



Everyone wrestles with God. We may not doubt if He exists, but we often wonder if He is right. Jesus got questioned a lot. Using the gospel of Mark, we will glean truth from times when Jesus was second-guessed that will help us with our own questions.

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

1 The label “spiritual but not religious” has become popular in our culture. Why do you think that has been the case? What are the problems with that type of faith? Follow up: Rick said that *“True religion is not designed; it is received. And it is in submission to sacred scriptures, observance of sacraments, and participation in community that observers encounter that presence of God.”* How has that been true for you?

2 Rick mentioned that Jesus did those types of things regularly (scripture, sacraments, and community) because he was a very religious man. *But he was also quick to confront those who wanted to use a good thing in a bad way.* **Read Mark 2:23-28.** What stands out to you the most from Jesus’ encounter with the Pharisees?

3 QUESTION FOR HIM: “If you love God then why don’t you love His law?” The rabbis created “fences” around the law to protect the law. When Jesus responds to the second guessing of these religious leaders, what two key things is he challenging (see **Mark 2:25-26**)? Why do you think he responds like this? Follow up: What can you learn from Jesus’ example here?

4 QUESTION FOR THEM: “If you love God’s law then why don’t you love people?” The point is not that Jesus is against religion; it is that Jesus is against religion that misses the point. **Read Mark 2:27-28.** What stands out to you the most from how Jesus ended this conversation? When have you seen religion miss the point? Follow up: What is the Sabbath designed to do? How have you benefitted from observing the Sabbath?

5 Read Mark 3:1-5. What primary point do you think Jesus is making in this encounter? Follow up: **Read James 1:26-27.** What point is James making about religion and how does it apply to what we’ve learned from this lesson today?

6 QUESTION FOR US: “Does your religion stress you?” Religion is not supposed to be a grind; it is supposed to be a grace... So if your religion is making you anxious and exhausted may I gently but firmly urge you to make Jesus the center of it. When has religion been a stress to you? Follow up: **Read Matthew 11:28-30.** What encourages you the most from this invitation from Jesus?

7 QUESTION FOR US: “Does your religion bless others?” Our religion should make our speech kinder; it should make our compassion greater; it should make our wallets lighter. And it should definitely make our response quicker when a chance to meet a real need arises. Share some examples of how you’ve seen “good religion” do a lot of good. Follow up: What is one thing you can do this week to be a blessing to someone else in need?