

Spirituality & Religion

What is Spirituality?

Is there Christian Spirituality?

Prayer

What will the study be like?

- Discussion
- A central theme
- Stand-alone sessions
- Biblical conclusions and take-aways

% who identify as ...

A quarter of Americans now see themselves as spiritual but not religious

Note: Respondents were asked separate questions about whether they consider themselves to be “a religious person” and whether they consider themselves to be “a spiritual person.” The “spiritual but not religious” category includes those who responded affirmatively to the question about being a spiritual person and also responded that they do not consider themselves to be a religious person. Statistically significant changes are indicated in **bold**. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted April 25-June 4, 2017.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Religious and spiritual



Spiritual but not religious



Neither religious nor spiritual



Religious but not spiritual



2012 2017

Group Discussion:

- Do you know anyone who claims to be Spiritual But Not Religious?
- What do you think they mean?

Spirituality

“The spiritual core is the deepest center of the person. It is here that the person is open to the transcendent dimension; it is here that the person experiences ultimate reality.”

ed. McGinn, Bernard, John Meyendorff, and Jean LeClercq. *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1985), xiii.

Group Discussion:

- Can a Christian do Yoga? Why or why not?
- Can a Christian practice meditation?
- Can a Christian be a Buddhist?
- Can a Christian be a Hindu?

Thesis

Spirituality was a central aspect of Christian faith in generations past, but it is often ignored by today's Christians.

Those Christians who ignore or fight against spirituality rob themselves—and the Church—of something indispensable to faith.

Is there Christian Spirituality?

“Christian Spirituality is the lived experience of Christian belief in both its general and more specialized forms...

It is possible to distinguish spirituality from *doctrine* in that it concentrates not on faith itself, but on the reaction that faith arouses in religious consciousness and practice.

It can likewise be distinguished from Christian *ethics* in that it treats not all human actions in their relation to God, but those acts in which the relation to God is immediate and explicit.”

ed. McGinn, Bernard, John Meyendorff, and Jean LeClercq. *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1985), xv-xvi. [emphasis added]

Let's look at Scripture

“The Letter kills, but the Spirit gives Life.”

- 2 Corinthians 3:6b

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit...

²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”

Have you ever noticed the Spirit in these verses?

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Why does Paul include Him?

Paul also says:

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

-1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

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NOTE: “Do not quench the Spirit.”

What does this mean?

Is Christian Spirituality good?

- It depends what you mean by “Christian Spirituality.”
- Seeking guidance from spirits?
- Probably bad.
- Seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit?
- Probably good.
- Worshiping at a Hindu temple?
- Probably Bad.
- Allowing yourself to be challenged by the faithfulness of a Muslim?
- Probably Good.

Luke 10:25-28

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

²⁷ He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

NOTE: Our experience of God is not only supposed to be mental or spiritual. It is physical, too.

2 Timothy 1:13-14

¹³ What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

Note:

**Safeguarding our faith—
what we believe—is a
spiritual practice.**

Christian Spirituality is...

- Experiential
- Whole-person
- God-breathed
- Faith-formed & Intensely Biblical
- Faith-forming (*Anfechtung*)

One last note for today:

¹³ For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say. ¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵ So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. ¹⁶ Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified.

¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

¹⁹ But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.