

## Secondhand Religion

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I wonder how many people rely on the “faith of their fathers” to hopefully get them to Heaven, without ever really seeking the Truth on their own? So many are reared under so many different beliefs. These opposing religions cannot all be right, yet how many truly objectively question what they have been taught their whole lives and honestly seek the Truth? (Proverbs 8:17; Acts 17:27; Hebrews 11:6). The sad fact is that most Dads and Moms in the world are wrong when it comes to matters of faith (Matthew 7:13-14). When it comes down to it, who would want to risk his eternal destiny by simply relying on “what Dad said”? (Matthew 16:26). What if Dad was wrong? Is it possible to be sincere, but wrong at the same time? *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death”* (Proverbs 14:12). If you are about to breathe your last breath, will it be any comfort to say to yourself, “I hope Dad was right”?

We cannot go to Heaven on someone else’s beliefs. We must study and arrive at our own convictions. We must arrive at a firsthand faith, which we truly believe and are willing by which to live (John 6:45; Matt. 10:38, 39). That *“pure and undefiled religion”* will only come from God’s Word entering a sincere heart (Romans 10:17; Luke 8:15; James 1:27). In the book of Acts we read of Paul and Silas making their way to Berea, where the people *“were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so”* (Acts 17:11). These people should be an example to us. Like the Bereans, we should also be willing to investigate what we have been taught to make sure it is correct. Paul instructed the Thessalonians to *“prove all things; hold fast that which is good”* (1 Thess. 5:21). If what we believe is the Truth, it will still be standing after all the questions and criticisms have been brought forth.

Finally, we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). How can we truly love God in that way if our only reason to do so is because “Mama said we should”? When we really dig into God’s Word, we learn that He first loved us, and the amazing magnitude of that love. *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins...We love him, because he first loved us”* (1 John 4:10, 19; cf. John 3:16; Romans 5:8-10; Ephesians 3:14-21). We must have a firsthand religion, and if we seek answers in God’s Word with an honest heart, we *“shall know the truth, and the truth shall make [us] free”* (John 8:32).

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