



JESUS vs. RELIGION

SUNDAY, MAY 14, 2017

KEY SCRIPTURE | Mark 2:1–28

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Becky listened to Hillsong while she got ready for church this morning. As she made the 10-minute drive, she cursed at a driver who was following too closely, then wondered if he had noticed the fish on her car. Walking through the doors, Becky got annoyed when the greeter was too busy talking to someone else to shake her hand—“Good thing I’m not a visitor,” she thought. When she saw a friend and made a bee-line across the lobby, she ran right into a young mom who was trying to find the nursery hallway and paused long enough to say “Sorry.”

During worship, Becky raised her right hand, hoping the lady behind her noticed how nice her nails looked after yesterday’s trip to the salon. While she sang, she looked around and saw the guy next to her was looking at his phone. “How disrespectful,” she thought, before she raised her other hand, too.

Like the Pharisees in Mark 2, Becky was going through the motions and doing all the right “Christian” things, but what was going on in her heart didn’t match up. The Pharisees criticized Jesus for not following the rules, but they were so focused on themselves that they missed what God was doing in their midst. Becky did too.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Looking back at your notes from Sunday’s message, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Do you know anyone who isn’t interested in Jesus because they don’t like religion? Why do you think they feel that way?
3. Read 1 Kings 18:20–40. Elijah and the followers of Baal did all of the same things, but only one altar caught fire. What made the difference?
4. Last week we learned that true faith isn’t just knowing, but doing. This week we’re talking about how our relationship with Jesus isn’t about what we do. It seems like a contradiction, but it’s not. Talk about the tension between the two ideas.
5. On Sunday, Pastor Neal contrasted religion and relationship in four ways: Self vs. God, Inside vs. Outside, What vs. Why, and Rule vs. Law. Which one do you struggle with the most? What can you do to change that?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

There isn’t one.

