

DO or DONE religion?

In the little booklet entitled *Done*, Cary Schmidt makes the shocking statement that there are **only two religions in the world**. After grabbing everyone's attention with that unconventional statement, the author goes on to say that the two religions he is referring to are actually two systems of religions. There are DO religions and there is a DONE religion.

DO Religions

DO religions teach that you must DO something to gain the approval of God, earn entrance into heaven, and to receive His blessings. Various religions or denominations have different lists of "DOs" and/or "DON'Ts." For some, the tasks are **religious**: join the church, get baptized, get confirmed, give money to the church, keep the sacraments. For others, the tasks are more **moral**: be good, be nice, make sure your good outweighs your bad. In some cases, the list may be extreme or even **bizarre**: shave your head, take literature door-to-door, sell flowers at the airport, mutilate yourself, sacrifice animals. But the bottom line of all DO religions is the same - make sure that you've performed everything on the list or you will not have earned God's favor.



DONE Religion

The religion of the Bible says that there is nothing we can do to earn God's favor. Done religions know that "all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags." (Isaiah 64:6) Because we are sinners, we are separated from God and undeserving of blessing. God says in this verse in Isaiah that even our best efforts are not enough to make up for our sins. There is **nothing** we can DO to earn His favor. That's the bad news.

But there is good news! The Bible says that **everything necessary to pay for your sin and restore you to God has already been DONE by Jesus perfect life and His perfect death on the cross!** (Read that again.) When Jesus was about to die on the cross, He said, **"It is finished."** (John 19:30) That phrase is literally an accounting term

meaning our debt is **"paid in full."** You deserved to die and go to hell because of your sin, but, as your substitute, Jesus paid the penalty for your sin by dying for you. It's like you were standing in the courtroom as a condemned criminal, waiting for the judge to pass sentence upon you, and Jesus stepped up and said, "I'll pay his fine." If you accept His payment in your place, the judge is satisfied and will let you go free.

Remember what happened in the temple (the building symbolic of God's presence) when Jesus died. There was a large and thick curtain that separated the most sacred part of the temple (where God resided) from the part where people were allowed to go. This curtain served to constantly remind people that they were separated from the Holy, Holy, Holy God because of their guilt.

The moment that Jesus died on the cross, the temple curtain was miraculously torn in two - from top to bottom, throwing open the sacred place for all to enter. Do you see the amazing message? Suddenly, because of Jesus' life and death, whatever separated man from God was now completely removed, and God was inviting all humankind to come directly to him. At that moment, God symbolically said "DONE!" A DONE religion says **"there is nothing more to DO; it has all been done for you."** The price has been paid. The debt has been forgiven. Atonement is complete. God declares you forgiven and righteous, blameless and holy. If you try to earn it, work for it, or DO something to get it, you're wasting your time and you are insulting God by trying to pay for the gift that He has already paid for. It's already DONE! Or, in the words of Jesus on the cross, **"It is finished!"**

You may be thinking, *“That’s just your interpretation. Many people have read the Bible and come up with things that we must DO to be saved.”* Fair enough. Here are some passages of the Bible that will help you decide if the religion of the Bible is a DO religion or just another DONE religion.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us...” Titus 3:5

“know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified. Galatians 2:16

“I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through (obeying) the law, Christ died for nothing!” Galatians 2:21

“all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.’ 11 Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.” Galatians 3:10-11

You, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith... Colossians 1:21-23

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. 1 Timothy 1:15

Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God. 1 Peter 3:18

What do you think? Is the Bible teaching a DO or DONE RELIGION?

“When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day’s pay for his time, that is a wage. When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his performance, that is a prize. When a person receives appropriate recognition for his long service or high achievements, that is an award. But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award—yet receives such a gift anyway—that is a good picture of God’s unmerited favor. This is what we mean when we talk about the grace of God.” ~ G.W. Knight

I started this article with the shocking quote, “There are only two religions in the world.” There are “do” religions that say you must do something to gain God’s approval and earn entrance into heaven and the “done” religion that teaches that Jesus Christ has already “done” everything that is necessary for your salvation.

Anticipating the objection that this is just “my interpretation of the Bible,” I quoted verses from the Bible to let you decide for yourself if the Bible is teaching a “do” or the “done” religion. Here’s a continuation of those verses:

“Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” 29 Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” John 6:28–29

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Romans 3:28

“Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. 5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.” Romans 4:4-5

“But as many as received him (Jesus), to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name.” John 1:12

“Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...” Acts 16:31-32

Let me ask you question. **Do you remember the thief hanging on the cross next to Jesus in Luke 23:39-45?** He had lived such a wicked life that he admitted he deserved the death penalty. He hadn't lived up to the list of any “do” religion by any stretch of the imagination. And now he was in big trouble. Even if he wanted to “turn over a new leaf” and start doing the “dos” of a “do” religion he couldn't. He was hanging on a cross – moments away from death and judgement! But because he transferred his trust to Jesus Christ and accepted Him as Lord and Savior of his life, Jesus said to him, *“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”* The thief on the cross received eternal life by faith alone in the work accomplished by Jesus alone!

Here is a very dangerous equation that many people believe.

My faith + my works ⇔ Blessing of God

To those who think that it's faith in Christ PLUS something you have to do after you exercise that faith, such as being baptized, the thief on the cross, Jesus' statement, **“It is finished,”** and the above-cited verses all clearly refute your claim.

Here is the amazing refreshing TRUTH...

Jesus did it all. He saved you. He rescued you. He reconciled you to the Father. He secured your adoption. He raised his people from spiritual deadness. **He did it all.** (Carefully read Ephesians 1:1-14 and notice who does the work and gets the credit.) As the second Adam, Jesus' work (his perfect life and his perfect death) was given as a substitute for his people. He is our pinch-runner. He did all the work on our behalf. With empty hands, we receive all the benefits as a gift through receptive faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Jesus' obedience and death ⇔ Blessing of God

All we do is acknowledge the historical facts and say “Thank You!”

You see, that's what it's really all about. As long as you think you have to do something to please God and earn heaven, you are trusting in yourself. Even if you give a nod to Jesus and say, “Of course, I believe in Jesus. I believe that Jesus died for my sin, but I'm also trusting in my baptism (or fill in the blank from your “to do” list) to save me,” you are still trusting in yourself. But as Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us, salvation is not of ourselves. It is by the totally undeserved favor (grace) of God that is offered as a gift to us that is free for the taking. If it has any strings attached to it - if we have to do anything to earn it - then it's not a gift!

The way to accept this free gift and receive Christ as your personal Savior is to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 16:31) To believe on someone is different than believing in them. I believe in George Washington. I believe he existed as a person and I know some facts about his life. But I'm not counting on him to do anything for me. I have knowledge about him and I believe that knowledge to be true, but I am not trusting George Washington for anything. The Bible says that even the demons believe in God this way, so we know that's not enough to get you to heaven. (James 2:19)

Believing on Jesus Christ is more than that. To believe on Jesus is to have knowledge about Him, to believe that knowledge to be true, and then to trust Him for your eternal life. In other words, you must know that Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to die in order to pay the penalty for your sin, you must believe that there is nothing you can do to pay for your own sin and that Jesus has already done all that needs to be done by dying on the cross, and then place your trust in Him and what He has done rather than anything you do.

True Biblical Christianity is not about what you do, but rather clinging to what Jesus has done for you. If you've never understood this before, but understand it now, why don't you transfer your trust to Christ alone today? It's the Bible way of salvation. (Romans 10: 9-13)

“Despite our sin, you and I have been welcomed into an eternal relationship with the Lord almighty because Jesus fully met all the requirements of God that we failed to meet. We no longer have to fear God’s wrath. We no longer have to measure up in order to achieve his acceptance. We no longer have to hide in guilt or shame. We are God’s forever and ever. He will never turn his back on us. He will never angrily throw our sins in our faces. He will never withdraw His presence and his promises, no matter how messed up we continue to be, because our standing with him is not based on our performance, but on the perfect record of his Son.”
~ Paul David Tripp, New Mercies

NEXT STEPS

- ▶ Slowly reread this article and make a few notes.
 - Which ideas do you like?
 - Which ideas do you find confusing or disagreeable?
 - What questions do you have?
- ▶ Share this article with a friend and discuss it.
- ▶ Look up the verses included in this article and read the context. Make sure that the explanation in this article does not take the verses out-of-context.
- ▶ Paraphrase the meaning of this article in your own words. What do you think this article says about Christianity?
- ▶ What do you think God is saying to you personally? What do you think he wants you to do now?

“To accept Christ is to receive Him by faith as your Lord and Savior. But, strictly speaking, the great thing to see is that God has accepted Christ. He took our sins upon Himself, died to make propitiation (the sacrifice which removed the anger of God) for them. But God raised Him from the dead and taken Him up to glory. God has accepted Christ in token of His perfect satisfaction in His work. Believing this, the soul enters into peace. I simply rest in God’s thoughts about His son.” ~ H. A. Ironside, Full Assurance.