

Toxic

Toxic Religion (Wk.5)

LifeGroup Notes

TALK IT OVER

Main Idea

Toxic religion builds a wall no one can climb. Jesus is the bridge all of us can cross.

Key Scriptures

They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden.

Matthew 23:4

Everything they do is for show. And they love to sit at the head table at banquets and in the seats of honor in the synagogues.

Matthew 23:5-6

For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith.

Matthew 23:23

For you are careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence! Matthew 23:25

Religion is Man's idea to try and get to God.

Toxic religion is about:

- Rules –
Do what we say or else.
(Matt. 23:4)
- Power –
The many serve to prop up the few. (Matt. 23:5-6)
- Judgment –
Seeking opportunities to crush people's spirits.
(Matt. 23:23)
- Hypocrisy –
Do as I say, not as I do.
(Matt. 23:25)

Start talking.

- How have you seen religion used as a weapon?
- Of the four aspects of toxic religion, which is the most destructive? Explain.

Jesus offers a different way.

- Toxic religion says, "Keep Doing!" Jesus says, "It is finished."
(John 19:30)
- Toxic religion says, "Serve me!" Jesus says, "I lay down my life."
(John 10:18)
- Toxic religion says, "We accuse you!" Jesus says, "I don't condemn you." (John 8:11)
- Toxic religion says, "Fake it!" Jesus did what needed to be done. (Isaiah 53)

Christianity is God's idea how to bridge the gap to us.

Start sharing.

- Read Isaiah 53 in the New Living Translation. What emotions does that stir in you?
- Self-righteousness and judgment pops up like weeds in all of us. What areas of judgment do you need to guard in your own heart?
- Read Romans 6:23. The Gospel can be simply articulated. How does the Church sometimes complicate it?

Start doing.

- How will you apply the simplicity of loving Jesus and loving others this week?
- Who do you know that needs to hear the message of Jesus? Will you commit to pray for God to give you an opportunity to share?

Close in prayer.

The angel said, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here. He has risen." These words have changed the course of history. Have they changed the course of your history and future? This message of God's great love should change everything and drive us to share. Pray that Jesus would open doors for all of you to pour out the message of God's love and redemption to others.