sins onto the Cross, because I know who I am, and I hope I don't have to depend on my own religiosity.

~ Bono, from the book: *Bono: In Conversation with Michka Assayas*.

The background of the image is a monochromatic blue-tinted photograph of a human ribcage. The ribs are clearly visible, creating a rhythmic pattern of light and dark curves. The overall tone is somber and contemplative. Overlaid on this background is the text 'the pharisee in ME'.

the  
pharisee  
in ME