



Lie #11: “I Don’t Need the Bible or Worship to Have a Relationship with God”

Opening Prayer

Introduction

You often hear people talk about having a personal relationship with Jesus through faith in him. However, although individuals have personal faith, the Bible also speaks of our life with Jesus as communal. Christianity is not only about MY ongoing relationship with Christ, but the Church’s relationship with Christ. Through baptism we are made part of the collective spiritual body of Christ and his bride, the Church. So when we address having a relationship with God, it also necessarily includes a relationship with his people. This is not an either/or but a both/and!

1.) Let’s brainstorm some of the “one another” passages that assume we are living out our faith in action with our fellow-Christians.

2.) Imagine you live in a world exactly like our own but with one exception: the Bible doesn’t exist. Armed only with the natural knowledge of God, discuss what you could know about the following questions in such a world.

- How does God view me?
- What do I know about God?
- How do I get closer to God?
- Who is Jesus?
- What does God want me to do with my life?
- How do I get to heaven?

We Need God's Word

1. The natural knowledge of God is not enough to give a person a relationship with God. As you read the following passages, identify what we learn from the natural knowledge of God.

Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Matthew 5:45 "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

Romans 2:14-15 Indeed when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.

Acts 17:27,30-31 "God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ...³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

2. Agree/Disagree: All people know that God exists.
3. How do the following verses attest to the truth that in order to have a relationship with God, a person needs the Bible!

Galatians 3:26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.

Romans 10:17 Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Matthew 4:4 "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

1 Peter 2:2-3 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

John 15:5 "If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

4. Imagine if your spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend only talked to you once a week, or month, or year. What would that do to you emotionally? How does that relate to the topic of reading the Bible?
5. What of those who claim that God personally speaks to them through visions, dreams, spiritual whispering, etc. apart from (or addition to) Scripture?

2 Peter 1:21 Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

Jeremiah 23:25-32 ²⁵ “I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, ‘I had a dream! I had a dream!’ ²⁶ How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds? ²⁷ They think the dreams they tell one another will make my people forget my name, just as their fathers forgot my name through Baal worship. ²⁸ Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?” declares the LORD. ²⁹ “Is not my word like fire,” declares the LORD, “and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces? ³⁰ “Therefore,” declares the LORD, “I am against the prophets who steal from one another words supposedly from me. ³¹ Yes,” declares the LORD, “I am against the prophets who wag their own tongues and yet declare, ‘The LORD declares.’” ³² Indeed, I am against those who prophesy false dreams,” declares the LORD. “They tell them and lead my people astray with their reckless lies, yet I did not send or appoint them. They do not benefit these people in the least,” declares the LORD.

Isaiah 8:19-20 “When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.”

Hebrews 1:1-2 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.

Colossians 2:18-19 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. ¹⁹ He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Psalms 1:1-3 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

a.) What does *meditate* mean?

b.) In metaphorical terms, this Scripture describes the benefits of daily reading the Bible. Explain the metaphors. What is meant by “yields its fruit in season” and “whose leaf does not wither”?

God's People Gather Together Around His Word

We need the Bible, but we also need to worship with our fellow believers. Jesus, the God-Man, the Living Word of God, made it his custom to worship in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). Jesus said, "Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20). "The LORD said . . . 'Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you' " (Exodus 20:22,24).

1. What happens when we worship together with our fellow Christians?

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

1 Corinthians 14:26 What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.

Hebrews 10:24-25 Let us . . . not [give] up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

2. List some ways we encourage one another in worship.

3. What does the writer of Hebrews teach us about the importance of reading the Bible or worshipping together?

Hebrews 3:12-14 See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.

4. List some examples from Scripture demonstrate that God has not designed humans to face life as rugged individuals but with the encouragement and assistance of others.

Group Discussion

- Respond to this statement: "I know I haven't been to church, but God and me—we're good—I pray every night."
- List what you feel are the keys for a healthy relationship. How does believing this lie line up with fulfilling those keys?