

**RELIGION?**

System of ideas/writings/holy person...  
God connection

Ritual, ceremony, pilgrimage,  
prayer, etc. Attached to  
worship/spiritual rewards

Personal beliefs regarding  
God, morals, after life, etc.

They can testify that I lived as a Pharisee, according to the strictest sect of our religion (*Acts 26:5*).

Religion must ultimately be  
“**acceptable to God**” (1:27).  
Otherwise, though enjoyable  
or comforting or impressive, it  
is “**worthless**” (1:26).

**WHAT MAKES RELIGION  
ACCEPTABLE TO GOD?**

The CHRISTIAN religion is quite meaningless apart from FAITH, since only FAITH can initiate an actual relationship with GOD!



It is quite popular to bash religion as if it is opposed or contradictory to “relationship.” Not so. The reality of FAITH sparks relationship and infuses religion.

FAITH cannot be simply an intellectual assent or acknowledgement of God's existence. It only starts there.

Acknowledging God, I reject  
**self-centered, horizontal**  
living. THIS IS FAITH!

Acknowledging God, I turn TOWARD  
him with the goal of pleasing, loving,  
and trusting God. THIS IS FAITH!

A flurry of “religion” without this ingredient (faith) is meaningless.

WHAT MAKES RELIGION  
ACCEPTABLE TO GOD?

- a) Faith
- b) Motive

True motives are **honorable**  
and **genuine** to God. Motives  
may be faked or disguised  
to man, but never to God.

(vs. 26) The motive of honoring God is shown in **self control** (specifically “speech”)



(vs. 27) The motive to honor  
God is shown in mercy  
(specifically toward those  
who could not repay you)

(vs. 27) The motive to honor God is shown in **dedication** i.e. guarding against the pull of the world that would separate me from God)

“World” – system of manmade philosophy/politic/culture that will not admit God to the table. Looks “forward,” but never “upward.”  
Actually under the sway of Satan.

FINE LINE. We must be involved, compassionate, and passionate toward social problems (caused by sinful practices). But we must not allow the culture that produced these problems to have any impact on our life/thinking.