

WHY IN THE WORLD

PART 4: Putting Religion in Its Place

INTRODUCTION

We want answers for life's mysteries. Is there an afterlife? Will I see my mom again? What does the Bible say about divorce? Does the Bible say we have to give ten percent of our money to the church? Religion tries to answer those questions. Religion is about answers, order, predictability. Unfortunately, life isn't about any of those things. Life can be messy. Religion has a place in our lives, but Jesus taught us it shouldn't be in the first place. When religion takes first place, it begins flexing its muscles at the expense of mercy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you tend to follow rules to the letter, bend them when it suits you, or outright break them? In what ways do you think that tendency has influenced the way you view God?
2. What are some reasons people find rules comfortable and comforting?
3. Read Isaiah 1:13 and 17. How do these verses challenge most people's views of God? What do they tell us about what he values?
4. During the message, Andy said, *"Jesus consistently prioritized people over his own religion, customs, and traditions."* Respond to that statement. In what ways does it challenge your assumptions about Jesus?
5. Is it difficult for you to believe that God values you above his own rules? Why or why not?
6. What is one thing you can do this week to prioritize loving God and loving other people over your religion, customs, and traditions? What can this group do to support you?

MOVING FORWARD

Jesus didn't die for precepts and principles. Jesus died for people. Jesus didn't die for the law. Jesus died for the lawless. Jesus didn't die for a set of rules. Jesus died for rule breakers. Jesus didn't die for a *view*. Jesus died for a *you*.

You can know with certainty that you are more important than God's view of religion because God's view of you was defined by his Son's view from a blood-stained Roman cross.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:37-40