

Luther's Legacy for Laity
Disc 1: Dr. Timothy Wengert
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This study guide will follow the 10 parts of Dr. Wengert's DVD. Each part will include a brief summary, a list of Biblical passages and citations from the Book of Concord (Wengert Edition) when used, and questions for discussion. Key glossary terms will be listed at the end of each section.

Part 1: Up Religion

Summary:

Each of us operates with two religions. Dr. Wengert calls them *Up Religion* and *Down Religion* (Part 2 of this disc). *Up religion* is all around us and is based on the idea that we have to do at least something to be saved. We know that we are separated from God and we need/want to get back to God. How is the crucial question. *Up Religion* is designed to help us get back to God. It might be by following rules, doing good works, or simply making a decision to accept Jesus into our hearts. Once on this ladder we are in trouble, since no matter what we do we always end up far short of perfection. The results of climbing the ladder are either Pride or Despair. Dr. Wengert asserts that when we climb the ladder we don't ever meet God – instead we end up meeting ourselves. We are the ones who are in charge and we decide what God will have to do for us based on what we've done/decided for God.

Biblical References Part 1:

Genesis 3:1-5

2 Samuel 17:27; 19:31-39

Isaiah 7:11-17

Confessional References in Part 1:

Page 388 paragraph 22

Questions for Discussion:

1. Drs. Jensen and Gritsch use the phrase *If/Then Religion* to describe what Dr. Wengert calls *Up Religion*. Why might this be a helpful way of talking about the trap of this type of religion?
2. React to Dr. Wengert's comment that "We think we are king of the world, but are on the Titanic and don't know it."
3. If the phrase "decide to make Jesus your personal Savior" isn't in the Bible, why do you think it is used so often today in American religious circles?
4. "How are you doing so far?" Why does truthfully answering this question call into question the entire *Up Religion* structure?
5. Dr. Wengert drew a ladder to describe *Up Religion*. Create your own picture of *Up Religion*.

6. Share an experience similar to the one described by Dr. Wengert when he visited the dying woman, who asked him if she had done enough to be saved.
7. Dr. Wengert suggests that *Up Religion* leads to either Pride or Despair. Question 6 helped you think about the Despair aspect. Share an experience that would help understand the Pride part.
8. Dr. Wengert paraphrased Gen. 3:4-5 “You will not die, you will be like gods, deciding good and evil.” Read the Bible passages and discuss how this helps understand why all of us default to *Up Religion*.

Glossary:

Anthropological Presupposition – Up Religion is based on the idea that human beings are actually in control of their lives.

Conditional Religion – Another way of describing If/Then Religion.

Knowing Good and Evil – The ability to decide for ourselves what is right and wrong.