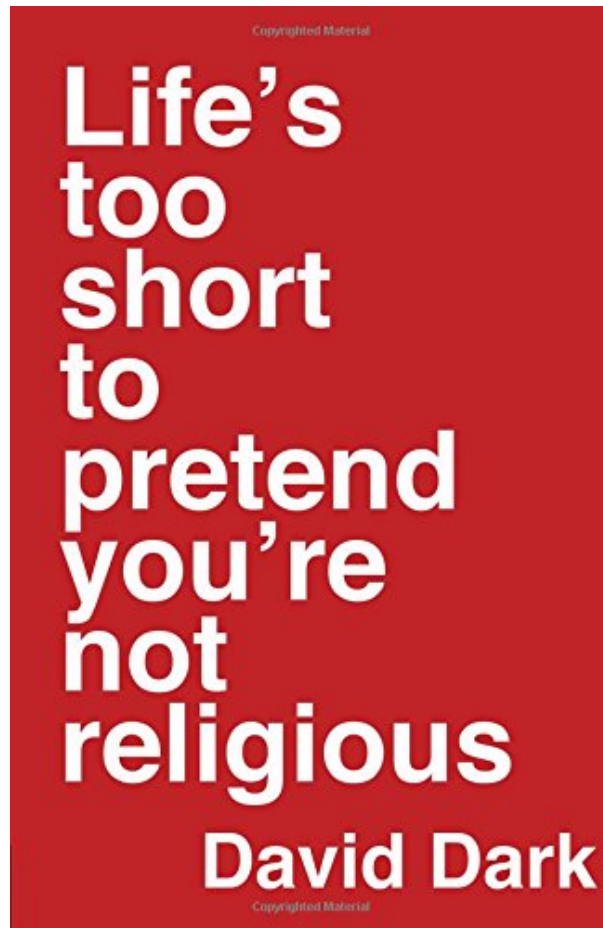


# **LIFE'S TOO SHORT TO PRETEND YOU'RE NOT RELIGIOUS BY DAVID DARK**



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### Review

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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 existence—the 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."

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#### Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

As an atheist, I can appreciate...

By Amazon Customer

I'm a former evangelical Christian minister, now atheist/humanist. I celebrate what I think is the net affect of this book--it puts tools in the minds of its reader to find common ground with those we've previously otherized, to expand the space of the talk-aboutable, and to elevate humility and empathy. I interviewed Dark on the 90th episode of the podcast Everyone's Agnostic, which I named after a phrase I borrowed from another of his books, "The Sacredness of Questioning Everything." Dark's genius is so good for what is ailing us.

12 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

... profound commentary on contemporary religious culture in such a beautifully written form

By Frank

Rarely have I read such a profound commentary on contemporary religious culture in such a beautifully written form. By turns humorous, deeply serious, whimsical, and philosophical, Dark's book is a powerful reflection on the inescapability of "ultimate issues," even in an increasingly relativistic culture. The book is ideal Lenten reading, joining in my mind works like Kathleen Norris's and Marilynne Robinson's in prompting a turn to soulfulness--to what really matters.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

sacred responsibility to eschew over-simplification in order to see and better understand ourselves and others

By Matthew Ryan Ward

“We’re 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.

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#### About the Author

David 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.

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