



We live in a culture that uses words like religion and spirituality in various ways. The bible indicates that we are all spiritual beings and that our spirituality is not separate from other aspects of our life. Christianity, when it is aligned with the Kingdom, is not a religion full of rules and tasks designed so we can earn our way into heaven. Rather, it is the outflow of our relationship with Jesus that gives us abundant life (John 10:10) as we become outposts for Heaven. The problem is that Christians can fall into the ditch of having a “religious spirit” like the Pharisees, treating religion like a formula to get into heaven. Conversely, we can fall into the ditch of misunderstanding spirituality, separating our spiritual searching from the triune God who created, resurrects, and sustains our spirit.

### ICEBREAKER

- What religious practice is especially meaningful to you? Explain.
- Tell about a time you felt peer pressure, or a desire to “fit in”. What did you do?

### SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What is your understanding of the words religious and spiritual? Has anyone ever said to you that they are “spiritual and not religious”? What do you think is meant by that?
2. Proverbs 20:27 states, “A person’s spirit is the lamp of the Lord that God uses to search out all their innermost thoughts, motives, and feelings” (Jeremy’s translation). How has God used your own spirit to search out your innermost self?
3. Read Romans 12:1–2. Some translators use “spiritual act of worship” and others “true and proper worship” (verse 1). What is our spiritual, or true and proper, act of worship? What elements of the human being are involved?
4. What does it mean to “offer your bodies as living sacrifices?” How do you live this out?
5. In James 1:26–27, James gives us a working definition of good “religion” that can be culturally translated as “being a voice for the voiceless” of society and not “taking on the non-kingdom values of the world.” How do you experience being religious in light of this definition? How could you grow in this area?

### CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE SILENCE

Make time each day to find a quiet place for silence and solitude. You may find this difficult to do, considering our busy and fast-paced culture. If this practice is new to you, try to be silent for 5 minutes. As you do, reflect on Proverbs 20:27. In that silent and alone space, invite the Holy Spirit to show you how he uses your spirit to search out your innermost thoughts and motives molding you into a more Christlike shape.

### LIVE IT OUT

This week prayerfully consider a “voiceless” group of people in our world that God may be inviting you to serve. What step will you take? If you need ideas, a great place to start may be on the serving page of our website [sov.church/serve/#servinginthecommunity](http://sov.church/serve/#servinginthecommunity).

### PRAYER

Dear God, help us remember that our religious activities themselves are not what’s most important, but our relationship with you. May our spiritual practices draw us closer to you. Grow us and change us. Inspire us to see and love others the way you do, and to serve others in ways that bring you honor and joy. We want our lives to be fruitful for you. Amen.