

# the Christian atheist

## The Christian Atheist

**You say you believe in God. Do you really? Do you live your life as if God is in the room, or do you assume He's not paying attention? You call yourself a Christian. Are you who you say you are?**

**In this multiple week series, we will challenge each other to confront hypocrisy, challenge ourselves, and live a life that brings glory to Christ.**

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### The Christian Atheist – Week 9

#### Believing in God but Pursuing Happiness at Any Cost

- Many Christians unknowingly place personal happiness above holiness, obedience, and God's will.
- This is a form of practical atheism—believing in God while living as if our happiness is the highest authority.

#### Matthew 16:24–25

- Jesus calls us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him.
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#### The Lie of Modern Culture

- Follow your heart
- Do what makes you happy
- You deserve happiness
- If it feels right, it must be right
- These ideas oppose the teachings of Jesus.
- The Christian life is centered on God's glory, not personal happiness.

- When we pursue Christ, we discover lasting joy—not fleeting happiness.
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## Four Truths About the Danger of Pursuing Happiness

### Happiness Is a Poor God (Slide)

- When happiness becomes our #1 pursuit, it becomes an idol.

#### Exodus 20:3 | Matthew 6:33

- Our culture elevates happiness above commitment and obedience:
  - Marriages abandoned
  - Commitments broken
  - Churches left
  - Disobedience justified
- The problem is not happiness—it's making it ultimate.
- Anything above God becomes an idol.

#### Exodus 32 – The Golden Calf

- Israel believed in God yet sought satisfaction elsewhere.
- Today's idols may include:
  - Comfort
  - Success
  - Relationships
  - Entertainment
  - Personal fulfillment
- Key Question:
  - What will honor God most—not what makes me happiest?

#### God's Promise: His Presence (Exodus 33:14; Joshua 1:9; Matthew 28:20)

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### Holiness Produces Deeper Joy Than Happiness (Slide)

#### 1 Peter 1:15–16 | Psalm 16:11

- Happiness vs. Joy:
  - Happiness depends on circumstances
  - Joy depends on God

- Jesus commanded holiness—not happiness.
- Truth:
  - Because God loves us, He wants us holy
- God shapes us through discomfort.

### **Romans 8:28–29**

- The goal is Christlikeness—not comfort or ease.
  - Ask:
    - Will this make me more like Jesus?
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## **Following Jesus Requires Sacrifice (Slide)**

### **Luke 9:23**

- Many want:
  - Salvation without surrender
  - Blessing without sacrifice
  - Victory without obedience
- Jesus says: Take up your cross
- Following Christ means dying to:
  - Selfish ambition
  - Personal preference
  - Sinful desire
  - Self-centered living

### **Philippians 1:21**

- Christ is worth more than comfort, convenience, or happiness.
  - The world says: Avoid cost
  - Jesus says: Follow Me—even if it costs everything
  - Question:
    - Where is God calling you to obey despite difficulty?
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## **Real Joy Is Found in Surrender to God's Will (Slide)**

**John 15:9–11 | Psalm 37:4**

- The world says:
  - Find yourself
  - Live your truth
  - Do what makes you happy
- Jesus says:
  - Deny yourself
  - I am the truth
  - Follow Me
- Paradox:
  - The more we surrender, the more joy we find

### Hebrews 12:2

- Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before Him
  - God's will may not feel easy—but it leads to something greater
  - Stop pursuing happiness
  - Start pursuing Jesus
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### Closing Challenge

- Many claim to worship God but actually serve happiness
  - The real question is not:
    - Am I happy?
  - But:
    - Am I faithful?
  - Happiness, comfort, and circumstances are temporary
  - Joy in Christ is eternal
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### Application

- Replace: "What will make me happy?"
  - With: "What will glorify God?"
  - When God is your greatest pursuit, true joy follows
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## Prayer

- Forgive us for pursuing happiness above You
- Help us seek Your kingdom first
- Strengthen us to follow Christ even when it's difficult
- Teach us to surrender our desires to Your will
- Remind us that Your plans are always better