

“For years I went to church, because you’re supposed to.”

Have you ever attended a church service out of a sense of duty or because you think you’re supposed to?

“A lot of times I find myself looking around thinking, ‘Is this what God had in mind?’”

When it comes to church, what do you think God has in mind?

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them ‘Rabbi.’”

[Matthew 23:1-7 \(NIV\)](#)

“Jesus said to them, ‘Everything for you is about being seen in public as important people. I mean you love to be looked up to. You love to be respected. You love the best seats where everyone can see you.’ And then Jesus says, ‘Everything for you is about appearance. How things look to other people.’”

How much time do you spend worrying about what other people think of you?

I’ve had it with you! You’re hopeless, you religion scholars, you Pharisees! Frauds!
Your lives are roadblocks to God’s kingdom. You refuse to enter, and won’t let anyone else in either.

[Matthew 23:13 \(MSG\)](#)

“He goes on to tell them, ‘You’ve abused your positions of religious authority and you are actually getting in the way of people who are honestly searching for God.’”

Is it possible to be interested in Christian faith but turned off by Christianity?

The number of Americans who don’t go to church has mushroomed from 39 million to 75 million since 1991 – representing more than one-third of the U.S. adult population and a 92 percent increase.

[Barna Research Group](#)

“God says in the book of Isaiah, ‘These people, they honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me.’
Sometimes we have to stop and ask, ‘Why do we do what we do?’
To keep the family happy?
So that I don’t feel guilty?”

Does God need us to attend a church service once or twice a week?
Why or why not?

Sons I have reared and brought up, but they have revolted against me. An ox knows its owner,
and a donkey its master’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.

[Isaiah 1:2-3 \(NASB\)](#)

“The Scriptures remind us that God doesn’t want the empty rituals. God wants our hearts.”

How do we know that God has our hearts, and that we’re not just going through the motions?

“God hates it, he can’t stand it, when we put on a religious show and then we ignore the poor and the broken
and the marginalized and the oppressed.”

Have you been part of the show?
What issues in our world today do you think God really cares about?
What are you doing about them?

“Is church a building? Like an hour once a week?
Church is people.
People whose hearts are beating more and more like God’s.”

What does it mean for our hearts to start beating more and more like God’s?
How could this change the way the world sees Christianity?

“Let’s be honest. A lot of people confuse religion with God and walk away from them both.
The point isn’t Christianity. The point is being a Christian. It means being a follower of Jesus.
It’s being connected with everything that is true and good and right. Everything that goes on around us,
that reminds us that there is so much more going on around us than we realize.

Could anything be more beautiful?”

The phones seen in each restaurant booth are used to place food orders directly to the kitchen.

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NOOMA Sunday I 004 Rob Bell

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