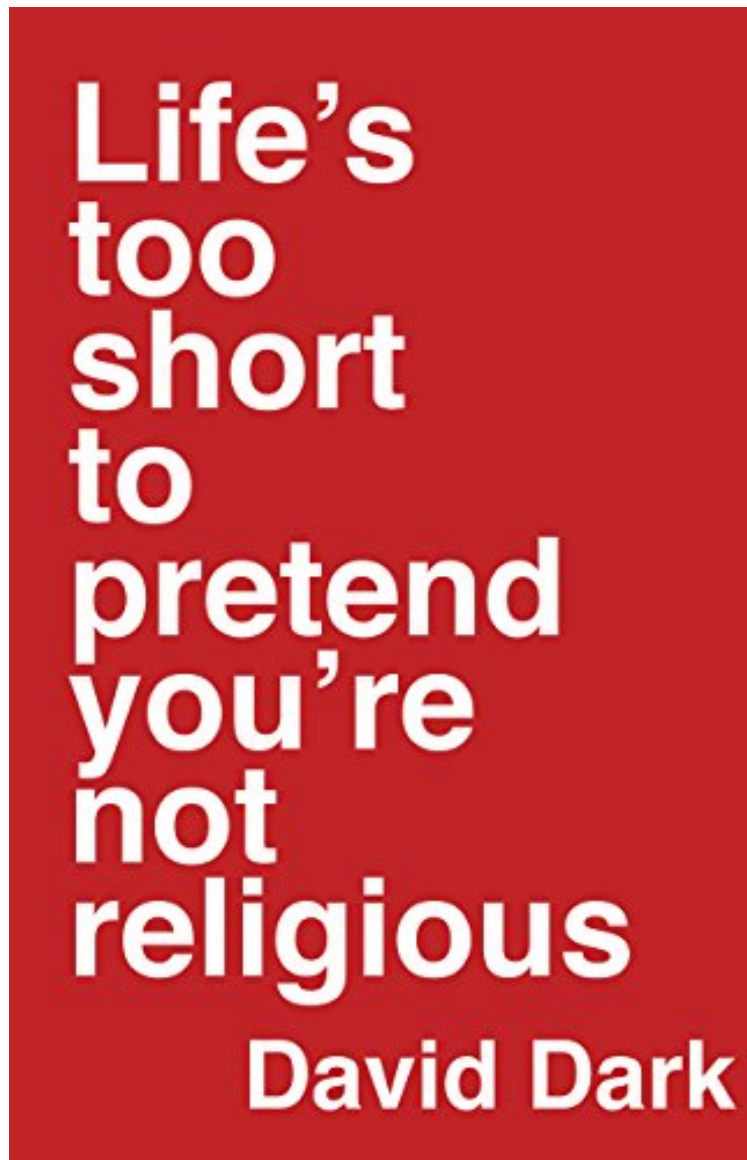


(Download free ebook) Life's Too Short to Pretend You're Not Religious

## Life's Too Short to Pretend You're Not Religious

*David Dark*

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**David Dark : Life's Too Short to Pretend You're Not Religious** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Life's Too Short to Pretend You're Not Religious:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. sacred responsibility to eschew over-simplification in order to see and better understand ourselves and othersBy Matthew Ryan WardWere in the presence of a catastrophically unexamined concept. There may not be a more desperately needed discussion at this moment than what David Dark

attempts to invoke here. "Life's Too Short..." is an invitation for honesty and empathy a call to a, dare I say, sacred responsibility to eschew over-simplification in order to see and better understand ourselves and others, thoughtfully. Those who take objection to Dark's choice of "religion" to name our worldviews, mythologies and devotions (recognized or unrecognized), say far more about themselves than the author's intent. You 'gotta serve somebody', and you can't exit culture. As Dark says, "We're all in it." So the subject of religion, of our religion(s), doesn't have to be a label or a dead end, but rather a perpetual opportunity for conversation and self-examination, and ultimately for love. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Like the ligaments of the body re-lig-ion is about reconnecting By E. W. McLaughlin Finished reading *Lifes too short to pretend youre not religious* by David Dark, professor of religion at Belmont University. Dark has one foot in the world of popular culture and the other in the world of theology. The point he makes in this book is that everyone is religious in some fashion. Whatever you are devoted to is your religion. The term religion has its roots in connection and relationship. Like the ligaments of the body re-lig-ion is about reconnecting. Dark asserts that there is no wall separating the sacred and the profane, or the spiritual and the secular. It's all of one piece. The most secular person is religious in terms of their relationships and commitments. He writes: Show me your receipts, your text messages, your gas mileage, your online history, a record of your daily doings and, just to get things started, a transcript of the words you've spoken aloud in the course of a single day, and then we might begin to get a picture of your religious commitments. The space of your worship is the space of your life. The author approaches spirituality from a sociological point of view. All of us, he says, are part of a story or drama. That drama is how we define ourselves and what is important to us. Religion happens when we get pulled in, moved, called out or compelled by something outside ourselves. The calls to worship are everywhere. The music we listen to is part of our worship. The kind of clothes we wear, the mode of transportation we use, the kind of friends we choose, the books we read, the movies we watch of this defines what makes sense out of life and how we cope; this is religion in the larger sense what we are committed to. Dark says, Whatever the content of the script were sticking to for dear life that would be our religion. As Leonard Cohen said, Lets compare mythologies. Dark is in touch with a wide swath of the literary and artistic community. He references Will Ferrell, R.E.M., Bob Dylan, Camus, Neil Gaiman, Doctor Who, Philip Dick, William Wordsworth, Jacques Ellul, Her, Marilyn Robinson, Flannery O'Connor, Thich Nhat Hanh, Wendell Berry, Ignatius, Daniel Berrigan, and so many more. Science Fiction has never been my cup of tea. But I appreciated his chapter on sci-fi. He points to how sci-fi literature and film can break through ideological barriers and enable us to see reality in a clearer way. He refers to sci-fi as a sacred genre. It is where we get to hold a colloquy with our own bad thinking and helps us be aware of the reigning dysfunctions of our world. This book takes us on a tour of the necessities of life: mutual interdependence, self-awareness, paying attention, imagination, discernment, playfulness, love, patience, transparency, authenticity, and poetry. According to David Dark, religion is everywhere and an aspect of all people because we are all part of the holy Whole. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant and very readable By kyrie fuss This is a truly excellent book. I devoured it in a few days and am now slowly rereading it, learning more the second time around. As someone who lives in a largely academic world in a country where devout faith is increasingly seen as incongruous with intelligence, this perspective on culture and religion gave me tools for my interactions with people around me and some serious food for thought about what "good living" looks like. There are masses of literary, movie and tv references, as varied as the more traditional sources that he also cites, and while incredibly intelligent it also made me dissolve to fits of giggles on more than one occasion, largely by the implications rather than outright statements. I've recommended it to those who count themselves religious and those that don't and will continue to do so.

For many of us, the word "religious" immediately evokes thoughts of brainwashing, violence and eye-rubbingly tiresome conversations. Why not be done with it? David Dark argues that it's not that simple. The ease with which we put the label on others without applying it to ourselves is an evasion, a way of avoiding awareness of our own messy allegiances. Dark writes: "If what we believe is what we see is what we do is who we are, there's no getting away from religion." Both incisive and entertaining, *Life's Too Short to Pretend You're Not Religious* combines Dark's keen powers of cultural observation with candor and wit. With equal parts memoir and analysis, Dark persuasively argues that the fact of religion is the fact of relationship. It's the shape our love takes, the lived witness of everything we're up to for better or worse, because witness knows no division. Looking hard at our weird religious background (Dark maintains we all have one) can bring the actual content of our everyday existencethe good, the bad and the glaringly inconsistent to fuller consciousness. By doing so, we can more practically envision an undivided life and reclaim the idea of being "religious."

"David Dark is one of our most astute and necessary cultural critics. His work gracefully opens new doors of understanding and breaks down barriers between secular and non-, and it puts a lot of old mythology out to pasture with a daring affirmation at the heart of his radical critique. *Life's Too Short* refreshingly ropes everyone in, insisting that we're all in it together. We forget that." (Jessica Hopper, author of *The First Collection of Criticism by a Living Female Rock Critic*) "Effectively skewering a central fallacy of the age, David Dark argues that at the deepest level no

one is more or less religious than anyone else. With his premise granted, new avenues for ownership, responsibility and a renewed attentiveness to all we say, do and think arise. *Life's Too Short to Pretend You're Not Religious* is a call to consciousness and the compassion that accompanies the sacred insight that the whole world is kin and everything belongs." (Richard Rohr, O.F.M., Center for Action and Contemplation, Albuquerque, New Mexico)"Brace yourself. Our bold conceits, wishful thinking and soothing sobriquets on the abolition of religion and the end of faith are set on a collision course thanks to David Dark's luminous reckonings with the real. The result is a shock of recognition: life more abundant awaits us only in the deep immersions of togetherness with others. Here alone are the comedy and chaos that define the human condition and lead us gently or not into the strange new world of grace. *Life's Too Short to Pretend You're Not Religious* is an irresistible triumph." (Charles Marsh, Commonwealth Professor of Religious Studies, University of Virginia, author of *Strange Glory: A Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*)"Don't let an aversion toward that radioactive word dissuade you. *Life's Too Short to Pretend You're Not Religious* is a bracing manifesto for modern people and an optimism-infused love song to humanity. David Dark calls us to pay better, more generous attention to our own lives and the lives of others." (Sara Zarr, National Book Award finalist, author of *The Lucy Variations*)"Prepare to have idols smashed. David Dark renders futile the cherished modern ambition to opt out of human religiosity; religion, rather, is a road we can make by walking with open eyes and informed minds. No marvels of progress can save us from being heretics and holy fools, or prophets, seers and miracle workers. Dark helps us recognize these characters (and more) on the radio, in a dreary parking lot and within ourselves." (Nathan Schneider, columnist for *America* magazine, author of *God in Proof and Thank You, Anarchy*)"David Dark is one of the most important prophetic voices of our day. *Life's Too Short to Pretend You're Not Religious* is another beautiful demonstration of the winsome way in which he unsettles our language and our imagination. Not content to unravel the basic fabric of our existence, Dark reweaves the fibers into a rich and vibrant vision of the flourishing religious life for which we were created." (C. Christopher Smith, coauthor of *Slow Church* and founding editor of *The Englewood of Books*)"I am so very grateful for this book, which, among other things, demonstrates that answering 'Jedi' or 'Toni Morrison' when asked for your religious affiliation is a perfectly legitimate response to that question thereby arguing us into another definition of what it means to be alive to wonder and mystery. And at a time in our culture when we seem to prefer our 'dialogues' to be conducted behind well-defended barricades from which we lob Twitter grenades, David Dark shows us that there could be another way to live with each other and speak with each other. Each sentence here is graced with a wisdom, humor and humility that can't help but inspire us to be a little less suspicious of each other and to hope a little bit more and if that isn't a rare gift of prophecy, I don't know what is. Also, he writes like an unprintable word, and for that I am glad." (Carlene Bauer, author of *Frances and Bernard and Not That Kind of Girl*)"Dark's work is a valuable resource for youth workers who are facing questions from students about agnosticism or are struggling to deal with apathy in today's youth culture." (Katie Mussat, *Youthworker*, Fall 2016)"David Dark has a request for all of us. Stop thinking of being religious as passivity. Stop thinking of it as participation in something monolithic, intractable and stagnated by centuries of routine. In his new book, he asks us instead to find religion all around us: in music, television, books and film. In doing so, he reimagines being religious as a collective action open to all and demonstrates that in a time skeptical of religion, it can be a source of meaningful work and lifegiving pleasure and joy and even of change." (Kaya Oakes, College Writing Programs, University of California, Berkeley)"With candor and humor, (Dark) synthesizes a broad range of cultural voices alongside his own 'attention collection' of personal influences to create an argument against the thought that we can escape religion. . . . Through references to science fiction novels, Wendell Berry, Thomas Merton, and Daniel Berrigan, Dark sheds light on how thoughts are handed down to us, what we judge to be essential, and the ways in which we can begin to unlearn all that we have unwittingly inherited. Dark's argument couched in a memoir is a persuasive, well-grounded case for religion's place in modern society." (Publishers Weekly, December 14, 2015)"While not a novel or sectarian position, it is refreshing that this approach comes from an avowed Christian. Anyone who wishes to get beyond the acrimony between believers and secularists will appreciate Dark's narrative, even if they wonder whether religion differentiates good from bad." (James Wetherbee, *Library Journal*, May 1, 2016)"In an age with 'religion' is often viewed as a dirty word, author and theologian David Dark wants to reclaim the term. Through storytelling and accessible prose, Dark deconstructs negative connotations of religion as well as common assumptions about a divide between the secular and sacred." (*Covenant Companion*, July/August 2016)"Dark has given us a book that is beautiful and timely, one that initiates a vital public conversation about the nature of religion and its benefits. I suspect many of those who identify as 'spiritual but not religious' would discover a winsome conversation partner, even if they do not agree with the way he defines all his terms. Because of its conversational nature, *Life's Too Short to Pretend You're Not Religious* begs to be read and discussed in churches, coffee shops, homes, and libraries across North America. . . . Dark has given us a compelling and meaningful understanding of how religion can lead to a more connected life of flourishing. And I'm not ashamed indeed, I'm delighted to wave that banner in the public square." (C. Christopher Smith, *Christianity Today*, February 8, 2016)"[Dark] writes with humor and wit about our 'weird' religious backgrounds and our need to develop a 'language of love' based on sharing the things that are most important to us. Saying to someone 'I think you might like this' becomes a way of letting them know they have been seen, that we share common interests, and that we welcome

their participation in something we hold sacred. Religion so handled is presented as a potent means of overcoming our isolation and building and sustaining community." (Foreword, Spring 2016)"Dark suggests that religion is the way people see themselves who they are and what they do. Religion shapes people's thoughts and lives. Religion gets passed down from generation-to-generation through thoughts and stories. Dark shares personal stories from his own life to study our ideas of what religion is. He will open readers' minds to perhaps a new way of thinking about religion." (Ruth O'Neil, CBA Retailers+Resources, February 2016)"Having just finished David Dark's new book, I want to buy stock in Religion Unlimited, meaning that David helps us see why pronouncing religion dead or dying is terribly short-sighted. The writing is muscular yet graceful, and the content is wise and insightful. You couldn't ask more from a book . . . and you couldn't ask for a more important subject." (Brian D. McLaren, author, speaker, activist)About the AuthorDavid Dark (PhD, Vanderbilt University) teaches in the College of Theology at Belmont University and among the incarcerated communities of Nashville, Tennessee. He is the author of *The Sacredness of Questioning Everything*, *Everyday Apocalypse* and *The Gospel According to America*. He also contributed to the book *Radiohead and Philosophy* and has published articles in *Pitchfork*, *Paste*, *Oxford American*, *Books and Culture* and *Christian Century*. A frequent speaker, David has appeared on C-SPAN's Book-TV and in the award-winning documentary *Marketing the Message*. He lives with his singer-songwriter wife, Sarah Masen, and their three children in Nashville.