

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

RELIGIOUS STATUS QUESTIONNAIRE



SUMMARY: Religious discussions tend not fruitful because they do not actually focus on the points of different understanding. This lessons provides a set of questions to determine the point where two people's understandings begin to differ.

Because of the long-term effects, the basic religious decisions that you make are the most important decisions you will make while you are on the earth. A decision to obey God's word and instructions will not only determine whether you will spend an eternity in heaven or hell, it will affect the quality of your life on earth and will influence a number of people around you, including your children.

In spite of the immense importance of this subject, most people do not consider God's word prior to setting their religious course. Often the church you grew up in, the church of a persuasive friend, the church close to your house, or no church at all forms the basis of one's religious beliefs.

This cannot be an adequate guide, although acceptability of this philosophy is promoted by the contemporary slogan of "Go to the church of your choice". "Your choice"? Before we take "our" choice, we should find out if God has a "choice". Two things must be established. First, does God give instructions on what church to attend? Secondly, does God mean what he says? If God has a choice and He means what He says, we would be foolish to make any other choice, for any reason!

The first question of whether God gives us instructions on what to do and therefore how to locate the church which follows His instructions is easy to illustrate. Just open your Bible to any of the books between the first four on the life of Christ and the last on prophecy and you will find 22 books of instructions on how to become a New Testament Christian and how to live a Christian life. For some specific examples, see Acts 2:37-41, Ephesians 4:25-32, and Titus 1:5-9.

The second question of whether God means what He says can be simply illustrated from the Old Testament. In the Old Testament (and in part of the New Testament) all three events are frequently recorded. For the sureness and certainty of God's judgment see examples of the death of the well intentioned Uzzah in II Samuel 6:6-7 (Numbers 1:51) and Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11.

The same God will be our judge, not the contemporary myth of something close to Santa Claus. We must not confuse Godly mercy on people who tried and didn't understand with Godly justice on people who didn't try to understand or simply chose to ignore God's instructions.

In the light of the conclusions that God has given us instructions and that He means them, this lesson is prepared to assist you in determining your basic attitude toward religion and at what point your beliefs depart from basic New Testament Christianity. The "Religious Status Questionnaire" on the following page is designed for this purpose. It can be of help in determining what matters should be discussed to bring one closer to being a New Testament Christian.

These questions should be answered in sequence starting with number one and should be answered until a "no" is an answer. When a "no" is encountered, that question should be resolved to a "yes" before proceeding to any subsequent question. The reason for this is that the questions are arranged from most general to most specific. For example, if you don't believe in God (#1), you couldn't believe that Jesus was the Son of God (#6).

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Religious discussions tend not fruitful because they do not actually focus on the points of different understanding. The following is an attempt to identify the point where your understandings differ so you can discuss from that point on:

- ___ 1. Do you have a personal belief in God? Not one that you got from your parents or society, but you own personal conclusion from nature, creation, observations or whatever that there must be a God? (Romans 1:20)
- ___ 2. Do you believe that Jehovah is the one and only true God?
- ___ 3. Do you believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God by your own conclusion; due to any number of factors such as its perfection, prophecy and fulfillment, or lack of contemporary myths? (Job 26:7)
- ___ 4. Do you believe that the Old Testament is our schoolmaster, but is not in effect today? (Gal. 3:24-25)
- ___ 5. Do you believe that the New Testament is our guide, and will continue to be our guide without respect to changes in the attitude of society?
- ___ 6. Do you believe that the New Testament is our complete revelation, and that no organization, council, or person is authorized by God to add to or take away from it? (II Tim. 3:16-17 & Rev. 22:18-19)
- ___ 7. Do you believe that Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God? (John 3:16-18)
- ___ 8. Do you know as much as the people who heard the first sermon on Pentecost knew about Jesus and the plan of salvation? (Acts 2:38)
- ___ 9. Do you believe that you should be obedient to whatever the New Testament requires?
- ___ 10. Are you willing to do whatever the New Testament requires?
- ___ 11. Are you willing to do whatever the New Testament requires, now?
- ___ 12. At Pentecost, the people heard the word, believed (gladly received), repented and were baptized for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2:37-41) The Eunuch illustrates the scriptural form of baptism: by immersion (Acts 8:35-39). Are you ready to submit to what God, thru the Bible, requires of you?

If you sincerely answer "yes" to all the questions, you are or shortly will become a New Testament Christian. Becoming a Christian does not mean that you have all the answers. It means that you have found the source for the answers and will submit to the truth. It is not important that you have all the answers to start with, but rather that you keep an open mind and a willingness to study and submit to God's plan thru His word. This is the attitude and plan followed by the Churches of Christ in your area. For assistance, fellowship, study, and worship - call or visit your nearest Church of Christ.

VERSES REFERENCED IN QUESTIONNAIRE

(In order of reference, all NIV)

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Job 26:7 "He stretches out the north over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing.

Galatians 3:24-25 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Revelation 22:18-19 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

John 3:16-18 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Acts 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:37-41 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

Acts 8:35-39 Then Philip opened his mouth and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] Acts 8:38 And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him but went on his way rejoicing.