

What Celebrities Teach Us About Christianity and a Few Ways to Unlearn It

You've probably heard of a couple of these spiritual legends and giants: Martin Luther, John Wesley, C.S. Lewis, Billy Graham and others.

But are you familiar with the newest "theologians" our culture has to offer? You know, Katy Perry, Miley Cyrus, Justin Bieber... and just about anyone else with a zip code of 90210.

Luther risked his life to teach salvation by "faith alone." Wesley advanced the concept of holiness in unparalleled ways. Lewis even embedded Christian theology in his world-famous children's stories. But that was a long time ago, back when theologians had to study, you know, theology.

Or at the very least, read the Bible. These days, we don't seem to place such "stringent requirements" on those with religious rants; the only prerequisite seems to be a Twitter account or YouTube channel. Anyone with an opinion and a platform can add to the confusion. And nobody does it better—or more frequently—than celebrities.

Ask a typical American to name the four Gospels and they might very well say, "Matthew (McConaughey), Mark (Wahlberg), Luke (Perry) and John (Mayer)." But is the version of Christianity that Hollywood teaches worth believing? Take a look at what some of the most iconic members of our culture have to say about the Christian faith, the Bible or God ... and see for yourself.

In 2012, Miley Cyrus took to Twitter to share her thoughts on the origins of life. Quoting physicist Lawrence Krauss, she said, "You are all stardust. You couldn't be here if stars

hadn't exploded, because the elements ... weren't created at the beginning of time. They were created in stars. So forget Jesus. Stars died so you can live." But forgetting Jesus is difficult to do in light of Colossians 1:16–17.

Miley's friend Katy Perry is also happy to share her religious ramblings. In an issue of *Rolling Stone*, Perry said, "God is very much still a part of my life. But the way the details are told in the Bible—that's very fuzzy for me. And I want to throw up when I say that. But that's the truth."

Not to be outdone by their musical counterparts, hip-hop stars Macklemore and Ryan Lewis waded into religious territory when they released "Same Love," a song that focuses on the legitimacy of homosexuality and, by extension, same-sex marriage. There are plenty of references to the Bible, faith and religion in the song's lyrics, but the most interesting line is: "Whatever God you believe in, we come from the same one." Let's keep going. Funny man Zach Galifianakis told *Relevant* magazine, "The Bible has too many typos," but nonetheless wished he "knew more about the Bible."

This list could go on and on, but you get the point: We shouldn't turn to culture to get an understanding of Christianity. After all, we go to a doctor when we're sick, not an architect. So where should we go to get a firm grasp on the Christian faith? Understanding biblical Christianity begins by dismissing the inaccurate versions that exist, namely those listed above. Here are a couple of strategies for doing that.

1) Grab a Bible and get in it. If we want to understand how our lawnmower works, we need to read the owner's manual. The same is true for our TVs, our cars and our coffee makers. The Bible is Christianity's authoritative book that outlines what we need to know about God, faith and life, and it can be trusted in everything it teaches. In *'s Like This*, a book about understanding Christianity in simple terms, an entire

chapter is dedicated to proving this crucial point. The book also provides a few helpful tips for maximizing your study of God's Word. Studying the Bible is the single best way to understanding the faith it proclaims.

2) Find a church and get in it. Yeah, I know that a lot of people, like Justin Bieber, claim that strong faith is feasible apart from church, but I've never once met a person who could pull it off. Yes, our faith in God is incredibly personal, but it's lived out in a communal context that's simply not possible apart from a great church. Like studying the Bible, this element is so important. *'s Like This* takes ample space to describe what a life-giving church looks like and how to find one. Do everything you can to join—and serve—a strong church. You don't have to settle for culture's superficial Christianity. God wants our understanding to be authentic and life-changing. So go to Him, not them.

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