

Christianity is NOT a Belief System

1. Was there anything that surprised you in this article?
2. What did you like or not like?
3. From your own “frame of reference” how would you define or describe a belief system?
4. When Jesus was going to depart from this earth, would you say His primary focus was on remembering His teachings or on Himself and who He was?
5. Why do you think this is so?
6. Most “religious teachers” taught to remember their teaching, how was Jesus different? See Jn. 14:6 and 11:25.
7. If you didn’t have anything in writing could you still know Jesus as your Savior? Why or why not?
8. What do you think the Evangelical Christian Church’s primary focus is on today; teaching or the very vital and dynamic Being of the person and life of Jesus Christ by His Spirit?
9. What are the four things the author mentions that Christianity is not?
10. What does he say Christianity is?
11. If Jesus left us just with His teaching apart from who He is what would we really have?
12. What does the author say about how Christianity can function?
13. When doctrinal and theological beliefs become the essence of Christianity what happens to the Church? To the individual Christian?

14. According to your Christian experience so far would you say the teaching you have been exposed to is equally balanced with the dynamic, alive, reality of Christ living in and through you?
15. When you gather with other Christians, what do you talk about the most?
16. If you opened a book entitled "The Essence of Christianity" what are some of the things you would like to see mentioned?
17. Finish the sentence: "Christianity is all about_____."
18. When you read "Jesus came primarily to give us what"? How would you answer this?
19. What are some differences between Jewish and Greek thinking? See 1Cor.1:22.
20. What did Paul emphasize in 1Cor.1:23?
21. What does the author say the so called "Church Fathers" reduced Christianity to?
22. What were the "Church Fathers" so quick to let go of?

Something to think about: Here is Jesus Christ, the living Lord; the Creator of all things visible and invisible. This is God incarnate, the dynamic Being who came to give you Life, His Life, the essence of Christianity to be your very life.

You are excited to have this living, growing, intimate relationship with the living Lord Jesus Himself.. As time goes on, you little by little, so subtly begin focusing on His teaching. You begin to develop a well thought out "doctrinal system". You begin to categorize, and systematize and put together what you call "theological and doctrinal constructs". You are really excited with all this knowledge you are gaining. You start forming classes to share all this "wisdom" you are gaining. These now form a "belief system", a belief system that becomes the essence of your teaching. In time Jesus who was the Essence and your First love is now mentioned in passing as you go on to "deeper truths". Jesus is now overshadowed by the tremendous amount of information, of course you call it "theological", and now this becomes the essence of our Christian faith.

23. Is this Christianity “more or less” as you know it today?
24. When the Church focuses on the teachings of Jesus as the essence of Christianity aren't we placing Him on the same plane with other religious teachers?
24. Did Jesus say “who do they say that I am”? or did He say “ what do others say that I teach”?
25. When the Apostle Paul wrote about who we are in Christ, and what we have in Christ, he would always direct his teaching back to it's Originator, the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
26. In the writing of Paul, John, Peter etc., there was a clarity of Jesus' teaching and a simple record of the gospel dynamic of the life of Jesus Christ. Do you experience this in the “teaching” your exposed today? If not, what do you think happened?
27. What council was Constantine well known for?
28. What was his purpose?
29. What allegiance was to be given to this Nicene Creed?
30. As we moved further from the early church and the clear and simple record of the gospel dynamic of the life of Christ, what was Christianity perverted into around 325 A.D.?
31. How does the author describe Augustine's theology?
32. How did Karl Barth refer to Augustine's theology?
33. What was the seven hundred year period from 200 B.C. to 500 A.D. known as?
34. What about 500 A.D. to 1000 A.D.?
35. Why do you think this period is referred to as the “Dark Ages”?
36. What church was Thomas Aquinas associated with?

37. What did a man named Rene Descartes introduce during the Renaissance Period?
38. What about Sir Isaac Newton?
39. Why was the Reformation called the “Reformation”?
40. Wouldn't you think that the birth of Protestantism moving away from the Catholic Church would restore the centrality of the spiritual dynamic of Jesus Christ?
41. What did it develop into?
42. As disagreement began to arise, what did they divide and subdivide into?
43. Do you see the evidence of this today? If so how?
44. How does author Gene Edwards summarize the Reformation? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
45. So far in this study, what are some things you have learned that you didn't know or realize before?
46. In 1611 the King James Bible was translated. It has also become known as what other title?
47. Why do you think that is?
48. Why are newer translations moving away from using the word “doctrine”?
49. Before reading this article, when you heard the word “doctrine” what came to mind?
50. In your opinion how is the word “doctrine” viewed among Christians today?
51. If you were to disagree with some of the things in a Church's “statement of faith” how well would you be accepted? Have you ever experienced this?
52. How does the author summarize America in relating to denominationalism?
53. Briefly describe what he says about “fundamentalism”.

54. What does he say has become their basis of fellowship, acceptance, security and bonding?
55. Do you agree or disagree with this statement, "It is a tragic misrepresentation of the Church when the basis of our commonality is calculated by doctrinal agreement, rather than the indwelling Lord Jesus Christ; when uniformity of doctrine is the primary issue instead of the unity of Christ"? Why or why not?
56. What does the author say doctrine has become in "Christian religion" today?
57. What does he describe as a gross form of idolatry?
58. God is only what God is and God alone is absolute and immutable, meaning His attributes are exclusive to Himself and only Himself. What do we make a person or object when we place or attach an exclusive attribute of God to that person or object?
59. If doctrines and belief-systems focus on religion (which means to "bind" or "tie up") what happens when the Christian Church makes doctrine and belief-systems their primary focus of teaching?
60. How would the statement from James Stewart be true?
61. If you were asked, "what is truth", how would you answer
62. If I said to you, "you are saved by grace through faith", would that be true? Why or why not?
63. Would the statement be true because it is a statement that happens to be true or is it true because it came "out of" the essence of "The Truth", the Lord Jesus Christ who is Truth?
64. Does it make sense to you that what is true can only be true in Christ and from Him, and does it also make sense that "truth" cannot exist apart from Christ, who IS the Truth?
65. Can truth be whatever we want it to be? Why or why not?
66. From reading this study can you now see that Christianity IS Christ?