

Why Should We Care about Religion?

- How does the Bible present God and His desires?
 - Personal figure, not power figure (Exodus 6:3)
 - Family, children, sibling images dominate.
 - Desires all to succeed (1 Timothy 2:4)
- How did God go about setting up for accomplishing His goal?
 - People are not defective. Sin is not innate. (Ecclesiastes 7:29)
 - Jesus was planned before the beginning (Colossians 1:13 – 20, 2 Timothy 1:8 – 10, Titus 1:2, 1 Peter 1:20 – 21), not as a result of disobedience.
 - Jesus paid off justice for all humans of all time (1 John 2:2, 1 Timothy 4:10). Justice could not be pushed aside because justice is part of God's character.
 - The earth was designed to be broken so people could develop hope in God's promise of something better. (Romans 8:19 – 25)
 - Entry into the eternal family is based on faith (Romans 1:17, *et al*) with these characteristics:
 - Evidence
 - Understanding sacrifice
 - Accepting the Bible as true
 - A realistic hope of heaven
 - Trust in the promises of God (knowing what they are)
 - Taking on the divine nature
 - Evangelism
 - Faith develops through several stages to love, selfless concern for others. (2 Peter 1:5 – 7, Galatians 5:6)
 - The Spirit is provided to overcome self-inflicted character damage.
- How did God plan to attract people into His plan? (called by):
 - The goodness of God (Romans 2:4)
 - Jesus' virtue and character (2 Peter 1:3)
 - Promises about the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)
 - Liberty (Galatians 5:13, 2 Corinthians 3:17)
 - Peace (Colossians 3:15)
- Short and simple summary
 - Because justice is an integral part of a gracious nature, God came to earth and paid off justice so family membership could be based on mutual trust and concern.
 - The gift of the Holy Spirit is for repairing the damage we have done to ourselves.
 - We know we are doing "enough" when the Spirit does something through us.