



Right Questions, Wrong Answers:  
**A Study of World Religions**  
by Earle D. Treptow

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**Adult Bible Study - World Religions**

**Worship Service: 10:15 A.M. (Sunday School/Adult Bible Class 9am)**

7305 208<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98053

(425) 868-9404 - [www.lhlc.org](http://www.lhlc.org), [pastortodd@lhlc.org](mailto:pastortodd@lhlc.org)



## Right Questions, Wrong Answers: A Study of World Religions

• Lesson Six •

### Who Am I?

1. By nature I am a sinner and an enemy of God
2. By grace through faith I am a child of God

## Worship

A meditation based on passages from 1 John\*

**Leader:** God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

**Group:** If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

**Leader:** If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**Group:** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

**Leader:** If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

**Group:** If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

**Leader:** How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

**Group:** The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

**Leader:** Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known.

**Group:** But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

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**Leader:** May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will.

**Group:** And may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**All:** Jesus, your blood and righteousness My beauty are, my glorious dress; Mid flaming worlds, in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head. (CW 376:1)

\*1 John 1:5–2:2; 3:1,2

**Prayer:** Lord God, our Father in heaven, we do not deserve to be called your children. Each day, through our transgressions, we demonstrate the sin that still lives within our hearts. We give you thanks that in the holy blood of your Son poured out on Calvary's altar, you cleanse us from all iniquities. For working through water and the Word to instill faith in our hearts and making us your dear children, we offer our humble hymns of praise. Lead us each day to see who we are by nature, that we may appreciate who we are by your grace— your dear children and heirs of everlasting life. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Introduction

It was no longer a conversation, but a monologue. On and on he went. I couldn't really blame him, I suppose, because he was terribly troubled by the things that he saw going on all around him in the world. After a five-minute discourse on the evils of society and the decline of civilization as he knew it, he made this concluding comment: "I can't believe that people can do these things to one another. I can't understand why they steal and kill, without any thought about whom they are hurting." Had you been the object of such a monologue (maybe you have been), what would you have said?

In this day of denial, people do not want to talk about who they really are. They want to see themselves as good people who do what is right, to the best of their abilities. They don't want to hear that maybe they aren't all that good. They would rather not be told that they can't stand before God on their own. They would prefer to live with pictures of themselves that have no basis in reality. We turn to God in his Word to hear the truth about who we are.

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## Studying God's Word

### By nature I am a sinner and an enemy of God

#### Read Romans 3:9-20

1. In the beginning of Romans chapter 3, Paul addresses questions frequently posed to him by the Jews. The last of those questions was: "So is being a Jew a disadvantage? Are the Gentiles better off than we are?" What was Paul's answer? (verse 9)
2. What is the difference between saying "I am a sinner" and "I have committed sins"? (verse 9)
3. Some might argue that human beings are born neutral and then choose to pursue either good or evil. How do verses 10 and 11 answer that argument?
4. What is God's estimate of people as they are by nature, without God in their lives? (verse 12)
5. According to verse 19, why did God give the law?
6. Agree or disagree: The main purpose of God's law is to show us how to become right in his sight. (verse 20)

### According to non-Christians religions, what is man?

**Islam:** Human beings are creatures of Allah. They are neutral at birth—neither fallen nor saved. Though they are weak, they are essentially good and able to fulfill Allah's commands. People simply need Allah's guidance to tell them what they are to believe and how they are to live.

**Judaism:** Because people are made in the image of God, they are inherently good and able to follow the law of the Lord. Though people have an inclination toward evil, they are able to do enough to receive forgiveness from the Lord for any misdeed.

**Hinduism:** Human beings are parts of God. They are, therefore, basically good and capable of delivering themselves from samsara.

**Buddhism:** Human beings are basically good but have a proclivity for becoming too attached to this world. Their desires for things in the world and their attachments to the present existence produces suffering.

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### His Word in My Life – Option 1

Muslims believe that people are born innocent (called fitrah). Human beings, to be sure, are often negligent and forgetful, and they can make poor choices. But whatever happens after that, Muslims would say, is the result of outside influence.

1. Why would such a teaching be popular?
2. Agree or disagree: The environment in which we live determines what kind of people we are and will become.
3. What danger is there in thinking that we are by nature neutral?

### His Word in My Life – Option 2

Your Jewish friend believes that all people are made in the image of God. Therefore, they are naturally good and capable of doing what is right. Though an individual may be led astray by an evil inclination, she remains basically good. If the person does something wrong, she can achieve forgiveness through prayer and doing good.

How might you demonstrate to your Jewish friend that human beings are not basically good?

***The sinner within us and the world around us would have us believe that we are basically good and able to do right if we simply set our minds to it. However, by nature we are sinners and enemies of God.***



## By grace through faith I am a child of God

### Read Galatians 3:26-4:7

1. Though every human being is a creature of God, not every human being is a child of God. Explain, in light of verse 26.
2. What does a sinner have to do to become a child of God? (verse 27)
3. What glorious things happen when God gives us faith? (verses 28 and 29)
4. God the Father graciously sent his Son into the world. The Lord Jesus, through his life, death, and resurrection, rescued us from the punishment we deserve. What role does the Holy Spirit play in our becoming children of God? (verses 1-6)
5. Every Christian is an heir. What do Christians inherit from God? (verse 7)

## Does grace play a role in other religions?

**Islam:** Ultimately, it is Allah who judges people innocent and grants them entrance into paradise. The individual can make a strong case for that judgment through performance of the Five Pillars and obedience to canon law. But he must always leave it up to Allah to decide whether or not he has done enough to find mercy and compassion on the day of judgment. The individual is responsible for doing all within his power to earn Allah's favor.

**Judaism:** Though no person can become perfect through his deeds, the important thing is for the individual to be striving continually to live according to the Lord's law. If the person is sincere in his endeavors, he is able to receive forgiveness for any misdeed. The Lord is the only one who can forgive, but his forgiveness can be earned.

**Hinduism:** It is the Hindu's responsibility to release himself from the cycle of rebirth by following one of the three ways of salvation. The Hindu who chooses to worship a god uses that worship as a means to the end of releasing himself from samsara. The individual must enter into union with Brahman through his own efforts.

**Buddhism:** The individual must follow the Noble Eightfold Path to detach himself from this existence and to experience the enlightenment of nirvana. The individual has the ability to do so; no one can do it for him.

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### His Word in My Life – Option 1

A Muslim believes that a person can, through the appropriate choices in life, do enough good to be considered a child of God.

1. Why is the Christian's hope a far better one?
2. How might Christians fall into the same way of thinking as Muslims?

*Child of God and heir of life—could there be a better position? God Almighty considers us his dear children, not because we are worthy but because he is gracious. When working with people from another religion, remember that they think they have the power to serve their god. They follow the natural idea that they can save themselves. They have no room for grace. When you witness to them, point out sin and then express the hope you have in Christ.*

## Summary

Christians who pause to consider their baptisms every day know themselves well. They know that they are sinners by nature, hopelessly lost without the grace of God. But they also know that by grace through faith they are children of God. Washed clean from sin in the water of Baptism, Christians know that they have been clothed with Christ and are heirs of everlasting life. They have a greater hope than that afforded by the other religions in the world. What a tremendous blessing they have to share with those entrapped in false religions.

## Life with God

**Day 1:** Read Psalm 51. King David confesses his sins and his sinfulness before God.

**Day 2:** Read Genesis 6:1-8. The inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood.

**Day 3:** Read Ephesians 2:11-22. In Christ we are members of God's household.

**Day 4:** Read Romans 7:7-25. The Christian is both saint and sinner at the same time.

**Day 5:** Read Romans 8:1-16. God graciously made us his children through Christ.

**Day 6:** Read 1 Peter 1:13–2:2. Living as a child of God in a world of sin.

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## Lesson 6 Readings – Who Am I?

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### Romans 3:9-20 – By nature I am a sinner and an enemy of God

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#### No One is Righteous

<sup>9</sup> What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. <sup>10</sup> As it is written:

“There is no one righteous, not even one;  
<sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands,  
no one who seeks God.  
<sup>12</sup> All have turned away,  
they have together become worthless;  
there is no one who does good,  
not even one.”  
<sup>13</sup> “Their throats are open graves;  
their tongues practice deceit.”  
“The poison of vipers is on their lips.”  
<sup>14</sup> “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”  
<sup>15</sup> “Their feet are swift to shed blood;  
<sup>16</sup> ruin and misery mark their ways,  
<sup>17</sup> and the way of peace they do not know.”  
<sup>18</sup> “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

<sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup> Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

### Galatians 3:26-4:1-7 – By grace through faith I am a child of God

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#### Sons of God

<sup>26</sup> You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, <sup>27</sup> for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

#### Galatians 4:1-7

<sup>1</sup> What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. <sup>2</sup> He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. <sup>3</sup> So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. <sup>4</sup> But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. <sup>6</sup> Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

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