**Christianity begins where religion ends (Hello God)**

What would you say if I told you that statics show that most kids who grow up in Christian homes, regularly attending church and youth groups, will end up being a Christian drop out?

These kids come on Sunday mornings, week after week, to a building covered in images of Jesus, sing songs to Jesus, listening to sermons about Jesus and reading stories about Jesus (Some only come because their parents make them) but Once they leave their parents’ house and are making their own decisions about where they are going to spend their Sunday mornings and if they are going to continue reading their Bible, at that point their faith will slowly fade away as something they used to do when they were a kid.

Most kids, approaching adulthood, that drop out of church say **they have never heard Jesus speak to them or had a personal relationship with him in anyway**.

How is that possible? It makes no sense if you stop and think about it. The church tells them that God answers prayers,

[Mark 11:24](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3A24&version=ESV) Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

They tell you trust in him and He will guide your path,

Proverbs 3:5-6  Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.  In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will guide your paths.

They say if you need wisdom, God will give you answers

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

But how can any of that happen if you have never heard him or seen him? What happens if you become an adult but have never met God?

Maybe Christ has spoken to you in the past but you don’t hear his voice anymore. The bible tells us sometimes God will leave us to test what is in our heart (2 Chronicles 32:30) and sometimes our sins separate us from God ([Isaiah 59:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+59%3A2&version=ESV)). During these times, it is easy to rationalize that God was never there in the first place, it was just your imagination or lucky circumstances.

Albert Einstein‘s definition of insanity is doing the same thing, over and over again, and expecting different results. If that‘s true then you would have to be insane to keep coming to Church, Sunday after Sunday, week after week, to talk to a God who doesn‘t talk back or maybe doesn’t even exist.

Why would you keep coming If He‘s not moving or speaking to you? And if he is not speaking to you then the church is lying, the Bible is false, Pastors are frauds and Jesus is dead. In which case, there is no hope or purpose in life.

But that isn’t the case: “If you haven’t noticed we are talking about a resurrected Jesus– as in not dead – as in alive? Jesus is alive!

Jesus is not an image on a stained glass window, or the hero of a religious fairy tale. He‘s the living, acting, speaking God of the Universe. “

We know this to be true because that message was backed up by an active display of the Holy Spirit‘s power. We saw a change in the lives of the disciples of the 1st century and in the millions of people saved ever since then.

With that said it wasn‘t the empty tomb that convinced Mary Magdalene that Jesus was alive. In spite of all she saw and heard throughout the years of ministry with Jesus, when she first arrived at the garden and saw that the stone was rolled away, she didn‘t celebrate that Christ had risen - she cried for fear that his body had been stolen. It was only after running into Jesus on the way out of the garden, when she heard him say her name, "Mary" (John 20:16), that she believed. It was her **encounter with the living God that convinced her.**

For millions of young adults the church has become - an empty tomb with no encounter. So, they walk away disappointed, disillusioned, and disinterested.

Romans 10:17 - So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Many of you believe because you parents told you that you that you are a Christian but…

* **You can pass down religion but you can’t pass down relationship**

It is like the story of the Samaritan woman, whose life changes after encountering Jesus at the well. So, she runs off to tell her village but they are not convinced until they meet Jesus themselves.

John 4:41-42 And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

It is only through a person relationship with Christ that you can have a lasting relationship with the heavenly father

**Questions to ask**

* What are you looking for in the God you follow?
* What does this Generation want out of the church? Your youth Group?
  + Is it entertainment, is it happiness, is it relevance, is it eternal life. Or do you just want to hear God speak to you personally.
* How do you know when God is speaking to you? (There is no great booming voice)
* Do you want to know God?
* Do you want to hear God’s voice?
* Do you really want a relationship with Him?
* Is the hard part connecting with a God you haven’t seen or loving a God you have not met?

I guess it would be like going on a blind date. You may be willing to connect with someone you haven’t met but you definitely aren’t going to love or trust them until you have seen them, talk to them, get to know them. There needs to be a relationship.

**Every believer, before they can truly believe, has to encounter God. All authentic relationships begin with an introduction.**

As we read through the bible we see believers having a supernatural, personal encounter with the maker of Heaven and Earth. In that moment, God was internally promoted from concept to Creator, from myth to Majesty, and from tradition to Truth.

God chooses to reveal himself in different ways to people.

* Abraham sat & walked with God
* Jacob wrestled with God
* Moses saw God in the Burning bush
* Mary saw an angel
* Paul saw a great light and was blinded
* Elijah: God choose to introduce, not in an earthquake, hurricane or fire but in a whisper ( kings 19:11-13)

Why can’t God do that for me?

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**So What’s the answer**

* We need to create an environment where the supernatural is welcome
  + Knowing the greatest love story ever told:The Gospel.
  + realize that you are part of a far bigger picture than this world has to offer.
  + Know that following Christ requires complete surrender ([Luke 9:23](http://biblehub.com/luke/9-23.htm))
  + Realize that you are part of God’s family and have a mission
* “God is love” (1 John 4:8) has to be more than just information, it has to be revelation.
  + What’s the difference? Information is something you learn; Revelation is something you realize, it becomes Real.
* As a Kid you hear “Jesus loves me” over and over but what we need is for a supernatural event to happen where you realize that Jesus actually does loves ME - This is the greatest revelation a person can have.
* This revelation can only come by the Holy Spirit
  + 1 Cor 12:3 … no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

**You don’t need to search the gospel to find value. The Gospel story searches us and shows us our value.**

We can’t assume that because someone has heard the story of Jesus over and over that they know Christ or even know the Gospel.

Do you know the Whole story:

Creation 🡪 the Fall 🡪 redemption 🡪 restoration? Can you teach it to someone else?

Christians will hear the following statements over and over: Jesus Loves you, Jesus died for you, Jesus is the only way to heaven. You may agree with all of these but this generation does not deal well with statements like these. They don’t process truth through absolutes.

As a teacher, I need to allow you, the younger generation, to interpret the story- to identify with the Characters, examine the issues and find the solutions. In that process revelation will be born – The Gospel message has to be more than “Jesus died for you”.

**It all starts with teaching the Gospel** (*Lets take a look)*

**Creation**

The Gospel starts in Genesis and the first question to answer is why did God create us? (Why do Parents have kids?) God loves us just like Parents love their Kids, because we are created in their image. (Even if you were adopted your views, thoughts, interest are shaped by your parents).

If your Kids run away, you go after them and that is the story of the bible we ran away from God and He came after us.

**The Fall**

Why did God put the tree of knowledge in the middle of the garden?

The proof that we love God comes when we keep his commandments (1 John 5:3) Like obeying our parents.

What does it say to your parents when you disobey them? (I know better than you about what is right? I don’t care what you think, ???) Isn’t this what we are saying to GOD?

But sin put a gap between God and Man. So, what does God do? He creates a Band-Aid. When Adam and eve realized they were naked God killed two animals and clothed them with the animal skin. This was the first sacrifice where sin caused the shedding of blood. Life for a Life. But sacrifices could only cover Sin, like air freshener covers stink, but it doesn’t remove it. (Hebrew 10:4)

God doesn’t just want to live with us. He wants to live in us so the final plan was to remove the sin, not just hide it.

**Redemption**

Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, the sacrifice to remove sin “once and for all” (Heb 10:10)

Three reasons why:

1. The sacrifice had to be a Man (Adam fell - Jesus redeems)
2. The sacrifice had to be perfect
3. The sacrifice had to choose (we choose to Sin - Jesus chose to die in our place) (john 10:18) (Animals didn’t choose to die)

**Restoration**

Young Christians wonder why they still struggle with Sin when they are supposed to be “saved”

The bible tells us: as the spirit of the lord works within us we become more like Christ and reflect his glory. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Once you except Christ and make him the Lord of your life then the Spirit will start a good work in you. (Philippians 1:6)

We are all in the process of Restoration. It is this restoration that gives us hope that God is not done with me (No matter what I have done in the past)

Not only is God working in you but he will also work through you to change others. This is our mission on earth

**Telling the story**

The Holy Spirit is the greatest story teller of all. Sometimes we need to get out of the way and let the holy spirit speak through us.

1 Corinthians 2:13 - This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.

For Example: Peter, a fisherman that stumbled over himself throughout the Gospel but then delivers a sermon on Pentecost that turned the hearts of over 3000 people. Did Peter change???

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:3-5 - I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might **not** rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.

Some may say the Bible was written by Men but it was no more written by a man than a book is written by a pen. The men were merely tools used by the holy spirit to tell God’s story.

The key to hearing God speak is understanding how he speaks, which is through the Holy Spirit. Sometimes our services, prayer times, and worship is so structure that we leave no room for God to step in. The Gospel story is powerful when we invite the Holy Spirit to tell it. When we invite the Holy Spirit, lives are changed. So how do we get the Holy Spirit to show up? We don’t. We invite him to show up!

Jeremiah 29:13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Most people do not actively seek God. They need to be led and inspired to seek. They need to see an example in those that are actively following him. That is why I need to teach and convince you of the importance of prayer and seeking God’s presence.

When we encounter the holy Spirit, we meet God, and an Authentic relationship can begin. Every sermon, bible study, discussion, … Should start with an invite to the holy Spirit.

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**Finding your Purpose**

Everyone is in search of a purpose. That is why everyone needs to find God because when they find God, they find purpose. Mark Twain said:

” The two most important days in your life are they day you are born and they day you find out why?”

Finding our purpose becomes our why. For some people that means asking the question “How can I love God and People through my gifts & abilities?” Our mission/purpose has to start with loving God and loving others

As Christians, we need to offer purpose by setting up opportunities for new believers to get involved

If you are trying to introduce someone to God remember you can’t introduce someone to someone you have never meet so make sure you know him first

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Let me tell you about several supernatural meetings I have had

* Driving down the freeway at 65 miles an hour and faced with a Car dead stopped right in from of me
* Praying for a word from God and a homeless man comes up and prays for me
* Sitting in a Church and having the presence of God pass through me

Now you could easily pass these of as coincidence or maybe I am just crazy but what if just by some crazy chance it was really God? Wouldn’t you want to be a part of that?

God is always with you but he is waiting for you to ask and desire a relationship. As with going on a blind date you have to first desire to show up. Once you do show up what kind of relationship would you have if you knew nothing about the other person?

God actually reached out to us by telling us all about himself in the bible we just need to open and read it and Ask God to reveal himself to us.

My life changed once I was committed to wanting to know about Christ. Not just opening the bible to read it because I felt I had to, but actually trying to know Him- Seeking Him.

**Do you really want a relationship with Jesus Christ?**

I have to say this topic hit home with me as a Youth leader and I have spent much time praying about it, Looking for answers.

One thing I heard God say was that maybe, some of you, will need to fall away so you can find the Risen Christ for yourself. If this does happen to you, Christ will be standing there with open arms waiting for you to return.

Warning: I was one of these Kids. I walked away and I have to warn you that it was a painful experience. **God will want you back** and will throw everything in your path to redirect you back to him.

My Story: I almost died several times. I sat in Jail many times. Each time refusing to acknowledge God. Oh, I am sure I prayed, each time, for God to get me out of that situation and each time he did but I just went back to living my life My way until I realized life was meaningless without Jesus Christ. (Sometime God will take you to a very low and dark place)

You can ask anyone who has walked away and they will probably have a similar story.

🡪If you could avoid all the pitfalls of life by learning from the past would you do it? Most people will say yes but then walk in the path of those that have failed before them.

🡪Remember: the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result?

* **Don’t waste your life living without Christ**
* **Make sue the word Christian means something to you**

## Some content paraphrased from - Hello God: How to Get Your Kids to Heaven and Grow Your Ministry by JJ Vasquez

**Supporting Lessons**

* **My Parents Religion.docx**
* **Are you a Christian (not finished)**
* **Too Busy for God (not finished)**
* **Listen, God is speaking**
* **Not A Fan**