

B A D I D E A S

REMOVING ROADBLOCKS TO KNOWING GOD

BAD IDEA #5: *All Religions Lead to God*

APPETIZER: The Problem

“We live in a world with hundreds of belief systems. It is arrogant to say that only one religion is true.”

- Isn't there something about the nature of truth that is inherently exclusive?

“In an increasingly divided world, we need to learn to get along! We can't have people running around telling each other they are wrong.”

- Isn't the key question how we learn to co-exist *with* our differences, rather than feeling we need to pretend they don't exist?

“I have a Muslim/Hindu/Buddhist/Sikh/Jedi friend. They're so *nice*.”

- What if true religion has very little to do with being “nice” and everything to do with the question of who is Lord?

Love for the other and truth are two attributes to be held together, the one complementing the other. Truth without love can be harsh and even cruel, but love without truth can be equally as dangerous as, lacking discernment, it steers the soul into shipwreck after shipwreck.

~ Mark Durie, *The Third Choice*

DINE IN: The Uniqueness of Jesus

John 13:31-14:10

Most of the world's religions can be categorized into one of three ways (or combinations thereof):

- Religions based on *thinking* (you master the right truths)
- Religions based on *experience* (have the right mystical encounter)
- Religions based on *doing* (keep the right commandments)

Problem: Each of these 'ways' can lead you to look down on others who don't know what you know, haven't had the experiences you have had, or are not as obedient in keeping the law as you.

What's different about Jesus and how does he cut against the grain here?

See also: John 1:1-14; Mark 10:17-23; Romans 5:1-11

The Incarnation reverses the traffic pattern of all other religions: it is not how we, by morality or enlightenment or some other means, mount the ladder to heaven, but God who comes to us in our weakness and unworthiness.

~ James Edwards, *Is Jesus The Only Savior?*

TAKE OUT: Comparing Yahweh and Allah

Yahweh is relational

Allah is distant

Yahweh can be known

Allah cannot be known

Yahweh is love

Allah is not love

NEXT WEEK: *BAD IDEA #6: Faith Should Be Private*

Home Church Questions

HANGOUT [Warming Up to the Topic – in one Large Group]

1. After reviewing Sunday's message, talk about something you learned or any questions that remain.
2. **ROLE PLAY!** Take turns in pairs, or as a group, responding to someone who says...
 - a. "Just as there are many paths to the top of the mountain, there are many paths to God."
 - b. "Believe whatever you like, as long as you are sincere."
 - c. "Sure, I'm a Christian, but I'd never tell a Muslim friend they're wrong. That would just be rude."

HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture – in Discussion Groups]

3. Read **John 13:31-14:10**
 - a. What idea stands out to you most in this passage. Why?
 - b. How does Jesus understand his own identity? What are the implications of this?
 - c. In John 14:6, Jesus famously calls himself "the way, the truth and the life". Why do you think Jesus separated out these three categories?
 - d. Why do you think Peter was so quick to make the rash promise he made in John 13:37? Can we sometimes be as guilty as Peter of speaking-before-we-think and thus missing the point?
 - e. If Jesus is the only way to the Father (v6-10), how does that affect how we think about our friends of other faiths?
 - f. In John 13:34, Jesus emphasizes that *love* is the supreme ethic. How do we balance love and truth in our evangelism, especially in reaching those from other faiths?

HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together – in Huddles]

4. Use your Huddle Handout Questions and pray for one another.

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Quotes

Welcome to our new series about common bad ideas that interfere with people knowing God.

The weapons we fight with have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

~ The Apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Today's Bad Idea: All Religions Lead to God

"Christians and Muslims worship one and the same God. They understand God's character partly differently, but the object of their worship is the same. I reject the idea that Muslims worship a different God than do Jews and Christians."

~ Miroslav Volf, *Allah: A Christian Response*

"Allah does not reveal Himself to anyone in any way. Allah reveals only his will ... Allah does not reveal himself to anyone ... that is the great difference between Christianity and Islam."

~ Isma'il Al-Furuqi, *Christian Mission and Islamic Da'wah*

"Jesus was a good man just like Buddha, Mohammed, and ourselves. We believe he was a good teacher of morals but we believe that his good morals are really bad. We believe that all religions are basically the same, at least the one we read was. They all believe in love and goodness, they only differ on matters of creation, sin, heaven, hell, God, and salvation."

~ Steve Turner, *Modern Thinker's Creed*

"As in arithmetic, there is only one right answer to a sum, and all other answers are wrong; but some answers are much nearer being right than others."

~ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

"If you start with a kind of absent landlord kind of God, or the God of Islam, or one of the New Age gods, or even one of the gods of ancient paganism and ask what would happen if such a god were to become human, you would end up with a figure very different from the one in the Gospels. But if you start with the God of Genesis, the God of the Exodus, of Isaiah, of creation and covenant, of the Psalms, and ask what that God might look like, were he to become human, you will find that he might look very like Jesus of Nazareth

~ N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Identity of God*

"Men of Athens, I see that in every way you are very religious ... Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you."

~ Paul of Tarsus [Acts 17:23]