

## **CHAPTER 20 EVERYONE IS RELIGIOUS**

### **WE MUST DISCOVER WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR INSIDE NOT OUTSIDE OF OURSELVES**

We all have an inner peace we can learn to consciously access.

External rational thought creates external feelings.

Internal conscious thought accesses internal feelings.

### **SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE INVENTORY**

1. All people are religious. True or False?
2. Religion is about Spirituality. True or False?
3. God is not religious. True or False?
4. You will become religious if you read the Bible, pray and go to church. True or False?
5. If you follow the law you will be blessed. True or False?
- 6.. According to Scripture God only speaks to certain people. True or False?
- 7.. People should go to church to commune with God. True or False?

### **EVERYONE IS RELIGIOUS**

. All people are religious. Religion is our response to what God has done. Atheists and agnostics are religious. Religion is NOT about spirituality. All spirituality is religious, but not all religion is spiritual. At times it gets quite materialistic. God is not religious. Religion is a person's response to God, therefore God cannot be religious.

Do you think of God in a worldly way or do you think of the world in a godly way? The answer is of course "Yes". Sometimes people see God in a worldly way and sometimes they see the world in a godly way. The difference is when one sees God with external, rational thinking, God becomes a theory or a theology. When one thinks of the world in a Godly way, the world is seen from a relationship with God in a loving, peaceful, and joyful way.

### **THE PROBLEM WITH RELIGION**

The above questions represent some of the problems with religion. Some people believe they go to church to commune with God. The problem is they have to keep going back to commune with God. What they need to do is to go to church to practice communing with God, so when they leave they can continue to practice communion with God.

"In order to communicate with God, read the Bible and pray." The problem with reading the Bible and praying to communicate with God is, people find they need to read more,

and pray more, so they can communicate better. They finally get so filled with tasks they get overcome with all the pressure, and fall into legalism. What people need to do is learn how to communicate with God and then read the Bible and pray the prayers. It starts from the inside and goes to the outside.

"All people are religious." One of many dictionary definitions of "religion" is "one's reaction to what God has done". Whatever a person's reaction to God, that is their religion. An atheist is religious in not believing in God, an agnostic in not knowing God, and a dedicated believer in ones response to God. An atheist told a minister he did not believe in God. The minister's response was "Tell me about the God you don't believe in". "Wait a minute, you're supposed to tell me about your God." The minister replied " You must have an idea of the God you do not believe in."

After he had told the minister about the God he didn't believe in, the minister replied. "Well, I don't believe in that God either." Religion as a response to what God has done means God is not religious. It has been said the reason Jesus was crucified was because he wasn't religious.

"If you follow the law, you will be blessed." There is no guarantee. This is one of the great problems of religious spirituality. There are two ways to go, one is by the law, the other by grace. The legalists who go by the law are under all sorts of external exercises; chants, and laws people are required to perform in order to have communion with God. These become works.

The other choice is grace. It is to get blessed by being in communion with God, and then follow the law, do the exercises, pray the prayers, chant, or whatever you are called to do. The difference is that you get blessed to follow the law rather than follow the law to get blessed. It is "Blessed be" rather than, "be Blessed".

"According to Scripture, God only speaks to certain people." There is the thought, 'God only speaks to "holy" people'. Yet according to Scripture, God is in communion with everyone, but everyone is not in communion with God. It is humorous to read about people who are shocked to hear God speak to them. The point is if God can speak to Balaam's ass he can speak to anyone!

The reason for so many problems in religion is there are two kinds of spirituality. One external and one internal. The external tries to go from the "out" to the "in". The internal starts from the "in" and goes to the "out". One form uses external rational faculties, while the other uses internal conscious ones. What people see is the external and miss the internal. For example, if you wanted to externally define a saint, they do at least five things. They read Scripture, pray prayers, join a community, give generously, and do good works. However if a person prayed prayers, read Scripture, joined a church, gave generously and did good works, they may not necessarily become a Saint, with a capital "S". Why? Because it is not the external spirituality that drives them, but an internal spirituality that leads them.

Bill Gates made the statement he did not have time to go to church on Sunday morning. It expresses the thinking of a lot of people who say they are too busy and do not have enough time for spirituality or religion. Spiritual faculties can sense the presence, call it peace, joy, love, or God. Whatever you call it, you don't have to do anything externally to experience the presence. Some may want to respond by reading Scripture, praying prayers, joining a church, giving generously, or doing good works because they are already experiencing the presence. That becomes the external and visible of the inward and spiritual grace, or free gift of inner peace.

Internal spirituality does not take any time either. How long does it take to turn on a light switch. It can be immediate, once a person understands the dynamics. I knew a very religious person who had a hard day at work, went home, got in bed and prayed what he called the "Jesus" prayer, that is, just saying "Jesus" over and over. It took him forty-five minutes to get into communion. The dynamic was, he finally changed his way of thinking from external rational to internal conscious; he just happened to do it after 45 minutes of praying the Jesus prayer. If he had changed his way of thinking at first, he would have been able to stay on the job!

You can tell if one's religion is external spiritual or internal spiritual. If you hear them tell you they are feeling "dry", "empty", "hungry", they "want more meat", then they have an external spiritual religion. They will begin to pray, read, go to church more, attend conferences, perhaps start a ministry. Sooner or later they will still be empty. The reason is, they are seeking something outside themselves to give them what they already have inside. It is called in the Scripture, "idolatry", which is depending upon something other than God to get what God has already given.

The problem with religion and church today is we are trying to give spirituality to people who already have it. We need to help people discover what they already have. In the book "The Grand Inquisitor" by Dostoevski, Jesus returns to the earth. He begins to do some miracles and attract a crowd. The Church puts Him in prison. The Grand Inquisitor interrogates Him, and believes he is Jesus. He says to him, "You got it all wrong when you came. You should have turned the stones into bread because that is what people were looking for." There is the fear if he stays around he will turn all the work the church has done for the past centuries upside down. He is a threat to their religion.

### **FROM FISHING MARKET TO FISHING HOLE**

As people move back on the road to healthy functioning and recovery, the church as it is now, will have to change to accommodate them. This is probably the main unmentioned threat to the church today. The church is like a fish market, teaching people they need to come there to get spirituality.

If they ever taught people how to be spiritual in the world, that is how to fish, the people would no longer come to the fish market. They would come to a fishing hole. That is what the church in the coming century must do; teach people to fish and, become a fishing hole. The best fishing holes will attract the best fishermen. And you can always tell the difference between the tourist and the fishermen. The tourist walks around the

hole and asks to see what was caught. The fishermen ask the best fishermen, "What bait did you use?"

### **WHAT IS NEEDED FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

There are three things needed for a community to grow spiritually. First of all, the community must want to grow. That does not mean everyone in the community wants to but there is a core group that includes some in leadership positions who want to grow spiritually. Not all churches want this. I have heard clergy announce in the middle of a service that they are going to have a church picnic. They add, "Bring your families, friends and neighbors and don't worry, we are not going to do anything religious." You can feel a kind of silent sigh of relief. This is not a church which will be growing spiritually.

Second, the senior pastor must be willing to grow spiritually. There is a rule of thumb that says the community cannot grow deeper spiritually than the rector. If the rector does not want to grow, the community will not. Individuals in the community may grow deeper but the community as a group will not grow deeper than the pastor.

The third thing that is necessary for a community to grow spiritually is to have spiritual intelligence. This seems so obvious, but it is the missing link. Without spiritual knowledge, no matter how sincere the community or its leader is, it will get sidetracked into legalism if it is not guided by certain spiritual principles.

The one main premise for all of spiritual life is you must discover what you are looking for inside not outside of yourself. All psychological problems, all dysfunctional behavior, Sin and separation from God are caused by looking outside rather than inside ourselves for what we already have. The definition of idolatry is depending on something other than God to give us what God has already given.

The main three spiritual principles of this premise is first of all you must know you have two faculties physical and spiritual. The physical sees what is seen. The spiritual sees what is unseen. You must be able to differentiate between the two. Rational analytic thinking is so powerful in our lives it tends to overshadow our own conscious sensing faculties. It is what is called in the Bible the "narrow way" or "door." It does not mean it is narrow, it means it is the harder faculty to use.

Secondly we must be willing to use the faculties once we distinguish between them. Knowing about them and using them are two different matters.

Thirdly we use our spiritual faculties to focus on the presence of the peace of God. This presence is within all of us. We will see, hear and act differently than when we are not experiencing the presence of God's peace. This comes down to the reason we go to church.

### **WHY GO TO CHURCH?**

The church seems at times to be teaching we need to attend in order to get into communion with God. We should not go to church to get into communion with God, we

should go to practice getting in communion with God. This means we should practice getting into communion with God. When we sing hymns, pray prayers, listen to scripture, sermons or take communion we can practice getting into communion with God. Therefore when we leave do the same in our marriage, families, businesses and in our person life.

We attend church for two reasons. To practice getting into communion and to be with people who want to grow spiritually as much as we. When you go to church to practice the presence, try this exercise. As you start to sing a hymn, wonder what difference it would make if you were singing while experiencing the presence of Jesus or not. When you pray, start off by wondering what difference it would make if you were experiencing the presence of Jesus or not while praying or while listening to the reading of Scripture, the preaching of the sermon Ask the same question. If you have communion, ask yourself what difference it makes when experiencing the presence of Jesus or not.

If you understand and practice this then each day during the week do the same. Ask yourself at times . "When things are difficult, what difference would it make if you were in the presence of Jesus or not?" Ask in your marriage, while dealing with your family, your business or in your personal life. Experiencing the presence of God is God`s greatest gift of grace to us.

Now check your answers and see if you have any change of heart.

#### SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE RESPONSES

1. All people are religious.

True. Religion is our response to what God has done. Atheists and agnostics are religious.

2. Religion is about Spirituality.

False. All Spirituality is religious, but not all Religion is Spiritual. At times it gets quite materialistic.

3. God is not religious.

True. Religion is a person's response to God, therefore God cannot be religious.

4. You will become religious if you read the Bible, pray and go to church.

False. Going to church will not make you religious anymore than going to a garage makes you an automobile.

5. If you follow the law you will be blessed.

False. There is no guarantee. You need to follow the law because you are blessed.

6.. According to Scripture, God only speaks to certain people.

False. According to Scripture, God is in communion with everyone, but everyone is not in communion with God.

7.. People should go to church to commune with God.

False. People should go to church to practice communion with God.