

# Video “Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus” Goes Viral

Dear Teacher,

A young artist from Tacoma, Washington, named Jefferson Bethke created a spoken-word video in early January called “Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus.” After being posted on YouTube, it quickly went viral and, by early February, had been viewed over 18 million times. If possible, someone should bring a laptop on which the video can be played for your class.

Bethke describes his work on YouTube as a “poem I wrote to highlight the difference between Jesus and false religion.” He believes that Jesus came to abolish religion, and says in the video, “Religion puts you in bondage, but Jesus sets you free.”

Such a message is bound to be popular in a society that has become disillusioned by the failings of the church. The greed of Protestant televangelists and the sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests have been well-documented in recent years, giving all of Christianity a black eye.

But is it true that Jesus came to abolish religion, as Bethke insists? In this week’s installment of *The Wired Word*, we will learn what the Scriptures teach us about Jesus and religion, and whether the two can or should be separated.

Remember, if you wish to provide your class members with an abbreviated copy of the lesson, [click here](#), and you can send them a copy via e-mail today.

May God bless you as you teach the Scriptures this week.

The Editorial Team of *The Wired Word*



## Video “Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus” Goes Viral

*The Wired Word* for February 12, 2012

### In the News

Jefferson Bethke is a 22-year-old Christian artist with the ability to put his beliefs into poetry. In a four-minute spoken-word video, he stands in a courtyard and rhymes about why he hates religion but loves Jesus. Bethke has captured the attention of a large number of people who are attracted to Jesus but not the church, and who may believe in Christian teachings without belonging to organized religion. Since its posting in early January, the video has “gone viral” (been passed around like a virus), with over 18 million views to date.

“What if I told you Jesus came to abolish religion?” he begins. “I mean, if religion is so great, why has it started so many wars? Why does it build huge churches, but fail to feed the poor?” He correctly points out that religion has given spiritual endorsement to many military campaigns over the centuries, and that there have been times when scarce resources have been invested in church buildings instead of food programs. Bethke charges the church with hypocrisy when he says, “Religion might preach grace, but another thing they practice.”

His vision of the church is this: “If grace is water, then the church should be an ocean. It’s not a museum for good people, it’s a hospital for the broken.” He goes on to say, “Now let me clarify, I love the church, I love the Bible, and yes, I believe in sin. But if Jesus came to your church, would they actually let him in?”

Bethke perceives an enormous gulf between Jesus and the church, and says that “Jesus and religion are on opposite spectrums. See, one’s the work of God, but one’s a man-made invention.” In language that is more at home in a Christian rap video than a theological essay, he claims that “Religion puts you in bondage, while Jesus sets you free. Religion makes you blind, but Jesus makes you see. And that’s why religion and Jesus are two different clans. Religion is man searching for God, Christianity is God searching for man.”

Bethke’s work has inspired numerous video responses, including “I Hate Religion, and Jesus Too,” “Why I Dislike Your Poem, But Love God,” and “Why I Love Religion, and Love Jesus.” He was interviewed on “CBS This Morning” and received a rhyming response on the show from a priest named Edward Beck.

The video was even featured in a column by David Brooks in *The New York Times*, who said that Bethke’s protest is “symptomatic of a lot of the protest cries we hear these days. This seems to be a moment when many people -- in religion, economics and politics -- are disgusted by current institutions, but then they are vague about what sorts of institutions should replace them.”

So is it true that Jesus came to abolish something called religion? *Wired Word* editorial team member Timothy Merrill considers Bethke’s attitude to be “a typically American individualistic expression, something that is engrained in our independent spirit, nurtured from the very beginning since getting off the boat at Plymouth Rock.” Merrill responds to such sentiments by pointing to all the hospitals, colleges, universities, food banks, rescue missions and soup kitchens which would fail to exist without organized religion. Churches, synagogues and mosques are the “franchises” of religion, and they often provide day care, counseling and education in communities across America. Merrill acknowledges that the “hate religion, love Jesus” people can go it alone, but he wonders how many people they have cared for, counseled and educated compared to what religion does when it gets organized.

Editorial team member Frank Ramirez reports that a number of younger leaders in his denomination are talking about the possibility of “being Christians without being part of a fellowship.” He fears that accountability will be lost if people are not sharing together as a body. “It can be something as simple as not needing to shell out any cash to keep the church heated in the winter, if you’re in love with Jesus and not with people,” he says. “But it also means that you only have to encounter believers and opinions with which you are in agreement, which is what our culture is doing politically.”

Is there a way to love religion *and* love Jesus? David Brooks concludes his column on Bethke by saying, “Effective rebellion isn’t just expressing your personal feelings. It means replacing one set of authorities and institutions with a better set of authorities and institutions. Authorities and institutions don’t repress the passions of the heart, the way some young people now suppose. They give them focus and a means to turn passion into change.” Perhaps religion can give rise to a better set of authorities and institutions, for people who love Jesus and want to do his work in the world.

More on this story can be found at these links:

[Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus, YouTube](#)

[Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus spoken word lyrics, RapGenius](#)

[Losing His Religion, CBS This Morning](#)

[How to Fight the Man, The New York Times](#)

## The Big Questions

1. What are the aspects of church that cause people to “hate religion”? And what are the factors that inspire people to say they “love Jesus”?
2. Jefferson Bethke attacks hypocrisy in the church, pointing out that Christians don’t always practice what they preach. How is this a legitimate criticism, and where do we need to work to restore integrity to organized religion?
3. If people are turned off by the obligations of religion, how can the church present the demands of faithfulness in a positive light?
4. Did Jesus organize his followers, and if so, how? What structures did the early church put in place to advance its ministry and mission?
5. How do you define “religion”? Is there a better way to describe the practice of discipleship?
6. Why has Bethke struck a nerve with his video? Are people interested simply in videos that challenge authority, or is something deeper being touched?

### **Confronting the News with Scripture**

Here are some Bible verses to guide your discussion:

#### **Isaiah 58:6**

*“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?”* (For context, read 58:1-14.)

The prophet Isaiah draws a contrast between false and true worship, saying that those who practice false worship serve their own interest on their fast day, and oppress all of their workers (58:3). Those who practice true worship, on the other hand, work for justice, feed the hungry, house the homeless and clothe the naked (58:6-7). True religion avoids the charge that Bethke levels at religion when he says that it builds “huge churches, but fails to feed the poor.”

**Questions:** In what ways do we practice false worship today, and what changes can we make to move closer to the true religion described by Isaiah? Where can connections be made between the work of justice and the worship of God?

#### **Matthew 5:17**

*“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.”* (For context, read 5:17-20.)

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes clear that his mission is to complete the work that God started through religious law and the work of the prophets. He is not devoted to the destruction of all that has come before him. He predicts that “not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is

accomplished” (5:18). Jesus tells his followers that “unless [their] righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, [they] will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (5:20).

**Questions:** What does Jesus mean when he says he came to “fulfill” the law and the prophets? How does Jesus complete what has come before him? What sort of righteousness does he challenge us to practice? Describe how this might have a positive effect on the church and community.

### **Matthew 23:27-28**

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”* (For context, read 23:23-36.)

Jesus accuses the scribes and Pharisees of focusing on religious obligations such as tithing, while neglecting “the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith” (23:23). He criticizes them for focusing on outer appearances instead of inner purity (23:28), and for persecuting the prophets of God (23:34). He calls them hypocrites, because they speak religious truths but do not practice them.

**Questions:** In the church today, where do we focus more on outer appearances than on inner purity? Bethke says, “Religion’s like spraying perfume on a casket.” What effect does this have on people outside the church, especially members of the younger generation? How can we better align our words and deeds?

### **Luke 21:37-38**

*“Every day [Jesus] was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple.”* (For context, read 21:29-38.)

After his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, Jesus teaches in the temple. He uses this holy place as a location for telling parables and making predictions about the coming of the kingdom of God (21:29-33). Although he has predicted the destruction of the temple (21:5-6), he does not attack it himself. In fact, he cleansed it because he was upset that it had become “a den of robbers” (19:45-46).

**Questions:** Describe the position Jesus takes toward the organized religion of his day. Does he hate it, tolerate it or concentrate on purifying it and improving it? What steps can we take to follow the example of Jesus today?

### **Hebrews 10:24-25**

*“And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”* (For context, read 10:19-39.)

The author of the letter to the Hebrews challenges us to persevere in times of struggle, holding fast “to the confession of our hope without wavering” (10:23). To overcome our difficulties, he advises us to provoke one another to love and good deeds, meet together and encourage one another. All of this appears to be done in the context of the community of faith.

**Questions:** One of Bethke’s criticisms is that religion “tells single moms God doesn’t love them if they’ve ever had a divorce.” How can Christians do a better job of encouraging one another, and of provoking one another to love and good deeds? What can be done to improve the quality of our meeting together?

### **James 1:26-27**

*“If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”* (For context, read 1:19-27.)

James insists that Christians be doers of the word of God, not merely hearers. This includes personal self-discipline such as being quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger (1:19). But it also involves care for the vulnerable of the community, especially orphans and widows. James predicts that doers of the word will be “blessed in their doing” (1:25).

**Questions:** How does organized religion help us to practice religion that is “pure and undefiled before God”? In what ways does a decision to “hate religion” reject a biblical pattern of organized mission and ministry? How does a narrow focus on loving Jesus limit the practice of the Christian faith?

### For Further Discussion

1. In what ways are churches and religion pulled down by the maintenance of buildings and organizations, and how can they focus more on Jesus’ ministry and mission?
2. Bethke says, “If grace is water, then the church should be an ocean. It’s not a museum for good people, it’s a hospital for the broken.” What keeps us from sharing our brokenness in church, and how can we reconnect religion to the healing ministry of Jesus?
3. James says that “the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy” (James 3:17). While organized religion will never be able to embrace this heavenly wisdom completely, what concrete steps can be taken to nurture these spiritual qualities in the life of the church? Which one are you willing to incorporate into your life?
4. Identify several inaccurate and unfair criticisms of religion in Bethke’s video. Although his love for Jesus is admirable, are there aspects of his passion that may not be sustainable? Where does he need to deepen his understanding of the relationship between Jesus and the Christian community?
5. What are the advantages of separating Jesus from religion? What are the disadvantages? How can the two be held together in a faithful and edifying way?
6. Following the observation of *New York Times* columnist David Brooks, how can organized religion give people “focus and a means to turn passion into change”?

### Responding to the News

The Christian community is required not only to preach grace, but to practice it. Jefferson Bethke’s video challenges us to align our words and deeds, practice a true religion that cares for the needy and build

ministries of support and accountability into the life of the church. This week, don't reject the institution of the church; instead, work to build a better one.

### **Other News This Week**

Fallout continued from the controversy over the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation's funding for Planned Parenthood. A Komen vice president, Karen Handel, resigned this week after Komen reversed its decision to stop funding particular Planned Parenthood projects. Handel does not support the mission of Planned Parenthood, since the organization provides abortions, and she stood behind Komen's decision not to renew aspects of its longstanding partnership with Planned Parenthood. But the controversy arose over grants to support Planned Parenthood's breast cancer screening programs, not abortions. Is there a way to separate women's health from the issue of abortion? Why do reproductive issues always create such controversy? What role can Christians play in shedding light on these issues, instead of additional heat? (See Matthew 5:9, Galatians 5:22-23, Acts 15:39, Mark 5:25-34.)

More on this story can be found at these links:

[Komen Foundation VP Resigns, Blasts Planned Parenthood, \*CNN\*](#)

[Komen Vice President Resigns as Details Emerge on Planned Parenthood Debate, \*The Washington Post\*](#)

### **Closing Prayer**

Lord God, we stand convicted of the charge of hypocrisy, because we know that we have not always practiced what we preach. Forgive our failures, and help us to build a church that is truly a hospital for the broken, one in which all of your children are accepted, healed, helped and challenged to grow in faith and good works. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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*Such a message is bound to be popular in a society that has become disillusioned by the failings of the church. The greed of Protestant televangelists and the sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests have been well-documented in recent years, giving all of Christianity a black eye.*

*But is it true that Jesus came to abolish religion, as Bethke insists? In our next class, we will learn what the Scriptures teach us about Jesus and religion, and whether the two can or should be separated.*

*If you wish to start thinking about our topic in advance, below is some introductory material.*



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## The Big Questions

*Here are some of the questions we will discuss in class:*

1. What are the aspects of church that cause people to "hate religion"? And what are the factors that

inspire people to say they “love Jesus”?

2. Jefferson Bethke attacks hypocrisy in the church, pointing out that Christians don't always practice what they preach. How is this a legitimate criticism, and where do we need to work to restore integrity to organized religion?
3. If people are turned off by the obligations of religion, how can the church present the demands of faithfulness in a positive light?
4. Did Jesus organize his followers, and if so, how? What structures did the early church put in place to advance its ministry and mission?
5. How do you define “religion”? Is there a better way to describe the practice of discipleship?
6. Why has Bethke struck a nerve with his video? Are people interested simply in videos that challenge authority, or is something deeper being touched?

### **Confronting the News with Scripture**

*We will look at selected verses from these Scripture texts. You may wish to read these in advance for background:*

Isaiah 58:1-14

Matthew 5:17-20

Matthew 23:23-36

Luke 21:29-38

Hebrews 10:19-39

James 1:19-27

*In class, we will talk about these passages and look for some insight on the big questions, as well as talk about other questions you may have about this topic. Please join us.*

## Scriptures for The Wired Word Online Bible Study for February 12, 2012

### Isaiah 58:1-14

<sup>1</sup>Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. <sup>2</sup>Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

<sup>3</sup>“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. <sup>4</sup>Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. <sup>5</sup>Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? <sup>6</sup>Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? <sup>7</sup>Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

<sup>8</sup>Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. <sup>9</sup>Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, <sup>10</sup>if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. <sup>11</sup>The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. <sup>12</sup>Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

<sup>13</sup>If you refrain from trampling the sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; <sup>14</sup>then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

### Matthew 5:17-20

<sup>17</sup>“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup>For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup>Therefore, whoever breaks

one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup>For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

## **Matthew 23:23-36**

<sup>23</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. <sup>24</sup>You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel! <sup>25</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup>You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean. <sup>27</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. <sup>28</sup>So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. <sup>29</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, <sup>30</sup>and you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ <sup>31</sup>Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. <sup>32</sup>Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors. <sup>33</sup>You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell?

<sup>34</sup>Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, <sup>35</sup>so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. <sup>36</sup>Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.

## **Luke 21:29-38**

<sup>29</sup>Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup>as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup>Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. <sup>33</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. <sup>34</sup>“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, <sup>35</sup>like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup>Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” <sup>37</sup>Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. <sup>38</sup>And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple.

## Hebrews 10:19-39

<sup>19</sup>Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup>by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), <sup>21</sup>and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup>let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup>Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. <sup>26</sup>For if we willfully persist in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup>but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. <sup>28</sup>Anyone who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy “on the testimony of two or three witnesses.” <sup>29</sup>How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by those who have spurned the Son of God, profaned the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace? <sup>30</sup>For we know the one who said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” <sup>31</sup>It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. <sup>32</sup>But recall those earlier days when, after you had been enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, <sup>33</sup>sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and persecution, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. <sup>34</sup>For you had compassion for those who were in prison, and you cheerfully accepted the plundering of your possessions, knowing that you yourselves possessed something better and more lasting. <sup>35</sup>Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. <sup>36</sup>For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. <sup>37</sup>For yet “in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay; <sup>38</sup>but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back.” <sup>39</sup>But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved.

## James 1:19-27

<sup>19</sup>You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; <sup>20</sup>for your anger does not produce God’s righteousness. <sup>21</sup>Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. <sup>22</sup>But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. <sup>23</sup>For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; <sup>24</sup>for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. <sup>25</sup>But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing. <sup>26</sup>If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup>Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

## 04 Why I Hate Religion....

Link to watch original video of this week's topic.

Click [here](#) to watch the video on the internet.

## Jefferson Bethke – Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus (Spoken Word)

rapgenius.com

What if I told you Jesus came to abolish religion  
What if I told you voting Republican really wasn't His mission?  
What if I told you republican doesn't automatically mean Christian  
And just because you call some people blind doesn't automatically give you vision

I mean if religion is so great, why has it started so many wars  
Why does it build huge churches, but fails to feed the poor  
Tells single moms God doesn't love them if they've ever had a divorce  
But in the Old Testament, God actually calls religious people whores

Religion might preach grace, but another thing they practice  
Tend to ridicule God's people, they did it to John The Baptist  
They can't fix their problems, and so they just mask it  
Not realizing religion's like spraying perfume on a casket  
See the problem with religion, is it never gets to the core  
It's just behavior modification, like a long list of chores  
Like lets dress up the outside make look nice and neat  
But it's funny that's what they use to do to mummies while the corpse rots underneath

Now I ain't judging, I'm just saying quit putting on a fake look  
Cause there's a problem if people only know you're a Christian by your Facebook  
I mean in every other aspect of life, you know that logic's unworthy  
It's like saying you play for the Lakers just because you bought a jersey  
You see this was me too, but no one seemed to be on to me  
Acting like a church kid, while addicted to pornography  
See on Sunday I'd go to church, but Saturday getting faded  
Acting if I was simply created just to have sex and get wasted  
See I spent my whole life building this facade of neatness  
But now that I know Jesus, I boast in my weakness

Because if grace is water, then the church should be an ocean  
It's not a museum for good people, it's a hospital for the broken  
Which means I don't have to hide my failure, I don't have to hide my sin  
Because it doesn't depend on me it depends on him  
See because when I was God's enemy and certainly not a fan  
He looked down and said I want, that, man  
Which is why Jesus hated religion, and for it he called them fools  
Don't you see so much better than just following some rules  
Now let me clarify, I love the church, I love the bible, and yes I believe in sin  
But if Jesus came to your church would they actually let him in  
See remember he was called a glutton, and a drunkard by religious men  
But the son of God never supports self righteousness not now, not then

Now back to the point, one thing is vital to mention  
How Jesus and religion are on opposite spectrum  
See one's the work of God, but one's a man made invention

See one is the cure, but the other's the infection  
See because religion says do, Jesus says done  
Religion says slave, Jesus says son  
Religion puts you in bondage, while Jesus sets you free  
Religion makes you blind, but Jesus makes you see  
And that's why religion and Jesus are two different clans

Religion is man searching for God, Christianity is God searching for man  
Which is why salvation is freely mine, and forgiveness is my own  
Not based on my merits but Jesus's obedience alone  
Because he took the crown of thorns, and the blood dripped down his face  
He took what we all deserved, I guess that's why you call it grace  
And while being murdered he yelled  
"Father forgive them they know not what they do."  
Because when he was dangling on that cross, he was thinking of you  
And he absorbed all of your sin, and buried it in the tomb  
Which is why I'm kneeling at the cross, saying come on there's room

## Poet on "Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus" - CBS News Video [cbsnews.com](http://www.cbsnews.com)

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Watch again: Poet on "Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus"

[Click here to watch this video online.](#)



February 2, 2012

# How to Fight the Man

By **DAVID BROOKS**

A few weeks ago, a 22-year-old man named Jefferson Bethke produced a video called “Why I Hate Religion, but Love Jesus.” [The video](#) shows Bethke standing in a courtyard rhyming about the purity of the teachings of Jesus and the hypocrisy of the church. Jesus preaches healing, surrender and love, he argues, but religion is rigid, phony and stale. “Jesus came to abolish religion,” Bethke insists. “Religion puts you in bondage, but Jesus sets you free.”

The video went viral. As of Thursday, it had acquired more than 18 million hits on YouTube. It speaks for many young believers who feel close to God but not to the church. It represents the passionate voice of those who think their institutions lack integrity — not just the religious ones, but the political and corporate ones, too.

Right away, many older theologians began critiquing Bethke’s statements. A blogger named Kevin DeYoung [pointed out](#), for example, that it is biblically inaccurate to say that Jesus hated religion. In fact, Jesus preached a religious doctrine, prescribed rituals and worshiped in a temple.

Bethke responded in a way that was humble, earnest and gracious, and that generally spoke well of his character. He also basically folded.

“I wanted to say I really appreciate your article man,” [Bethke wrote to DeYoung in an online exchange](#). “It hit me hard. I’ll even be honest and say I agree 100 percent.”

Bethke watched a panel discussion in which some theologians lamented young people’s disdain of organized religion. “Right when I heard that,” he told *The Christian Post*, “it just convicted me, and God used it as one of those Spirit moments where it’s just, ‘Man, he’s right.’ I realized a lot of my views and treatments of the church were not Scripture-based; they were very experience based.”

Bethke’s passionate polemic and subsequent retreat are symptomatic of a lot of the protest cries we hear these days. This seems to be a moment when many people — in religion, economics and politics — are disgusted by current institutions, but then they are vague about what sorts of institutions should replace them.

This seems to be a moment of fervent protest movements that are ultimately vague and ineffectual.

We can all theorize why the intense desire for change has so far produced relatively few coherent recipes for change. Maybe people today are simply too deferential. Raised to get college recommendations, maybe they lack the oppositional mentality necessary for revolt. Maybe people

are too distracted.

My own theory revolves around a single bad idea. For generations people have been told: Think for yourself; come up with your own independent worldview. Unless your name is Nietzsche, that's probably a bad idea. Very few people have the genius or time to come up with a comprehensive and rigorous worldview.

If you go out there armed only with your own observations and sentiments, you will surely find yourself on very weak ground. You'll lack the arguments, convictions and the coherent view of reality that you'll need when challenged by a self-confident opposition. This is more or less what happened to Jefferson Bethke.

The paradox of reform movements is that, if you want to defy authority, you probably shouldn't think entirely for yourself. You should attach yourself to a counter-tradition and school of thought that has been developed over the centuries and that seems true.

The old leftists had dialectical materialism and the Marxist view of history. Libertarians have Hayek and von Mises. Various spiritual movements have drawn from Transcendentalism, Stoicism, Gnosticism, Thomism, Augustine, Tolstoy, or the Catholic social teaching that inspired Dorothy Day.

These belief systems helped people envision alternate realities. They helped people explain why the things society values are not the things that should be valued. They gave movements a set of organizing principles. Joining a tradition doesn't mean suppressing your individuality. Applying an ancient tradition to a new situation is a creative, stimulating and empowering act. Without a tradition, everything is impermanence and flux.

Most professors would like their students to be more rebellious and argumentative. But rebellion without a rigorous alternative vision is just a feeble spasm.

If I could offer advice to a young rebel, it would be to rummage the past for a body of thought that helps you understand and address the shortcomings you see. Give yourself a label. If your college hasn't provided you with a good knowledge of countercultural viewpoints — ranging from Thoreau to Maritain — then your college has failed you and you should try to remedy that ignorance.

Effective rebellion isn't just expressing your personal feelings. It means replacing one set of authorities and institutions with a better set of authorities and institutions. Authorities and institutions don't repress the passions of the heart, the way some young people now suppose. They give them focus and a means to turn passion into change.

