

# RELIGION

## RELIGION VS THE GOSPEL

- 1 I obey - therefore I'm accepted.
- 2 Motivation is based on fear and insecurity.
- 3 I obey God in order to get things from God.
- 4 When circumstances in my life go wrong, I am angry at God or myself, since I believe, like Job's friends that anyone who is good deserves a comfortable life.
- 5 When I am criticized I am furious or devastated because it is critical that I think of myself as a 'good person.' Threats to that self-image must be destroyed at all costs.
- 6 My prayer life consists largely of petition and it only heats up when I am in a time of need. My main purpose in prayer is control of the environment.
- 7 My self-view swings between two poles. If and when I am living up to my standards, I feel confident, but then I am prone to be proud and unsympathetic to failing people. If and when I am not living up to standards, I feel insecure and inadequate. I'm not confident. I feel like a failure.
- 8 My identity and self-worth are based mainly on how hard I work. Or how moral I am, and so I must look down on those I perceive as lazy or immoral. I disdain and feel superior to 'the other.'
- 9 Since I look to my own pedigree or performance for my spiritual acceptability, my heart manufactures idols. It may be my talents, my moral record, my personal discipline, my social status, etc. I absolutely have to have them so they serve as my main hope meaning, happiness, security, and significance, whatever I may say I believe about God.

# THE GOSPEL

## RELIGION VS THE GOSPEL

- 1 I'm accepted - therefore I obey.
- 2 Motivation is based on grateful joy.
- 3 I obey God to get to God - to delight and resemble Him.
- 4 When circumstances in my life go wrong, I struggle but I know all my punishment fell on Jesus and that while He may allow this for my training, He will exercise His Fatherly love within my trial.
- 5 When I am criticized I struggle, but it is not critical for me to think of myself as a 'good person.' My identity is not built on my record or my performance but on God's love for me in Christ. I can take criticism.
- 6 My prayer life consists of generous stretches of praise and adoration. My main purpose is fellowship with Him.
- 7 My self-view is not based on a view of myself as a moral achiever. In Christ I am "simul iustus et peccator" - simultaneously sinful and yet accepted in Christ. I am so bad, He had to die for me. This leads me to deeper and deeper humility and confidence at the same time. Neither swaggering nor sniveling.
- 8 My identity and self-worth are centered on the one who died for His enemies, who was excluded from the city for me. I am saved by sheer grace. So I can't look down on those who believe or practice something different from me. Only by grace I am what I am. I've no inner need to win arguments.
- 9 I have many good things in my life - family, work, spiritual disciplines, etc. But none of these good things are ultimate things to me. None of them are things I absolutely have to have, so there is a limit to how much anxiety, bitterness, and despondency they can inflict on me when they are threatened and lost.