

## Week 1 (Jan 12 + 14)

# “Are You Religious?”

At some point in your life you probably heard that religion is in decline and secularism is on the rise. Modern man, we're told, has outgrown myths and superstitions. We don't need religion to be spiritual, and we don't need to be spiritual to live fulfilling lives. We're now moving toward science and facts, toward progress, toward a world where religion isn't around to cause wars anymore.

At least that's the story.

It turns out the rise of non-religious secularism is the real myth. **People are still religious.** While many still align with the usual world religions like Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity, even those who don't are more religious than they realize. You see, secularism isn't freedom from religion—it's just a new religion. Non-religious people don't lack religious values, they just have different values. They don't reject faith, they just put their trust in something else. The difference is it flies under our cultural radar.

As Christians, we need to be aware that people commit to one faith or another for many different reasons. Some people are going back to the “old gods” of paganism, polytheism, and nationalism—often because they are looking for empowerment, meaning, and belonging. In the same way, people commit to secularism for different reasons. Maybe they want the truth and feel that's the best place to find it. Maybe they have been hurt by religious people in the past and want to run away from it. Maybe they are committed to a certain lifestyle and feel secularism is the best way to justify it.

One of the things we'll see in this study is that **secularism as a religion or a worldview is ultimately unsatisfying.** As we navigate one big question after another, we'll see that secularism doesn't deliver on its promises—and often doesn't promise much to begin with. By contrast, we'll see how the Bible addresses these questions, and more specifically how the Gospel of Jesus Christ addresses our deepest needs.

Religion isn't going away, even if it may be going undercover. Are you prepared to talk about it?

## **Week 1 (Jan 12 + 14) - Are You Religious? (cont.)**

### **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION**

Were you raised Christian or did you convert from another religion? How did you end up here and why have you stayed?

From where you sit, does it look like religion is declining, growing, or something in between? Feel free to answer this in local or global terms, whatever you've noticed in your experience.

Have you put much thought into why you believe what you believe?

Have you ever sat down and thought about the big questions of life? Which ones stand out most to you?

If someone asked you what makes Christianity great, what would you say?

What does it look like to share Christ with others in word and deed?

## **Week 1 (Jan 12 + 14) - Are You Religious? (cont.)**

### **NOTES FROM PERSONAL REFLECTION + GROUP DISCUSSION**